

extraspazio

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mike pratt *cumberland sausage*

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extraspazio gallery presents *Cumberland Sausage*, the first solo show in Italy by Mike Pratt (Sunderland, Great Britain, 1987; he lives and works in Newcastle).

"The works engage with frank and simple imagery, they stand as a remark; there is nothing sentimental or 'worldly', just a curiosity into the processes of making. The surfaces of the paintings are caked with layers of mixed paint types, from Gloss to Oil to Spray. Each action obliterates the last until the 'right' gesture has the final say."
(Mike Pratt, 2010)

Mike Pratt therefore proceeds by successive layers. Each action cancels out the previous one. The last 'coat' is the one that commands and is the 'statement'. But it is worthwhile adding that the artist's final gesture does not wholly obliterate the earlier passages and that the 'statement' speaks rather of a work that is self-aware, that questions its own *raison d'être* and ambiguities. The final work is, if not provisional, a sort of rind full of furrows that leaves a glimpse of the traces of the work's entire architecture.

Without hierarchies and sentimental or mundane implications Pratt samples the everyday that surrounds him: manners of speaking, abbreviations, expressions of recent and less recent art, utensils and foodstuffs. Transferring his notions with syncopated gestures and several reprises onto large format canvases or in installations. A merry sense of the absurd leaps out of his work, the liberating idea that we can't oppose the world around us but we can take note of its lack of meaning, its ambiguities, and make use of them.

Amid enamels, oils and sprays we also get a glimpse of the philosophical notion that says no work of art exists if not as an individual step in the infinite creation of an infinity of works. If we tried to ask confirmation from an artist who hangs up the word *ON* in an exhibition, in such a way that we might also read it as *NO*, he would probably answer such a philosophical question with the title of another work of his: *LOL*, acronym of *Laugh Out Loud*. Let's not take offence: we can always interpret it as *Lots Of Love*.

In this sense, *Con Molto Amore*,

Guido Schlinkert

Mike Pratt was born in Sunderland, GB in 1987; he lives and works Newcastle. His work was presented at Satellite Gallery, Newcastle (*HUBBA HUBBA*, 2009) and at Fourth Floor Gallery, Northumbria University, Newcastle (*Paint It Black and Give It a Name Show*, 2008) and he participated in the group exhibitions: *Psychic Geography*, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead, 2009; *JAMBON*, Cobalt Studios, Newcastle, 2009; *Some People Deserve Everything They Get*, Royal Standard, Liverpool, 2009; *Orifice*, Foyer Gallery, Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2008; *Collaboration*, Foyer Gallery, Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2008; *A Place to Think*, Gallery North, Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2007.

In 2009 he was awarded the Paul Masson Sculpture Prize.