Enzo Benedetto - Self-portrait As Prisoner (1941)



10 500 EUR

Signature : Enzo Benedetto

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 34

Height : 50

Description

Technique: oil on canvasMeasurements: 50 x 34 cmSigned lower right: 'Benedetto 941'.Signed, titled and dated on the back: 'Enzo Benedetto - Prisoner Self-Portrait - Jalahalli 13 - 8 - XIX'.Provenance: heirs of the artistEclectic artist, painter, graphic designer, journalist, writer, Enzo Benedetto 'devoted his life, more than many others, to futurism'[1]. A protagonist of the second Futurist wave between the 1920s and the 1940s, he inherited the idealism of the original 1909 current, actively pursuing it until after World War II and exalting its most vital aspects: aeropainting, design, dramaturgy, stagecraft and applied art.A crucial moment in his biography, which acts as a watershed for his production, are his years of imprisonment: after leaving as a volunteer in Libya in 1939, he took part in several

Dealer

Berardi Galleria d'Arte
Peintures et sculptures XIX-XX siècles
Mobile : +393477835083

Corso del Rinascimento, 9
Roma 00186

military actions in Egypt. Captured as a prisoner of war by the British, he was imprisoned for six years, first in Alexandria and Jsmailia and then in Bangalore and Yol in India. During this intense period, he wrote the novel Un cane in chiesa (A Dog in the Church) and above all the essay on the Fourth Dimension; he then continued to paint and also executed some clay sculptures that he would later destroy: some paintings and drawings, often made on makeshift material, would return to Italy, which Benedetto himself would bring back rolled up in his luggage.An iconic and emblematic work from his years as aprisoner of war is thePrisoner's Self-Portrait. The inscription on the back 'Enzo Benedetto - Prisoner self-portrait - Jalahalli 13 - 8 - XIX' (fig.1) confirms that the painting was executed during his imprisonment in Jalahalli, a suburb of Bangalore, in August of the nineteenth fascist year, 1941. A small and precious futurist self-portrait, fixed with immediacy and acumen, in which the face does not appear behind the bars of the cell but floating between intersections of planes, clouds and soft shapes and partly hidden by a hopeful ribbon with the Italian flag. Delicate, shadowy tones in a dreamy, dynamic space that simultaneously delivers a sensation of mobility and vital, contemplative pulsations far from the static and resignation that an image of imprisonment might convey, as if the author were already dreaming of being free. 'The decomposition is always built on linear or concentric, angular or curved tensions [...], morphologically futuristic, in order to create a condition of non-objective space, intelligible and usable only in a rational way"[2]. If there are some more restless compositions in the other prison compositions, such as the Danza macabra of 1942 (fig.2), a dynamic and pressing memento mori, theSelf-portrait, although nebulous and undulating, represents an unquestionable and combative affirmation of self, which would then explode upon his return to Italy: 'In April 1947, as soon as I returned after a year of war and six

years of imprisonment in India, I faced my new freedom by starting from scratch with a personal exhibition that was opened in the Galleria di Roma, at the Teatro delle Arti [...]. The exhibition of more than one hundred works, most of which had been executed in captivity, was a surprise."[3] [1] M. Verdone, Benedetto, in Quaderni di futurismOggi no. 22, Rome, Edizioni Arte-Viva, 1977, p. 1.[2] G. Caldini, Alcuni giudizi, in M. Verdone, Benedetto, in Quaderni di futurismOggi no. 22, Rome, Edizioni Arte-Viva, 1977, p. 16.[3] E. Benedetto, Futurismo cento x 100, Rome, Edizione Arte-Viva, 1975, pp. 191-192.