

American Pastoral

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At the Aicon Gallery in New York, Bernardo Siciliano's works of art, explicitly inspired by Philip Roth, immortalise the moments that narrate these two pandemic years.



Very often, painting acts as an interpreter of the present, of what is happening, of the most tumultuous or silent social feelings. Painting has always portayed current cultural events, philosophy, literature and music, interpreting and narrating them, becoming a metaphor. This is art's task. Maybe.

Aicon Gallery, NoHo, Manhattan, New York. An "American Pastoral", a reflection on these last two pandemic years, which were revolutionary for our habits and therefore full of difficulties, is narrated through the paintings of Bernardo Siciliano. His is an urgent

task: to reconstruct the time and space in which the psychological context of the characters describes precise themes. Changes, unions, decay of society, bewilderment.



Bernardo Siciliano, Summertime, 2019

“I paint for private reasons; it involves anxieties, neuroses and, almost by osmosis, I transmit them onto the canvas, silently, especially in this historical period”. This is how Bernardo Siciliano, Italian artist and son of art, describes himself. He moved to New York in 1996 and began to cure his anxiety through painting. His paintings started to feature subjects that were often different but always intimate, up to these latest works collected in the spaces of the Aicon Gallery.

“The exhibition tells an experience, my experience, what I saw, what I felt in days of (not only personal) great bewilderment. A political, social and economic bewilderment, at a time when chaos reigned supreme”.

The title of the exhibition, “Pastorale Americana”, is inspired by one of the best-known works of Pulitzer Prize winner Philip Roth, where similar and still topical themes seem to coincide perfectly with the Italian artist’s story.



Bernardo Siciliano, American Pastoral, 2020-2021

“You have to enjoy power, have a certain ruthlessness, to accept the beauty and not mourn the fact that it overshadows everything else. As with any exaggerated trait that sets you apart and makes you exceptional - and enviable, and hateable - to accept your beauty, to accept its effect on others, to play with it, to make the best of it, you’re well advised to develop a sense of humor”. Roth focuses on a specific period, in which his characters experience the war in Vietnam, bombings, political grandstanding, particular religious contexts and personal battles. Siciliano paraphrases Piero della Francesca, argues Achille Funi and takes us back to perfect perspectives reminiscent of Canaletto. In his paintings, shapes are

accepted as expressive elements, geometric relationships that experiment with the perspectives of his works.

His state of mind is interpreted through the portrait of his daughter Anna, his mother Flaminia or his brother Francesco: his Family, just like that of Levov, the protagonist of Roth’s novel, who faces life together with him, and whom he succeeds to immortalise in infinite moments made of a pictorial material of which the artist is not the only creator but also the master.