

Extrat from. the text by Anne Bousquet for the exhibition « ça va déménager », March/April 2003, at the chapelle des Pénitents Bleus, Narbonne.

*What do we find in the work of Elisa Fantozzi?*

First of all, the woman, the female world, the essence of femininity and of feminine sensitivity : Curiosity, Understanding and Compassion.

*Curiosity* : An interest and taste for discovery and adventure regarding unknown things or people. Lili follows her intuition and does not rely on certainties. She allows herself to try new things, to learn, to move forward, to change angle of vision and so never ceases to surprise us.

*Understanding* : Just after the question comes the attention, receptiveness, discernment and the need to look for and even find answers to the mysteries surrounding us. Elisa considerably pushes back her limits and ours, those of incomprehension and intolerance, of doubt and vagueness. Her pieces of work boarden our perspective. By mingling her sources of references ( religious, pagan, political or economical), her work widens our field of vision in terms of acuity and concepts. Distinct beliefs and values become superimposed. Apparently contradictory, they can set each other off, coexist and be complementary, suddenly clarifying the horizon of our truths and convictions.

In this way, Lili's painted virgins are emblematic of this perception of the world and of her artistic conception. They are, above all, a very beautiful representation of a woman, which Catholicism is one of the few religions to lend such importance to, but behind this, are the real and representative questions regarding the preoccupations of a young women at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as all the hopes women represent in the development of the world and today's societies on every level; political, religious or social.

Her statues are at once mother, sister and child, but clearly close and interconnecting. They are also spiritual icons (their initial purpose) and woman as an object, a consumer product ( by mercantile appropriation).

*Compassion* : Because asking questions and going in search of others necessitates and awareness of worldly realities, and a sharing of many oppositions, tensions, conflicts and suffering involved.

Amidst these turbulences, the rôle of the artist is one of a vigil, an enlightener, in the borrowed literal sense of the term. Lili's work sheds light on and warns against the errors and excesses of a consumer society of which the dogma is that everything is consumable and disposable ( including the artist and his message, of which the effigy is maliciously represented here as a tin, packet of crisps or other throwaway gadget). But the artist is also a free electron, a mischief-maker who chooses to offer dreams and smile. For this, Elisa Fantozzi's best weapons are humour and poetry, shocking at time for some, but which surprise and polish us up to better console us from chronic moroseness and take us away from today's prevailing indifference.

Anne Bousquet

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