

LA STAMPA

In New York two Italians consecrate the "Toulouse Lautrec of Times Square"

The anthology dedicated Patrick Angus inaugurated at the Bortolami Gallery in Soho: "He is the Robert Mapplethorpe of figurative painting"



The gallery owner Stefania Bortolami in her Soho exhibition space at 39 Walker Street

"After almost thirty years of oblivion, this exhibition returns Patrick Angus' work to the art system. New York was his city, the city he loved. Today this city reciprocates his love. It is a special day." Fabio Cherstich, the Italian opera collector and director who personally contributed to the rediscovery of the American painter by chasing him between Europe and the United States, is enthusiastic and also a little excited. This morning, at the Bortolami Gallery in Soho, a cultural institution of the Big Apple and a prestigious international showcase, the first anthological exhibition in America dedicated to the "Toulouse Lautrec of Times Square" opened. On display until February 27 there are about fifty works spanning Angus' entire career: from the first charcoal drawings, pencil and pastel from when he was a student in Santa Barbara to the large oil paintings of the New York period. "I am delighted to introduce this fantastic American artist to the American public," says Stefania Bortolami, from Turin who has been transplanting to Manhattan for twenty years. "It is very strange that as an Italian with a gallery in New York I discovered an American artist through an Italian collector. Patrick's talent gives a pictorial perspective to a very important era and environment. Patrick is, from the point of view of figurative painting, what Robert Mapplethorpe or Peter Hujar were for photography." Turin has been transplanting to Manhattan for twenty years.

Angus, born in 1953 and who died at the age of 39 from AIDS, described the gay scene of the 1980s and early 1990s like no other. His most famous canvases are set in the Gaiety Theater and The Prince, in strip clubs for men only, in cinemas and in homosexual saunas. Or they portray male figures in domestic, enigmatic and tormented environments. "His style is fluid but his attention is always alert, acute," explain the curators. "His is a unique form of expressive social realism."

Inspired by David Hockney, one of the few to have believed in his talent early on, Patrick Angus fought all his life against those who considered his works too explicit or even obscene. Only in the last few months, when evil was killing him now, he managed to glimpse a glimmer if not successful at least of consideration even outside the queer milieu. Today his paintings are part of the collections of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art in New York, the Kunstmuseum in Stuttgart and the Schwules Museum in Berlin.

Translated from Italian.