

VIN VIN

Viola Leddi

Strategies for invisibility

12 October - 12 November 2022

VIN VIN in Naples

There is an ancient, ancestral, obsession that cyclically concerns painting, exposing a raw nerve: how to reconcile the representation of a world of three-dimensional living objects with the flatness of inert support? Painting, the modernists whispered, interprets its own structural qualities. It tenaciously embraces the continuity of a plan that must remain intact: painting lays bare identifying itself with the medium and unfolding to our pupils without secrets.

In introducing Viola Leddi's exhibition *Strategies for Invisibility*, I will try to explore what seems to me to be the distinctive lemma of her style, praxis and even posture, that is weaving, conceived as a polysemic artifice through which the artist dismantles the modernist framework and its logic of power.

The crepuscular universes that Leddi balances with care generate dense surfaces that can be disorienting. How deep is a phantasmagorical interior sampled by Viola? The infinitesimal space of a blink of an eye or the elusive extension of the infinite plane? I believe that at the root of such a refined dimensional trap is how Leddi rediscovers the pellicular vocation of space. Developing the representation by misaligned planes of depth, Viola fractures the unique point of view of the Renaissance perspective, splitting space as one would do with a pat of translucent resin. If we happened to be (let us say) in the gravitational centre of the work, we could see the artist's fingers, ideally dissecting the depth layer by layer, outlining a figure on each veil. At that point, figuration emerges from the accurate weaving of these film-planes, transpiring from the composition and generating an indecipherable atmosphere. While coloured veils seem to float digitally, intersecting one on top of the other, you still get the impression that the air in Leddi's depressurised laboratories has been inhaled to thicken blurred on the surface of the works.

In my opinion, one of the most potent aspects of Viola's work is the spatial layering rooted in the artist's practice. In composing the palimpsests of diaphanous silhouettes in Photoshop, Leddi moves with seamstress's virtuosity and surgeon's lucidity. The pictorial composition is created by superimposing a series of transparent masks that the artist contours with a lancet directly onto the canvas. The work timing is thus realised in an extended, slow interval in which the figurative plot takes shape, veiling and unveiling itself. Technically, Leddi paints using

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three airbrush units simultaneously, an instrument the artist inherited from her mother: in such an intergenerational tangle, the mechanically

insufflate pigment, resting on the surface, breathes. The fact is that such a chrysalis-painting inspects, tempts, and confuses us should not be surprising. There is nothing openly exposed in Leddi's painting: on the contrary, it is the figuration itself that, emancipating from logic imposed by others, exploits the intimate inclination to colonise its own folds.

Sedimentation of the plan, stratification of the praxis: the last, crucial element that characterises Viola Leddi's practice is her recourse to diffuse authorship in territory and time. While the 16th-century illustration of a woman weaver appears outlined with a cutting plotter and then painted, in the gallery frame the last layer of the works is stitched by a group of Neapolitan embroiderers called upon to interpret the artist's drawings. Intersecting an ancestral knowledge that our ancestors have been practising since the Palaeolithic, namely that of weaving, space overflows from the surface as if it had uncovered microscopic flaws (holes in a thread?), condensing into the relief profile of a worm, a lock, a flower. The sofa taken from a junk shop owner is transmuted by a body of Neapolitan teenagers into an explosive couch fortress. A bunch of queer mice with long aurora tails crowded on a small old table bearing a message: someone from Viola's deep space is ogling us. Perhaps they would like to know us. It's just a matter of standing in front of the works and being caught, swallowed up and embraced by their covering veils. The chrysalis quivers... is that pumpkin staring at me?

Valentina Bartalesi

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Viola Leddi (*1993, Milan, Italy; she lives and works between Milan and Geneva)

2019 - MFA Work. Master - Contemporary artistic practices, HEAD - Genève (CH)

2012/2016 - BFA Brera Academy, Milan (IT)

2014/2015 - Erasmus at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Painting, Copenhagen (DK)

Solo Exhibition:

Upcoming:

August 2023 - Pace Gallery, Genève (CH)

December 2023 - FRAC Champagne-Ardenne (FR)

Past:

June 2022 - Liste Art Fair Basel (CH)

Mar 2019 - Creature Adorabili (Lovable Creatures), TILE project space, Milan (IT)

Group Exhibition:

July 2022 - Degree show, HEAD - Genève (CH)

March 2022 - Madrigale, VIN VIN Vienna (AT)

November 2021 - Casa Flash Art Market, curated by Gea Politi, Banner, Milan (IT)

September 2021 - From Submersion to Subversion, Palazzina, Basel (CH)

March 2021 - Against The Day, Giulietta, Basel (CH)

November 2019 - BLADE-BANNER, SPRINT - Independent Publishers and Artist's Books Salon, Spazio Maiocchi, Milan (IT)

November 2019 - Urania, curated by Zoe de Luca, Sonnenstube, Lugano (CH)

May 2018 - L'isola portatile, curated by Caterina Molteni, ADA Project, Rome (IT)

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October 2017 - Gattacornia, Altalena, Maccagno (VA)

Projects:

Co-founder of Altalena and of Favilla

Talks:

Dicembre 2018 - Trigger Party #20, curated by siliqoon, Marsèlleria, Milan (IT)

Residences & Workshops:

September 2019 - September Book, curated by Dallas, Fondazione ICA, Milan (IT)

July 2019 - Q-Rated: Pittura, with Enrico David, Marcello Fois, Bart van der Heide, Nuoro (IT)

April/June 2019 - Residenza La Fornace: Primavera, Spino d'Adda (CR)

Publications:

June 2022 - Cover and illustrations for Gancio Cielo: DNA Clepsydra by Francesco Cavaliere, curated by Idioletta, NERO Editions

November 2019 - Illustration cover for Every Me by Costanza Candeloro, published by Altalena

Links:

Quando le muse si svegliano. Insonnia, frammentazione e fluidità come demistificazione del femminile nel lavoro di Viola Leddi by Camilla Paolino, [Flash Art Italia 355](#) (italian).

Lovable Creatures on [Mousse Magazine](#).

Per una pittura situata. Diego Gualandris, Viola Leddi, Giuliana Rosso, Alice Visentin by Caterina Molteni, [Flash Art Italia 345](#) (italian).

Pittura Lingua Viva. Interview on [Artribune](#) (italian)