

From: *Markus Lüpertz, Giulio Paolini: figure, colonne, finestra*, curated by Rudi Fuchs and Johannes Gachnang, exhibition catalog (Rivoli-Torino, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, 19 December 1986 - 29 March 1987), Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli-Torino 1986, pp. 103-104.

## *Note*

### **Johannes Gachnang**

The guiding idea behind this exhibition did not come about for this specific occasion, it is something that coincides with a series of reflections which, over the years, have accompanied the work of those who create art and those concerned with the why's and wherefore's of art. It poses a question and suggests possible answers regarding some of the motivating factors which lie behind the creation of art, and those concerning the procedures involved in the construction of a picture or the layout of space. In as such, after years of reflection, it now assumes a precise character, and intends to have a spin off effect on future work: a stationary point which sets off motility, which follows a chain of actions and thoughts and then follows on with other actions and thoughts.

The project of this exhibition is firmly anchored to the ties between the work of the two artists in question, which developed over a fairly long period. In spite of the marked difference in temperament, place of origin, and the formal characteristics of their expression, certain parallels can be seen in the ambit of the two artists' intentions and strategies, and also in their modes of translating into artistic procedures: bringing these parallels to light, is not only significant to our knowledge of their work, but also serves to cast light on the future problems and questions surrounding the meaning of art, likely to arise in twenty year time. The reiterative use, by both artists, of figurative models around which a series of works are organized, changes the problem of formal construction from being one of abusive antithesis figuration/abstraction, into one of structural procedures involved in the construction of an image, be it a picture or the setting, and regardless of whether the figurative model adopted be an object of daily use, or rather a citation derived from the formal repertoire of artistic tradition, moreover, bearing in mind, thematic and content considerations.

The catalogue is organized more along the lines of a book than as an exclusive repertoire of images: texts and poems by the two leading figures, one written by an important artist - Per Kirkeby - a significant citation from a book by Carlo Levi, some prefaces by the writer which accompany the life and works of Markus Lüpertz, a Giulio Paolini's reasoned biography. It is, therefore, a collection of material designed to give literary indications to the exhibition and the artists work.

The Castle, rich in citations and fragments, is the ideal setting for the exhibition in question: its spaces organize the works of the two artists, and at the same time, provoke suggestions and cause echoes; far from the role of neutral setting, it is an active presence.

During my last travel, back from Turin to Bern, I just read in the Carlo Levi's book, *La doppia notte dei tigli*:

*«I've seen these faces quite recently: they are to be seen in the splendid pictures by the first German painters, whether by the minor ones or by the greatest, from Stephan Lochner to Von Kulmbach, to the Master of the "Pollinger Tafeln", to Martin Schongauer, to Baldung Grien, right up to Altdorfer, to Cranach the Elder, and to Dürer and Grünewald. Those f pictures are all, in different ways, quite*

*extraordinarily realistic: the first image of man that they gave to their people, is a realistic image, highly expressive of feelings, and at the same time totally devoid of what we call the "beautiful ideal". Perhaps I was thinking, as I contemplated my insatiable neighbours, these people, even today, feel so free of any limitations, they fear neither ugliness nor obesity, deformity nor old age, permitting their bodies to be immoderate and distorted, without complexes and fears, shameless, principally because their painters never created a model of beauty for them, that absolute form, which becomes later, even for the unaware, a form, an obligation. Raffaello's Madonna, which in a poor oleograph, hung above an Italian peasant woman's bed, obliges her, without her realising, to measure beauty. The greatest German painters gave no other model to conform to other than naked reality, or the deforming violence of feelings. The old, free anarchy of Germany has remained so, without the constraints of form: expressionism was from its very origins, an internal, protesting individual violence. These immoderate women, in the manifestation of their passions, most certainly feel at peace and in harmony, absolute, innocent, and, perhaps, beautiful».*