

# The vertigo of the gaze

LEONARDO CREMONINI

Maria Filopoulou approaches and discovers the realm of the visible and the realm of the painting through the vertigo of the gaze. Her works never become surfaces on which geography and geometry threaten to revoke this vertigo. Even man ceases to be the centre of the painting. The reference to the human body is no longer a perpendicular line that joins the head with the feet, nor a horizontal one that leads from left to right depending on the level of the gaze.

The view of space will often continue over the painter's head, turning behind his back and ending up trapped in the cage where the dazed gaze is powerful enough to lure it. For an experienced work is a cage – it has always been the desired, magical cage of an institution, an ideology. From last century to this day it remains a cage of passion and individuality, exalting the narcissistic self-awareness of its surface and its outline and not the playful illusion of flight we describe as 'freedom'.

Maria's freedom is enclosed in brackets, as if her desire for opening up would not be strong enough if it had not been preceded by the feeling of entrapment.

Often everything seems to be coming down on our head, yet the painting is still equated with our desire to go back to a questioning resistance of the gaze amidst the tension of the space, like when we regain the upset balance in a state of silent hovering.

Her face, her self-portrait, her gaze do not participate in the same vertigo. The tough interrogation, which is anything but self-complacent, provides above anything else an answer to the doubt; the same doubt that goes around the 'terrible' spaces is found here, in the frame of the mirror.

Space spills out from all sides of the painting to impart on us the same yearning that haunts Maria: the yearning to discover space just like a flying bird would, as if there were no frame; as if the frame was one of man's ephemeral inventions. And the reference points of this bird's flight must surely be those geometries of hope which we willingly send to mirrors, windows and skylights, as if the flying gaze could hit the glass and go into a state of vertigo.

It does not matter; the flying bird, even when it hurls itself against things, speaks with fervour about the frenzied need to go beyond the glass, the mirror or even the frame of the painting.