

BRUNO MARINO, Media Historian

There are three intertwining levels of representation in *Vulnerare*, levels that in their unfolding generate as many others, evoking suggestions and emotions in the viewer's mind.

The first pertains to the location, a specific abandoned prison, though the setting almost suggests a cross-genre audiovisual reenactment of dismantled and dilapidated spaces that evoke a more or less recent past steeped in more or less painful memories (from Bourbon penitentiaries to pre-Basaglia asylums, even 1980s discos in this extensive list).

The second level is performative: dance becomes, in some cases, a means of reclaiming these sites, symbolically restoring life to them. The third level consists of incorporating artworks, created by the same artist-filmmaker, into the space explored by the camera: abstract paintings placed inside the cells that once housed prisoners transform the location into a kind of museum, imbuing it with additional meanings. These artworks, in turn, acquire new meanings thanks to the space they perfectly inhabit, almost blending in.

Vulnerare aims to blend visual art, dance, and cinema, complemented by a highly effective sound commentary where music becomes noise and noise becomes music (courtesy of composer Andrea Moscianese). It also seeks to construct a potential narrative, enhanced by the writings of those who lived here for years, confined within these walls, the objects, the procedural files pointing to a Kafkaesque bureaucracy, the plants that have sprouted amidst the concrete reclaiming what is rightfully theirs, and ultimately, all the possible traces and testimonies of a temporal dimension that continues to reverberate in the desolate void.

Before the credits roll, the caption informs us that the prison we have entered is the Pontifical prison of Velletri, though this detail adds little to our viewing experience. What remains are the surfaces that *Illuminato's* gaze allows us to almost tangibly perceive. Walls, floors, ceilings, doors, windows become cuts, wounds, rifts, breaks, while choreographic gestures—inscribed within this geometry of architectural solids and voids—and the painterly material on canvases, hung or leaning against walls amidst debris, become moments of a singular visual score thanks to hand-held camera movements, dissolves, chiaroscuro effects, luminous intermittences, rapid zooms, details, and sudden cuts punctuated by surgical editing.

Vulnerare can ultimately be seen as a singular installation. In this sense, *Illuminato's* presence within one of the courtyards seems to complete the circle. The artist's silhouette seen from above fixes a phrase (or are there two linked together?) someone wrote on the wall: "Vulnerable therefore alive. Art is to love reality."

Vulnerability signifies weakness as man can be a victim of others, but it is also his strength, as he is conscious of being alive even in pain. The artist, too, is vulnerable when confronting reality, immersing oneself within it.

The awareness that making art inevitably means loving reality is not always a given assumption. Certainly not for those artists who, through creation, seek to escape the dimension in which they live.

But in this case, the task of the artist is to narrate the human condition within the concentrationary universe, and what remains of people's dignity even when deprived of their freedom.