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The works that are grouped here, summoned to the succession of pages, leave, to the eyes of those who indeed wanted to "come see", an astonishing impression of synoptic continuity. That we call it coherence or obsession, that we attribute it to the artist's tenacious will or to the uncontrollable expression of a preconscious substratum, it remains that this constant tension between the one and the multiple, the singular and the serie, is the unquestionable mark of an oeuvre. Philippe Croq's painting has progressively settled in the territory of art, an invisible and omnipresent world, like these mythological forests whose entrance is always near but nevertheless camouflaged by the aberration of observable reality.

Here they are together, these bodies and faces, in destitution or suffering. They are more often than not the authors or victims of a strange barbarity. In them, violence seems to be a starting point or a result. They are as if quartered, dismembered. Yet others, neither torture victims nor monstrous, appear in the non-fulfilment of their form, bent to the extreme by a tireless effort : that of being. They all claim by their skin made of paint (that is their voice), the one we should listen to by silencing the racket of the world. They all seem to emanate from the support that accomodates them, from the colors that found them, the lines that distinguish them. It is a tremendous feat that of succeeding in being seen. This is why they are constantly in danger, fighting against nothingness, alternatly visible or that tend to disappear, in a sort of permanent state of illusion. The artist must therefore act as the intermediary of this effort. Here, to paint is to take care and to defend, to reaffirm the membership of the figures to the irreducible humanity, even if it is by making them loom to the surface of the visible in the shattering manner of rupestrian paintings. More than ever, Philippe Croq's painting appears as moral, as far as, faced to the work, the individual is sent back not only to himself but to the other, sharing the fundamental complaint of the human element.

It is maybe because of this that faces and bodies never allow the spectator of the paintings to forget their beauty. The beauty that they once had, or the one that they will have if heaven exists. In any case, the one that the artist detects in his own gesture and that he carefully instills in the entire painting. A gesture that is henceforth confident and firm, conscious of its prestige as well as its modesty, or false claims (Revolutionaize painting ? What a joke ?) as well as true needs that he creates. Free to be fickle without caprice : the amazing variety of chromatic choices, where the blood red that spurts out becomes all of a sudden the same as that of a theatre curtain, where the pink of ancient

lattice work becomes debased into mucous membrane, where the ochre is sometimes that of the luxury of palaces, sometimes that of an viscera exposed to the sunlight. Likewise, the forms induce as much from the contingent line as from the monumental composition, serenely mixing graffiti to statuary.

Hotly pursued by centuries of pictural culture, the work remains standing without arrogance or complexes. It doesn't show itself as deferential nor does it cultivate an iconoclasm. It simply waits to encounter looks, be they those of art specialists or simply, as in the case of the author of these lines, of someone who comes to see. Then, in the matter that shelters them, the bodies and faces begin to utter words from their voice made of paint. They converse within us, speak about men and women, children and the elderly, remind us of old stories of which some we would have preferred to have forever forgotten, and others that enchant us like during our childhood. They speak of Hiroshima and Abraham, of the 20th century and of the deep, dark past. They speak of hope and deception, of the anger of those, who like them, must conquer their portion of visibility. They are the ghosts, the tragic replica of these planetary images of supposedly radiant bodies that saturate even our idea of the human element. They remain, obstinate, stubborn, determined. The time has come to go and meet them. «

Daniel Rocchia - 2006