

STEERING BY SIGHT

Giulio Paolini

Antonio Catelani is a daring, or even a reckless artist. His orderly and elegant acrobatics walk that thin line, drawn in space, which, from one end to the other of its course leads to the goal of rediscovered balance, leading from technical mastery to the audacity of discovery.

Thus canonical rigor meets the flash of surprise, and the right amount of wisdom merges with the innate gift of innocence. These are, I believe, the complementary elements which always give forth to the most successful apparitions, enduring moments which have the power of keeping us with bated breath. There is also great refinement in disguising the labor and effort, of steering such a course, in retaining the lightness and moderation which are such essential elements of this performance.

The economy of his work seems to stem from a miraculous equation: minimum effort = maximum effect (and we are not talking of *special effects*, but of extraordinarily *normal* effects).

I've called Antonio Catelani reckless, daring. I'm obviously not referring to the actual risk which the term normally implies: the risk which the artist faces each time, in each of his works, is a personal choice. A painting or a sculpture are not rivals with whom he must compete, enemies he must defeat, since nothing and nobody is forcing him to face them.

I am referring, instead, to a capacity peculiar to this artist, that of making an announcement, of conveying us the signal of a successfully avoided danger.

What perils are there, what dangers? Those often hidden yet always insidious, ready to cause irreparable damages and catastrophic consequences: from so-called *creative* chatter, to the babble disguised as *speech*.

Thanks to Antonio Catelani, the journey ends successfully: without sudden lurches, smoothly avoiding any tiresome maneuvers, we finally reach the shore, and step into the work of art.