

Art IS and always will be

by Cristiana Dobner

If someone thinks they can explain a work of art, we could identify them without a doubt: we'd be in the company of an art dealer, nothing more.

The work speaks, expresses and communicates of itself, if this doesn't happen it probably isn't art, only a saleable item, merchandise for art dealers.

Empathy is born or gives of itself spontaneously otherwise it is only "flatus vocis" which corrupts.

One must learn to pause, be invaded, so the spirit can be free to resonate and express.

However this humus can be prepared like any soil one wishes to cultivate.

With Sonia Valsecchi's paintings there is but one strategy: to dig as deeply as possible into one's artistic sensibility and then look back on the accomplished canvas. And patiently begin again. So arises the "pericoreisis", that is to say a circle which turning infinitely doesn't come back on itself to perish - because it would be like a snake eating its own tail - but rather returns matured and ready for another creative burst. And from inspiration to inspiration the viewer sees through one painting to the next, canvas to canvas, surface to surface.

In the joy and enrichment each artistic work inspires, in the expression of the "daimon" present in each person and in the erotic force which sustains and enlivens our being with true energy.

The pages of "The artist's sketchbook" are like Sonia's pen and brush diary, and are important in following the stages of this painting adventure and the developing awareness of her inner richness.

Sonia dedicated herself to painting at an early age, exploring a wide variety of techniques with the confidence and charge of a young spirit opening to life. At the Milan Art Academy she learned from professor Panno that:

"My students, we live in a superficial world, watching only television. The artist has the responsibility, I would even say the mission, to penetrate the essence of things..."

Through reflection and meditation on her readings, Sonia Valsecchi has drawn a few conclusions which characterize her "Weltanschauung":

"Painting is not just remaking something. One mustn't imitate what one wants to create. In art only one thing is important: that which cannot be explained".

Georges Braque

Sonia's gallery, drawn from:

THE ARTIST'S SKETCHBOOK

Shells

Her "shells" period seems to have been stimulated by a study of and admiration for Morandi to whom she feels close, seeing her artistic creation as "calm, solitary, whispered...":

06/98

I am doing a series of sketches of shells which are indeed the silent beings of the sea, their bizarre shapes, sometimes perfectly smooth, remind me of actors in a play. Yes, they aren't only shells, they are each individual characters...

Here, the great symbolic passage is accomplished; the inanimate object of nature taking on the life of an individual with a precise name and identity.

26/07/98

I believe I've achieved a new way of working with shells. One of them is an enormous white shell, very white with a pink edge leading to its dark depths. Very dark. I thought of calling it "Purity" because it was like the symbolic figure I found so fascinating in "Lord of the Flies". It's calling, an urge to confront oneself, to understand and to open. That's me.

Morandi's Still Lives with shells are a source of inspiration for me. They've given me the input, and the impulse, to paint again, the desire to rediscover the simplicity of painting and the magical magnetism which is created between the hand, the

paper and the colours...

I would so like to come out of my shell...

Birth and flowering of the artist

In 1999 it was Paul Klee who inspired Sonia's reflection and her chromatic manifestation, as well as the discovery of the daimon hidden in her soul, allowing another solution, unhindered:

1/09/99

"Man is not complete. Evolution continues if one remains open, and in life remains the elected son of creation, the offspring of the creator".

Paul Klee

In the mean time the artist macerates and grows, increasing in sensitivity and depth, reflecting once again with the great painter who had the gift of knowing how to communicate his thought and the torment of his seeking:

18/06/01

"Now begin the dangerous moments. Nature wants to swallow me whole. I am nothing, have no peace...to be grounded in the universal, foreigner here on earth, yet strong, this is surely my goal! But how to get there? Above all grow, continue to grow".

Paul Klee

Obscure questions following one after another seem to remain buried under a sand dune that has swallowed everything. On the contrary, it's a slow incubation which prepares and which seems to destroy, only to create again.

A painful and deadly "pars destruens" which, after having swept the rubble away with much effort and conscience, is a prelude to "pars construens":

25/06/01

"The comforting of the heart from phenomenon of outer and inner worlds.

Premonition of joy. The call. The language of the secret by the secret. Isn't this the idea? Isn't this the goal, conscious or not, of the imperative impulsion of creation? Woe to he who has the power to put the necessary words into art's mouth and doesn't. Woe to he who turns the ear of his soul from the mouth of art. Man speaks with man about what is beyond man: that is to say the language of art".

"The Spiritual in Art", V. Kandinsky

Travels...in Arizona and the Bull's eye

24/01/02

Paola, one of Sonia's friends, shares her impressions in front of Sonia's paintings:

"The landscape really invokes Arizona, at least for me, the endless open vistas of the rocky desert, the blinding sun which heats and burns the dusty, arid soil smelling sharp and wild. Echoes rise from the earth, of ancient music which each person has printed like a mark in the depth of their memory. The "Bull's eye" however reminds me of the predictions of the past: you know when someone would dig into the guts of animals to learn something about who you are, your future, your place in the world and in history...and more...a potion made of many ingredients and yet whole...you go in deeper and deeper until you are able to read the soul...historical fragments, your history, of encounters, joys and pains...which form you and have created the person you are and which each one of us holds in the depths of our eyes...

Here then are a few of the impressions I received through your work. Thanks for this "journey".

How does inspiration unfold from within the artist? With a few lines of a pen, Sonia is able to express this: anyone who is sensitive to, and loves art, is capable of recognising it, and can act from the soul and discover within this uplifting current.

13/09/02

...it's odd how an idea comes to me, spontaneously, as if by accident and I begin to sketch out forms and then again quite by chance these forms and ideas

develop into a cycle which ends just as spontaneously. It began with the rocks and then the leaves, the shells, the arid landscapes and now with wings, with butterflies ...what does this mean? Maybe that at first I was a little hard, dense and little by little I'm becoming light and supple. Yes, in a way. The rock is hard and compact, the shell hard and smooth: both closed forms. Even if in some of the paintings there are leaves and cocoons, turned in on themselves, they are in the process of opening, are transported by the wind, letting go...

The arid , but colourful, landscapes are a way of exploring the territory. They represent a return to painting after a period away. They are arid but contain a precious underground element, the inner landscape, hidden yet significant...Then the wings and butterflies, the birth of butterflies, lightness, serenity and the desire to live. Even the cocoon of one's being opening to the light is ethereal and hasn't got a hard outer skin...

4/06/04

Each time I think of art, or visit a beautiful exhibit, I am struck by a poignant melancholy. It's as if I'm seeing someone or something which is part of me, but which I must let go of again. Here, before me, is the catalogue from Mirò's exhibit. It's closed, I only see the cover, but already I'm touched. Maybe it is the colours, the lines, the movement or history, the textures and odours...the genius...

Pushing myself further...

Inertia is not destructive when the "daimon" has provoked it. In which case it can be defined as a show ripening, because all of a sudden in a burst, it blossoms as a force no one can stop:

1/ 07/04

Lately new works are emerging. Flowers have been a pretext for testing or modifying my technique. Four medium sized works, acrylic on paper, have risen from this period: two "Lilies" and two "Wilted Blooms" . The second "Lily" and both "Wilted Blooms" really please me. I had read Kandinsky and wanted to push myself

further, following his words, but I'm not certain I can let go completely, maybe my painting is still connected to, or even better, inspired by reality.

In Sonia's case everything arises from within: life, events, sounds and colours touch upon her spirit which sings as she fills the paper or canvas with forms and colours:

19/02/07

...here I am, taking some time to look within. I have begun a large piece which I would like to take forward but it's going to take more time.

Dance is the subject, a little imposing perhaps but with humility it feels close to me, perhaps because, even if just a little, I also participate in the dance. The works actually began in 2005, with a mixed technique, watercolours and acrylics, with lots of impact. They are medium and small sized pieces and very theatrical, drawn from cinematographic stills.

I like them because they are fresh, even if they are not pure watercolours. Then I decided to continue in this vein experimenting with acrylics, with different mixes, a lot larger formats: what a disaster! They seemed to be dead! Such muted colours, even the reds! A real mess! So I returned to a smaller size and to watercolours. I made a first attempt and threw it away...then another, a little better but dirty, modest, depressed maybe, in any case not a living thing, but one in agony...

It's a strange feeling because the drawings have been turning around in my mind for a long time: I'll do it like this, or like that, the dresses vaporous, the movement and lightness of the material, the elegance, the colour's purity...but to really do them...

But time is a tyrant...there is never enough because art is not "fast food"! What's more watercolour technique by its very nature requires patience and apparent calm. At first glance the surface appears still but the lightest touch with the tip of the brush on a moist area and one witnesses quite a show: a fireworks effect, joyful explosions of life, strange and magical encounters lively, exquisite nuances...

I feel I can do it, with tenacity and humility because I feel the fire of creation in me, which sometimes lies dormant but is now making itself felt...This is wonderful because it means my passion is still alive, I just need to let go completely and

abundantly!

Contemporary Daphne

How was this composition born? Sonia saw it come to life and develop, as if she was a spectator. A game of intimate mirrors which reflect and return the image:

16/04/08

I'm an artist!! I'm finally fully aware of this after so many years. So often denying, wanting to repress this, almost at any price. At last there has been this boundless explosion which by its very nature, "escaped" my control. Why did I deny my true nature, why? I know...there's still time and everything that has been done and decided is finished...but now there is this new awareness and nothing and no one can take it away...it's me that was afraid, it's me! I still feel the fear a little, but now I have this inner awareness.

I don't know, something is shifting in my soul, it's a time of inner change...From a pictorial standpoint it's a fertile period. I paint and paint and the more I paint the more I want to paint, my mind full of ideas. The completed paintings come to me whole, my mind creates them, as if I had a camera in my head which takes a picture of my idea and shows it to me. Then there's a voice whispering to me: "Now just do it, it's already in your mind!".

So I have begun a series of "Contemporary Daphne". I've done three pieces that aren't bad.

The olive trees

Among the trees, each person chooses one which responds to her personality, to her irresistible call:

...I have begun the "Olive trees". The olive tree is my favourite because of its energetic momentum, its twisting and sensuous lines, rich with life.

My artistic nature

The “daimon” has fulfilled his mission, despite all the difficulties he hasn't given up not even when confronted by the resistance of imperfection, which attacks and corrupts. From the apparent tomb of the cocoon a new creature emerges:

When all is said and done, It's been a fertile period. I think it's a beginning.

Step by step, step by step...I needed a change, a turning point to show me how I was deceiving myself.

One cannot contain art, wrap it up and put it in the basement.

Art IS and always will be.

Art is too important and I believe that in an era like ours, art can offer a substantial contribution, especially to new generations.