

SAFU THE GRACELESS (2023)

SAFU is undoubtedly one of the emerging voices in the contemporary art scene. Multiple cultural echoes can be read in his paintings, from Kirchner to De Kooning to Baselitz to Basquiat, which are revisited with a powerful and original stylistic signature. His art transmits pure emotions, made of blood, soul, and body; a deliberately wild, instinctive painting style, ungrammatical in the expressionist "madness" of colors and in the vehemence of his brushstrokes that demolishes and disarticulates the form. In line with the primitivist research of Gauguin and Nolde, the central theme is the return to an original condition, to a state of primordial innocence, with respect to an aesthetic conception that has made beauty an absolute value. In fact, Safu makes use of non-canonical models, such as African and tribal art, which deviate from the formal model considered classic, in the name of a communicative urgency and an immediate, expressive force, authentic and "brutal". For this reason, Safu presents himself as a non-aligned artist, who does not celebrate the "magnificent fortunes" of post-modern experimentation, but chooses to join the ranks of the abnormal, the eccentric, those belonging to the group defined by the French expression as *insoumis* (rebellious). The representation that Safu gives of himself is, indeed, that of an artist who constantly experiences the discomfort of the form, alternating playful-ironic moments in a pop key with others of painful existential evocation. With enthralling visual efficacy, Safu repropose the expressionist contestation of the painting as an object of hedonistic contemplation, and relaunches the value of the gracelessness as worthy of aesthetic attention towards the multifaceted aspects of reality. Everything in Safu is traversed by the thrill of life, by a thunderous and incisive Dionysian spirit that deconstructs the composition in total freedom of signs and colors, devoid of space-time coordinates. In this, Safu rediscovers the atmosphere of Dubuffet's ART BRUT, a spontaneous and uncultured vision of art that destabilizes conventional aesthetic norms, and embraces pure, free, and instinctive artistic expressions. At times, Safu's wild emphasis of colors and texture highlight the subject's anguish that shows the human figure in a simple, but angry, and tormented state of being. Other times a playful and grotesque spirit prevails which explodes on the canvas in an irrepressible and captivating expressive frenzy. This duality reflects the personality of the artist who draws the constituent elements of his works from his incessant dialogue with his inner world.

(Daniele Grosso Ferrando)