

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE PAINTING...

Audrey Nervi's paintings are definitely contemporary. Telling stories about our world, they transform photographs into pictorial spaces, which alternate between icons and reflections of our own society.

Photo-copy, simple reproductions of a captured reality which has already passed, Audrey Nervi's painted images are most of all real-life experiences and feelings acquired through journeys across the world.

These images however, are not only in the field of mimesis; part of a road book or of our world's memory. They are not supposed to be hyper realistic. If Chuck Close, Richard Estes and Gerhard Richter are some of Audrey Nervi's favourites, it is due to their pictorial liveliness rather than their realism. She also feels close to artists such as Gianni Motti, Larry Clark or Paul Mc Carthy.

Constantly floating between realism and activism, political fiction and poetic reality, Audrey Nervi's paintings are synonymous of protest.

Bearing a hidden meaning, which is buried by an obvious uniformity, her images are part of our world's archives. Each one of her paintings is a counterpoint, an anarchic image of our society.

For an alternative painting

If Audrey Nervi had been a writer she could have written the founding text on the Temporary Autonomous Zone¹ in the style of Hakim Bey. However she did not choose to express herself with words. Her writing is painting, her words are images.

One will understand that images are her stage, presenting our everyday life, an obliterated reality, forgotten, hidden, where everything disappears. Each painting is a vision of a changing world. However, through the use of colour, narration and series, it becomes a place where alternatives are possible. Through her painting, Audrey Nervi depicts a temporarily over stressed world and sheds a new light on a declining society, through different interpretations of reality.

We are offered a painting, which is an evidence of a new autonomy, an alternative painting.

Manifesto of a new kind of perception, which would be an alternate reality that we wouldn't have yet learned to perceive, this painting offers a new understanding.

For an illuminated painting

Her work is however neither a painting of despair, neither a political or anarchic acknowledgment; for the artist constantly mixes the search of realism and fantasy. Each one of her paintings is like a sudden Illumination and makes us feel the presence through representation.

The individual is at the heart of her work. Even when slightly absent, one can always deeply feel his presence: each one of her paintings is a proof of Being.

Audrey Nervi shows us a reality witness of a world overwhelmed by the disappearance of social values, but also a place where the human re-appears.

¹ “ We are looking for « spaces » (geographical, social, cultural and imaginary) capable of growing into autonomous zones – and space-time during which these zones would be relatively open, due either to State negligence, an omission from the study managers or for any other reason. Psycho topology is the state of art of the potential TAZ founder.”

Hakim Bey, TAZ: Temporary Autonomous Zone, Editions de l'Éclat, Paris 1997 for the French translation. (Original edition 1991)

The sight of a humanity often torn apart, lost, buried under ruins of objects and urban architecture (Bosnia, états des lieux 2002) becomes a hint, an icon and a symbol of this obliterated “out of shot”. In an era dominated by speed and merchandisation, erasing all individuality, its inhabitants become the central subject of a painting, which does not hide itself from the truth. Era of indifference and speed, new spirit of capitalism already theorized by many sociologists and philosophers, they have become philosophical fields which acquire a whole new meaning through the lone path of painting and the strength of a sole image. Each painting is a “thought caravan” (Champs, Spain 2002), which invites us to take up Hakim Bey’s words “to re-locate in other levels of reality”. Audrey Nervi offers an alternative and illuminated painting. Each image is an epiphany of our daily life.

Painting for another possible world

If the idea of another world were an esthetical movement, it would be through Audrey Nervi’s work that it would make sense.

Each one of her paintings is rather a political consciousness than a geographical description of a place. Furthermore, they could be interchanged with one another, and it is precisely this pictorial nomadisme which pushes us to taking new paths in order to re-appropriate the world as individuals.

Her work, mirror image of our society, is also emblematic of a state of consciousness of the world and its incoherence. The homeless, suicidal teddy bears, sacred cows, Untouchables... so many symbolic subjects of a drifting humanitarian world. Subjects, which assemble and disassemble themselves in a show of series: in the paintings’ set up, one can find the image’s meaning, mixing politics and poetic counterpoints. Territories covered with garbage, walls riddled with bullet holes, tanks and other attributes symbolizing strength (War game, Calcutta 2004) are not decorative elements, but actual subjects which could have been depicted by great painters of our century.

Is Audrey Nervi’s point of view on the XXI st century so different from that of Géricault’s on his own century...? One shouldn’t be surprised if it is amongst those she will consider as a witness in its time of human forfeiture...

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