

## **Lights after the Battle**

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A landscape made of souls and bodies, full of faces and skeletons, a battle of anatomy, eyes, teeth, and bones, a metamorphic and disquieting cycle creating sculptures, spaces and paintings:

Paesaggio dopo la battaglia (Landscape after the Battle) is the title chosen by José Molina, starting from his latest artworks collection and spreading to all his selected works for this great anthological exhibition.

In a sense, however, all the artworks Molina created could be considered as a greater landscape in the aftermath of a battle, at the same time pervaded both by the presence of evil and death and by a feeling of hope and rebirth, going through human passions and contradictions of our being-there, in a theatre of cruelty, but also a space of renewal and enlightenment.

Although being a master of black and all the enigmatic shades of its lustre, Molina is not a pessimist at all, rather the creator of a new humanism, giving real power and light to humanity and its journey, even in its darkest and unspeakable aspects, combining existential pain and the exerting struggle of just being there, eventually building up a great mosaic of images to bring to light the unknown, inmost parts of ourselves..

With his chromatic mastery, even clearer, paradoxically, even in his usage of blacks (as used to happen with masters of colour like Odilon Redon or Georges Seurat), Molina combines his extraordinary powerfulness in the act of expressing and giving shape, given his extremely under-the-lens-like and micro-minute ability to bring details to focus, likely to be a heritage from his Flemish Renaissance roots. Established such premises, the painter widens the iconic quality and the strength in contagiously transmitting his contents, as they can be detected in the indisputable stylistic quality and evocative power of his works.

Thus Molina finds himself solidly integrated into his universe, as in a sort of detached participation, almost losing himself inside the many folds of reality, inside the veining of leaves and scales of fish, in the hardness of reptile skin or wrinkles in human faces, giving special brightness to eye pupils and rock cavernosities. This way, the artist just produces a great re-creation of the world and gives more than a likelihood of life to it in a scenario where every minute fragment enhances the sense of enigma and significance of his whole imaginary universe.

Like a great novelist, Molina works creating massive cycles, with his enduring long

action that seems relentlessly focussed on building up a new, great Human Comedy made of closely-connected, analytical chapters encompassing the multi-faceted nature of the human soul, with its virtues and vices, always balanced between sin and redemption, mercy and cruelty. In his works, virtue and vice fight an eternal battle, and redeeming their incessant dialectic relationship flying over and beyond the unsatiable tongues of luxury, the unrestrainable fury of anger.

At the end of the battle, after bites of blade-pointed jaws and scars of brutal cuts, among reptile nails and dried bones, a new light might be shining over the arid desert of the battlefield, crossed by clash and violence, a sun rising in the aftermath of the battle revealing the fragments otherwise scattered of a cast-out and repressed humanity, left on the verge of the abyss and oblivion, but ready to wake up again through a secret but unmistakable spiritual breath, an invisible energy transforming bodies and giving new life-blood to all existent beings, a shock of glory rising from the black to flood the earth with the beauty of rebirth.