

SECOLO d'Italia

Friday, March 22, 1991

Show in Rome of the American artist in the gallery, "Incontro d'Arte". A series of oil paintings which reveal a singular originality and inspired freshness. An evocative balance between abstraction and representation.

The Magic Spaces of Stanford Brent

By Renato Civello

Not yet forty, Stanford Brent, who is exhibiting a selection of oil paintings on linen [and watercolors] in the prominent Roman gallery, 'Incontro d'Arte', is already a respected presence in the setting of American painting today. Looking at his works, one has the immediate impression of a culturally informed artist, but one of singular inventiveness and freshness, never inclined to submit to established paradigms. In the introduction to the show's catalog, Bill Berkson states that Brent's images are "closely calibrated;" but it seems to me that it is actually thanks to the "repertoire of variations" which characterizes each painting — a luminous icon in which are inscribed ambiguities and mysteries, urban epiphanies glimpsed as the aura of a spell — one can speak of transgression in the most orthodox sense

of the term. Indeed in Stanford Brent's work, there is a transgression of the constraints of the daily, not to embody the matrix of the real, but to clarify universal motifs and accents. We find ourselves face to face with magic spaces in which the painter has not played a role of supervising alchemist but has revealed, by instinct and through implied metaphors, the entire suggestion of an ever-unfolding totality.

The stories orbit, also and above all, around the rigorous filter of the *métier*: the attenuated light in the delicate migrations of colors; the sign of the fast and yet exacting creation; the delicate dosing of architecture and its internalized repertory; and the atmospheres which deconstruct shades and graphic elements, searching for inner strength. These and other technical and compositional elements announce the professionalism of the artist. But there is much more, which, however, would not have any value without the energy and the preliminary accuracy of a vocabulary which does not leave any doubt as far as the strictness of the progressive stages is concerned.

As a result, Brent's fugues govern his courageous exodus from the empirical prison. This is evident, for example, with the architecture that emerges in *Timepiece* or through the square lens in *City*, and the threadbare languor of *Morning News* or *Sacred Villa*. All well express the amazement of a journey into

the unexplored realm of the subconscious. Fresh with enthusiasm and laden with ever increasing energy, this artist will increasingly demonstrate his individuality. All this will unfold as he continues to work in a noble middle ground between abstraction and representation.

Standing in front of Stanford Brent's paintings, certain art historical references come to mind right away, but these are inadequate: at first sight, one might think of the arabesque-like levity of Dufy and the elemental synthesis of Van Doesburg, or the neoplasticism of Mondrian. But one soon realizes that the relationship, while it may appear definitive, reveals itself as illegitimate. In the end, Stanford Brent stands on his own, emerging from this muddled legacy.