

The route already long of Daniela Papadia

The route already long and just began of Daniela Papadia has sometimes approached a disquieting mystery that drives us toward death, though more and more pervaded by life. One day this mystery might perhaps attain happiness, but who knows?

For long, Daniela has portrayed young women in sport outfits, who fly, whirl over and above passing by crowds and streets, without ever landing, without conveying a message, without touching a single arm or head. At first, one might think they are bringing dreams, or hopes. Aren't they angels? But their flight doesn't stop, and they look more and more frightening, totally foreign to the people walking below. Until the moment I perceive on them the white of death, the silence of disappeared life. These videos have been exhibited on the ceiling of the Roman church of Santa Maria, in piazza del Collegio; they show people stretched on the floor and looking above in the blank, a posture that gives the sense of approaching death with an even more anguishing strength. These images reduce to silence and do convey at least Daniela's impotence to transmit a message, to decipher the meaning of this never landing flight.

It's a great relief to discover later on a short video showing a woman pervaded by the elementary forces of life. This visibly pregnant figure, naked and almost expressionless, has an arrow into her womb like saint Sebastian, but is anyway moving, is pervaded by waves, pieces of human bodies, her own body projected forward by powerful breasts, announcing the feeding of life and the appeal of pleasure.

In place of the moving white angels silently watching the passing-by crowd, the stillness of these reflexes and these pulsions let us feel the mounting life within this woman; though half awake yet, only half alive, this sensation is even stronger in the blue paintings than in the ocre ones. But we know already that life wins and our anguish fades away, as we feel that Daniela herself has shifted, has perhaps fallen on the life's side even though this woman (her double) doesn't smile yet, doesn't have a history, and is silently addressing herself only. Indeed, we don't know whether she is living a passion or is preparing to a delivery. Mystery looms large, and threats do linger in all these images of a unique woman. But our impression changes if we look back again to the death's angels: behind the images' almost still sequence, we now perceive a silent, personal story, a staged rather than a narrated story, much alike the stations of the Cross, though it will end this time with the advent of life and not with the triumph of death. We will not wait for long: this woman, whose images tell a piece, a moment of the artist's story, is like a dream that unveils its meaning step by step. Nobody can any longer doubt that the sight will very soon meet another sight, and the mouth will open to speak of what she feels and she understands of the story she is a multiple witness of, well before to become its effective actor. Or rather the actress, as we can't imagine a man playing this role, isn't it? She would have been almost obviously such in the last century, but how can anyone but a woman be seen in this awakening, a woman looking at herself and the mystery of life pervading her.

Daniela Papadia is entering, has already entered, her work's hearth. Her anguish will not disappear, and the death's angels will remain near, though imperceptible. It is life, though, that becomes incarnate into landscapes, movements, desires, words. Daniela's trip can no longer take the most dangerous side, and sweetness is giving to these yet troubled images the seal of a human life.

Am I indiscreet, or even bold, to say this? After all, I didn't receive any confession, any explanation by an artist I know almost solely through her works. Be that as it may, how to behave otherwise, as the emotions mirrored by her images are so strong that one is almost hearing the artist's voice? Be quick, Daniela, let's know whether we are wrong; we are now impatient to hear whether your inner life is turning into personal happiness.

Alain
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Touraine