

THE INCOMPLETE LIBERATION OF DANIELA PAPADIA

The collection of pieces that are so different from one another that they sometimes seem to be unrelated, comprises a story written in time. And although the story has a beginning, it has no end; it cannot have one yet. The time for rest, for happiness, has not arrived and desire itself is far off in the distance. The story, told in this piece is so close to each of us that we feel the need to participate even if we are unaware of where it will lead us.

The story begins with the overwhelming weight of the masses, their repetition of similar gestures and the presence of death which is masked as in Paolo Uccello's "Battles." As the crowd disperses it leaves free space; the space is empty and threatening, just like the empty space where countless tango dancers move in rhythm. This weight of order is not even relieved when modernity replaces tradition. Apparently, there is no way out, no emergency exit, or hope of liberation, in no place is there a lone individual or a questioning look.

In the meantime, the worm is in the apple; the individual does not disappear in the crowd; he looks at an image of himself, powerless to transmit it into words or gestures, but an image that raises an impassable boundary to the imposed homogeneity. Little by little disorder begins to arrive: the walkers go in opposite directions and start to meet others who resemble them almost completely and yet are clearly different. These individuals are usually men rather than women, because the world they are locked into is a masculine world, or rather, a world of non-women and beings without sex or desire.

Then, abruptly, the women do appear, women who had escaped from the crowd; they move their arms and legs, they dance and laugh heartily. But their cries are not quite voices; these individuals, dressed like women, are not quite women. It is as if they had the strength to free themselves, but not enough to construct their identity or desire. They are adult women, but at thirty they are barely past adolescence. If the crowd did not quash the individual prisoners, these women, who have left the crowd, are still only forces, needs and longings not yet transformed into expectations and desires. The fact is that the story is never this simple. The oppression was so crushing that the women who freed themselves are still very far from living and talking like human beings.

However, when we reach the end of the first part, a major result has been achieved - without discussions: there are women, beings who can become women, who have escaped the imposed repetitions. Silently and violently feminist discourses in which men are incapable of creating history. Untenable discourses, granted, with which the second part, starting from the first image, makes a clean break, while even the techniques become transformed and the use of photographs and computer graphics upset both the tone and content of the discourse.

The overly heavy universe of submission is gone, and so are the falsely adult women. The wind has swept it all away - both the imprisonment and the liberation. The false human beings, the ones political ideologies talk about as they evoke the new society and the new humanity have been transformed into the exact opposites of themselves. From too heavy they have become too light. They float like souls looking for their bodies, mainly male bodies in the early searches, until the women who finally have obtained real bodies, animated by desire flutter above the individuals rooted to the ground. They are merely beginning to come out of the void and are not yet rising towards the heavens. They are starting to move towards the ground that will make them human beings, with body and soul reunited.

But the work ends well before this creation of a human being is completed. The distance that permitted the liberation delays the moment of birth. We already feel that these are women who will impregnate the men, but their movements only encounter indifferent children, inert bodies, splotches of life and shadow.

Technicians will talk about the interaction between photography, painting and computer design developed in each of these pieces. And that is where we must begin, because it is this blend of techniques that allows the nearly impossible construction of desire and happiness in this imaginary

story. It is not cheerful art, and even less triumphant. We could call it spiritualistic, but it has no fixed point of support and it culminates in a turnaround that could just as readily be either a hunter above its prey or a wedding dance.

We do not know the end of the story; perhaps we never will. Perhaps the little girls who enter adolescence at a run and flies above the passers-by will continue to live eternally suspended in the air and will never find a place of her own other than the distance. But, as we draw away from these images, we feel the emotions that go along with the quest for life no matter how it ends. As long as Daniela Papadia never yields to the temptation of the happy ending, and keeps her distance we will feel all the more loser to her, floating and turning with her above an inanimate world. We are spectators who already want to enter the picture.

Daniela Papadia's most recent works bring answers, or the beginnings of answers to the questions that I have asked myself about these flying beings, women descending to earth or angels floating in space, they make us feel the power inspired by their creator's work even more strongly, They are not angels, nor are they real characters who are incarnated through their relations with other beings. They are dreams, dreams that begin the reawakening and desire but remain hidden from humans who live in the world where they want to fall or rather come to life. These works are set in the exact moment of landing when the bodies dressed in angelic yet provocative white, come into contact with humans. We do not know whether these women will take possession of the beings they meet. Actually, they go through them, but perhaps as they traverse those beings they leave behind souls that give life to bodies which up to then had been inert.

|But let us leave these beings who are becoming women to look at the woman who paints, photographs and brings these pictures to life. She gains admiration. Her work is already more filled with meaning than that of many surrealists. It comes from the unconscious and it is there that it remains. Her pictures revolve around the formation of the conscious which presumes that adaptation to reality is always limited. Perhaps it is here that the dream is transformed into words, into desire, maybe into another dream. The more uncertain we are, the better we see the person who created them.

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