

Miradas Manufacturadas

Venice does not exist unless you look at it with your eyes, beyond your mind.

Each work, which wants to be called a work of art, exposes itself to this dramatic court: who does not see that work as a work of art, who does not recognize it, sees it as an object among others. Carmen does not represent 'Venice'. Venice no longer exists other than in the eyes of the beholder. Carmen stages the 'eyes', and Venice no longer exists because nobody looks at it. Carmen does it, and makes it live.

To 'look' at Venice, we must pay less attention to its representation and more to the gaze it is dedicated to. Seeing is 'representing', building a city — whatever it may be — as if it were a stone and water factory. Like Venice. Water, in fact, changes, day after day, the very shape of the city that the 'world' calls Venice. The world imagines Venice as a still, quiet and dead place. Venice, on the other hand, as Carmen knows, lives in 'Fondamenta Nove' one of the parts most exposed to the transformation through water, as it lives in her eyes.

While she takes Venice with her, in her memory, like a totem, a presence, prior even to her works, Carmen 'betrays' it, like every best artist. Every eye that is set on stage, every shadow of the eyes that seems to be on stage, returns, after 25 years, to her memory without returning, at all to her life. The shadows she has managed to make, which pierce her eyes, using them, are the key to a stare that is now far away, which remains, without saying why.

I met Carmen exactly 25 years ago, in Venice. Her gaze, even then, was versed in sculpture which, for now, is that art of reconstruction of the gaze and observation of the present, of the life that one would like to be present in, that is: the re-enactment.

After 25 years, between the best Brancusi, and a splendid ability to "re-enact" that experience, that year spent in Venice, I know, I see how much, artistically speaking, how the forms of Venice, with her art, Carmen was able to rethink.

Venice is a place that needs 'gentle' art forms, like Carmen's, so that we can tell, first of all, a past.

Carmen's gaze is that past that returns, in its most gentle form, with its materials, its shadows, the voids in its realized works, which Venice needs. Venice needs this kindness: less memory, more remembrance. Less painting, more sculpture, in the way and form of whom, Venice lived it.

Emilio Raimondi
November, 2019

This project has its origin in Venice, in the pieces I made then to express the impact that living in that city meant for me. Since then, the idea of how our way of looking, of perceiving our surroundings and of understanding the reality that surrounds us has deeply interested me. I realize that understanding all this is conditioned by the points of reference in my life, as well as by the different scenarios in which I have lived my life; also in a fundamental way, because of my own experiences and the experiences of those I hold near.

With this thought in mind, dissolved and ambiguous, I resumed the project of "the eyes that look to understand" that had begun in Venice. The nature of this project is closely related and affected by the choice of the materials I have worked with.

Iron is the central axis of the pieces and constitutes the essence of the gaze, devoid of emotional charge or externalities. It is the pure exercise of observation, of the eye's stare. In this construction process, another of the materials used is leather. In some of the pieces, the shapes that would correspond to the eyelashes are made in this material. These pieces of leather were tanned by my father in his youth. I was interested in including them because of the strong emotional charge that it means for me to be able to give them a new use. They are, next to the work of carving and welding, the elements that I associate with the masculinity of my work and the development of the project.

The "tears" represent the substance of the emotional, the personal, the memory, the inheritance, the unique nature of my own gaze. These "tears" also support in some cases, the concept of femininity when I use elements made in crochet, which are a clear tribute and present memory of the women of my family: my mother and my grandmothers.

The wood comes from discarded remains for the manufacturing of instruments: ebony, palo santo, cocobolo, American walnut, purpleheart. I was interested in the variety of textures, their color, their versatility. On the other hand, I found the idea that these woods that had marked a glorious destiny and that ended up truncating, could be used again in construction, no longer for musical instruments but for sculptures.

Another important issue is the projection of the eyes' shadows on the wall. The projected reality that acquires even more protagonism than the piece itself. Transparencies and opacities are as compositionally determinant as the materials themselves.

A second part of the show is a series of pieces in which the different elements of construction of the eyes (leather eyelashes, wooden tears, irons, metal meshes, pupils, crochet balls ...) decompose and distort, change of dimension and disposition to later regroup, reorder and shape a new discourse and a new substance. It is the staging of the evolution of the gaze.

The definitive distancing of the elements, their origin and their conditions. It is finally, building a new personal look. The manufactured look.

Carmen Jabaloyes
November, 2019