

ESCAPE INTO REALITY

Giving time to the body's space

Achille Bonito Oliva, 2009

Donatella Spaziani. Fuga

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Donatella Spaziani is an artist, scarred by the palpable stigmata of life experience, in search of a space. Her work promotes blissful enclaves and huddled niches in which that experience vaporises, leaving its moulds and imprints behind.

It is a happy coincidence that an artist who works with imprints should exhibit at a gallery called *Impronte*, as Savinio said: a name is a destiny. I would say that an exhibition in this space acquires a definition of sorts through Donatella Spaziani's poetic language.

After all, what is art? Art is a mould that creates a type of counter-reality through forms. The almost oriental facet of Spaziani's work is interesting: western art operates on "fullness", Spaziani works on subtraction. I have always thought of sculpture as a genre that begs forgiveness for its intrusion. Spaziani works on evading, even in her first imprints – created on the beds in hotel rooms encountered by chance, leaving a sort of trace of her passing through – point to a sculpture that operates on the concave rather than the convex.

These photos, therefore, have the capacity to render the invisible visible. Indeed, art has this function, as Klee said, to bestow visibility on the invisible, and it is interesting how Spaziani manages, with an almost zen-like approach, to give three-dimensionality to absence, the absence of her body. It is autobiographical art therefore; nevertheless, it entrusts itself to objective forms, yet forms that encompass a very important dimension which is time, and in this case, it is the time of life experience that manages to escape from the moment of visualising the body, from such a place as a bed.

What is a bed? A place of sleep, of dreams and also of drowsiness. It seems to me that Spaziani gives space to a dimension that I think of as insomnia. A feverishness that manages to embrace both the idea of abandonment, a horizontal position, and the idea of psychological obsession, I would even say torment.

We can say that Spaziani's sculpture is stable, but not static. It is stable because it leaves behind traces of her passage therefore demonstrating the gravitational pull of a presence that subsequently vaporises. Growing thinner then, it attempts to find an exit, which might be through light, a door or a window. Perhaps we could say that Spaziani's is an airy sculpture. This flight is not only a form of escape from the interior towards the exterior; I would say that Donatella Spaziani's flight is from the exterior towards the interior. In other words, paradoxically, she finds comfort, defence, a posture of her own, in this return motion from exterior towards interior, and, I believe Spaziani achieves peace of mind precisely from precariousness of place.

In this case we have an added value which actually seems to be the opposite of art, a sort of osmosis: the stability of temporariness. I would say that this is a very personal, even solitary position. Indeed, it is a more mature position compared to other young artists who operate in terms of impersonality, neutrality and objectivity.

Here, objectivity becomes subjectivity too. Through sculpture the artist tends to engage herself in two directions, by means of healthy opportunism – I would call it strabismus - concave and convex, fullness and emptiness. Hence, the artist is feminine in her sensitivity, in so much as she works with vaporisation, traces that find their place in niches, below stairs. Furthermore, these seemingly pre-existent, non-invasive awnings are accompanied by shadows, always like figures from Chinese shadow theatre: the position of her body in space. We can say that Spaziani is an acrobat of emptiness.

Finally, fullness and emptiness are not vehicles of double extremism, they are rather the points of reference for a physical and mental dimension in a dialectic relationship and flowing continuity. Spaziani promotes an aesthetic of coexistence capable of endowing presence with absence and vice versa.

The artist's oriental philosophical attitude promotes forms capable of occupying and taking away space at the same time, developing a visual interaction that promotes mental freedom and in the very same moment formal necessity. These are two dispositions within which Spaziani undertakes her acrobatic creation, managing to promote an escape into reality through emptiness, visually highlighted through the traces of her experience.

Such traces, formalised through the language of sculpture and photography, underline the identity of an artist who does not accept the claustrophobia of a single posture, instead she upholds the continuous passage from emptiness and concave to convex, affirming art's happy indecision, which will not occupy pre-established and definitive spaces, preferring to seek new openings to assert an ever deeper escape into reality.

Achille Bonito Oliva

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