

# Eva L'Hoest, Mario Sironi *Correnti III - Techne*

Curated by Giulia Bortoluzzi

PRESS RELEASE

RITA URSO artopiagallery  
Via Lazzaro Papi 2, Milan

March 10 - April 21, 2023  
Opening Thursday March 9th, 2023, 6-9 PM



Eva L'Hoest, *The Inmost Cell*, 2020  
Still from the video  
Single-channel video, 10'30"



Mario Sironi, *Centrale Elettrica*, 1926-1927  
Tempera, traces of pencil and greasy pencil on paper  
applied to canvas, 47x37 cm  
Collezione Privata, Milan

RITA URSO artopiagallery presents *Correnti III - Techne*, an ideal dialogue between the young Belgian artist Eva L'Hoest (Liège, 1991) and the master of Italian art Mario Sironi (Sassari 1885 - Milan 1961). Two artists who, almost a century apart, were interested in the same theme, namely the relationship between industry and landscape, knowledge as a technique, and its possible outcome as the destiny of civilization.

*Correnti III - Techne* was born as the third exhibition within the *Correnti* project, which from September 2022 saw the artists Ella Littwitz and Elena Mazzi involved first in the exhibition *Correnti I - Animalia* (September-November 2022) and then Marzena Nowak in her personal *Correnti II - Blue* (December 2022-February 2023). This series of exhibitions has been specially conceived for the exhibition program 2022-2023 of the gallery, in a moment of change and transformation, which will be concretized this autumn in the transition to a new venue.

If in general the investigation of currents is proposed as a visual reading of the diversity of physical or metaphorical movements to which the term refers, the exhibition *Correnti III - Techne* is proposed as a double reflection on the human capacity to practice any activity, not only manual but also intellectual. The term *techne*, which defines the title of this third declination, refers to the ability to apply knowledge, empirically acquired and transmitted by tradition as in manual and artistic work or thanks to specialized scientific knowledge as in the case of industrial production. The dialogue that is activated in the comparison between the video and sculptural work of Eva L'Hoest (*The Inmost Cell*, 2020) and the painting of Mario Sironi (*Centrale Elettrica*, 1926) opens a horizon of meaning that calls into question both aspects: on the one hand the technique as the

human ability to create (*techne* means art in ancient Greek), which is manifested in the *artistic currents* in different periods of history, culturally connotated and strongly characterized by the use of its means of expression; on the other hand, technology as an exercise of human power on the landscape, shaped by industrial society, as in the case, for example, of the construction of power stations, of *electric currents*.

The *Inmost Cell* (2020) by Eva L'Hoest, a video work commissioned by the Riga Biennale in 2020 and presented today for the first time in Italy, is like a long memory in which fragments of images and memories combine in a partially real landscape, suspended halfway between Latvian mythology and post-apocalyptic scenarios. Thanks to the use of various digital processes, the artist creates fluid and three-dimensional architectures that cross with slow and contemplative movements, merging the forms into a single maritime mirage that leads back to the ruins of three submerged islands following the creation of the dam's functional to the construction of the Riga Hydroelectric Power Station on the river Daugava. The video is accompanied by some crystal sculptures, engraved in 3D, in which emerge the same shapes of some images of the shot, here illuminated and visible in glass.

*Centrale Elettrica* (1926-1927) by Mario Sironi, exhibited at the 31st International Art Exhibition at the 1962 Venice Biennale, portrays a mountainous landscape furrowed and interrupted by the clear line of a power plant that, while blending with the majesty of the background, remains detached and isolated, downstream. In the twenties, the theme of urban landscapes, already addressed in a futurist key, is recurrent in Sironi's practice and becomes almost an emblem of contemporary man, wrapped in the desolation of a new civilization occupied by workshops and machines. Even the prospective rationalization of space is a way to affirm the power of reason, "but this power is not yet powerful enough to free man from chaos; intelligent enough to understand the complexity of the world, he is petrified by his own intelligence," writes French art historian Jean Clair.

The exhibition was supported by Wallonie-Bruxelles International.be.

#### EVA L'HOEST

Born in 1991 in Liège, Belgium, she lives and works in Brussels. Her work aims to investigate how all types of mental images, especially memories and reminiscence, can re-appear in technological form. She is very interested in exploring memory and its "infinitesimal" reality. Piece by piece, the artist appropriates digital technology to interpret, distort, saturate, or alter the blurred images of memory. She has recently exhibited at the Sydney Biennale, Australia; at the WIELS, Brussels, Belgium; at the Frac Grand Large, Dunkirk, France; at the Riga Contemporary Art Biennale, Latvia; at the Malmö Museum, Sweden; at the Lyon Biennale, curated by the Palais de Tokyo, France; at the Triennale di Okayama Art Summit 2019, curated by Pierre Huyghe, Japan; in 2018, his videos were screened at Les Rencontres Internationales Paris-Berlin, Visite Film Festival, Vidéographie 21 and in the form of live performances at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, Holland. Her films were also screened at the Louvre Auditorium in Paris, the Carreaux du Temple in Paris, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, the Muhka and Het Bos in Antwerp.

#### MARIO SIRONI

Born in 1885 in Sassari, he moved to Milan between 1915 and 1916, where he approached the Futurist group and in 1916 signed the futurist manifesto *L'Orgoglio Italiano*. His painting immediately began to prefer dark and gloomy colors while maintaining, despite the fragmentation of the image, a great constructive solidity. In 1919 he participated in the Great Futurist National Exhibition in Milan, where he exhibited fifteen works. In this period were born his classic urban landscapes, deserted and disturbing images of the modern city, where the human figure is rarely present. Between 1919 and 1921 he painted the famous series of "Urban Landscapes". Meanwhile, he approached the fascist environment. In December 1922 he founded, with Bucci, Dudreville, Funi, Malerba, Marussig, and Oppi, the Novecento Italiano group, animated by Sarfatti and a supporter of a "modern classicism". In 1924 he participated in the Venice Biennale with the 20th-century group. In 1925 he joined the Steering Committee of the group with which he participated in national and international exhibitions. In 1931 he was invited with a personal room to the I Quadriennale in Rome and was commissioned to perform the stained glass *La Carta del Lavoro*, for the Ministry of Corporations in Rome, which ended in 1932. From this moment, in fact, he devoted himself to mural painting, theorizing a return to the great wall decoration in two programmatic texts: *Pittura Murale* (1932) and the *Manifesto della Pittura Murale* (1933), also signed by Campigli, Carrà, and Funi. In this period he made a long series of monumental works. In 1931 and 1934 he had two important solo exhibitions at the Galleria Milano and in 1942 at the Galleria del Milione. In the years following the end of the war and the fascist regime he refuses polemically to participate in the Venice Biennials but continues to exhibit in Italy (Triennale di Milano, 1951; Quadriennale di Roma, 1955) and abroad (traveling exhibition in the United States, with Marino Marini, in 1953). He died in 1961 in Milan.

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