

Do banks believe in art?

An interview with Clara and Corinna Conci

Try to imagine if all banks would believe in local art. Imagine if banks would start investing on a long term and regularly in young artists, selecting them with the help of an organization of the sector dealing with the production activity. Think what would happen if contemporary art would get to everybody's home, materialized in the images of a calendar given out as a gift for the new year from the bank to its customers. Thinking on a long term basis and taking a quick look on the existing market, we can see the welcome opportunity for this artistic-economic action. Imagine a long lasting relationship between an artistic subject and an economic one, a necessary presence for the spread of a participated culture, so to increase its developing possibilities. Imagine if the meaning of develop would include an improvement of cultural opportunities for citizens of a specific area presenting them a type of art usually considered academic and meant for an elite. Now imagine if this type of development would have national and international dimensions. Imagine all this as a glance of all those speeches about the crisis we are hearing since years: "Let's invest in culture and the young generation."

The "Cassa di Risparmio" of Bolzano has taken the first steps towards this direction this year. With the help of the Transart festival 12 young South Tyrolean artists were selected and asked to produce one work inspired by a painting or sculpture belonging to the bank collection. The work has been bought by the bank itself and will be presented in an exhibition with an available catalogue on Thursday, November 29th. Also a photographic reproduction will appear on the 2013 Cassa di Risparmio di Bolzano calendar. Among the involved artists there a few who have moved to different cities, nations and continents, all of them share origins from South Tyrol. A venture reflecting thousands perspectives, a hypothesis we hope will last as it holds characteristics of credibility and practicality from many points of view.

Clara and Corinna Conci were chosen by Transart to produce the work "The red notebook", a 3-minute full HD video, inspired by Leo Putz' painting "Naked girl wearing a hat".

Transart: What does the past generally represent in your work?

Clara: My personal work is deeply based on the memory and on the past.... what materializes in my hand comes from a place far inside of me that originates in a past I had forgotten existed.

By doing so, different fragments blend naturally creating work that can be read like memories.

Corinna: All my works are a commemoration and a projection at the same time. I make intentional drawings about the future as I do not like many things around me. However, I know that most of my material comes from something I have personally experienced while conscious and unconscious. This flash-back and flash-forward mechanism is essential from here and now: it is an oscillating quest of impressions on the line of what I find right and go towards to and of what I do not want like and I keep my distance from. Roots emerge in our common works and those are from the gut. Contrary to what many think, it is definitely difficult to face an artistic process with a family member because the same experiences appear translated into two different stories, with implications and variables. So, the paths of our production are made up of contrasts, which then must be clarified into clear visions of subjects being part of how events that have transformed our identity. We investigate topics where divergences are found, knowing that something wants to be brought to light and shown to our eyes and to the world. We face our own selves with our feelings, which are anachronistically intense each time: It is a very sincere mental battle, but after the fireworks, the result of the process is always two winners with equal scores.

Transart: How did you live the relationship with the work you proposed?

Clara e Corinna: We saw a mirror through the painting, a representation of something that closely portrayed us. The more we examined the original work, the more our story was materializing like a tale. The flourishing nature surrounding the two girls, the lake not seen but perceived, the holiday climate and the intimacy. Then, in a subplot, hidden between trees, a female figure watching the main scene from far away: we used this character as the point of view to shoot the video from a viewpoint invisibly spying on the scene.

Transart: How did you deal with this work of comparison, what is the basis you began with?

Clara e Corinna: As the painting was observed, this question was immediately raised: "what is the intention linking the two main characters?". We proceeded by investigating the relationship between the two protagonists: we found it to be a trusting relationship, then the sudden approach of a woman calling the other to reveal something important and secret.

Transart: From painting to video: why did you choose these artistic medias?

Clara e Corinna: The video was the most suitable media to tell a story focused on a relationship made of dynamics and feelings. We wanted to highlight the motion through the approach scene of the figures by showing the scene multiple times from different perspectives. Additionally we did not want to forget Putz' nature brought to life by the symbiotic movement of the trees, almost as if they were agreeing to the scene, giving it their approval. Next, we wanted to give the necessary space to the authentic sound of our childhood incarnated by our mother's voice. By recovering an old audio tape we extracted a recording where she was repeating the multiplication table in the attempt to teach us. Lastly, we wanted to listen to our own adult voices, digesting fragments of memories. By doing so, we created a dialogue between us as children and adults.

Transart: Where does the idea of the red notebook come from?

Clara e Corinna: The red notebook is the original elementary school notebook of one of the two of us. We felt it as was the best representation of the secret that one of the main characters of Putz reveals to the other. According to our interpretation there was a truth brought by the blond girl to the brunette girl that with her nudity means the defenceless and clear condition necessary for her to hear the news. For us the choice of the revelation moment is fundamental as it needs several predispositions from both sides, all of the characteristics we captured in the painting scene. Therefore, we see the red notebook as a moderator, an intermediary holding inside a childhood of twenty years ago, so long ago, but containing pivotal events. While we look through the notebook we find homework, drawings, and personal thoughts leading us to retrace memories with our double identities – the past and the present one. The red notebook has so become a magic chest where remarks and considerations broke out to become answers that only now we are able to give to each other.



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