

## Elisa « lili » Fantozzi : an Angel Carries us Away

Lili Fantozzi, a little girl in the body of a woman. A conscious naivety, which lifts us up towards happiness.

For Lili tries to become happy through her artistic work, which consequently brings joie de vivre to her audience. The joy of growing up.

Lili Fantozzi is a traveler, who moves between the South of France, first Pezenas and now Sète, as well as Paris and New York, city of all possible fantasies, where Lili likes to learn and grow. She attracts attention there by suspending an angel on which are written the words « Un Ange Passe- Lili (an Angel is passing through- Lili )» .

For Lili blesses the places she goes, by virtue of her exceptional beauty and her gift for happiness. In 1995, she set up l'Epicierie (the Grocery shop) in Pézenas, a workshop and showroom open to the public, where she made her first religious sculptures. She collected church statues of saints, given by priests, which she made joyful with kitsch colours, often in response to Americanization, as in the case of « Welcome to the World », where Super-Heros clash on statue of Saint Nicolas. Lili appropriates an Empire, that of Christianity, to denounce phenomena of manipulation and show their absurdness with garish colour, a « kitchimisation » that turns the symbols of Christianity into toys for children. An artistic reappropriation that upset Catholic fundamentalists, who even went as far as vandalizing one of the artist's exhibitions.

Lili also denounces the « Consumerization » of Christianity, by producing a series of religious statues, such as « Les Marchands tu Temple » (The Temple Merchants), sculptures made of resin and easy to transport. The artist had predetermined the bases of this principle with her series of displays on which bar codes are juxtaposed, like on consumer products. This series, as a questioning of the artist about her own existence, also foreshadowed the work Lili started in Sète when she moved there from the Epicierie.

Lili then went on to produce work like « Inspiration/Expiration », « Envie d'être en vie » (Will to be alive) 1 and 2, in which her body is duplicated in resin, like merchandise. For we will have understood that Lili is in search of herself, like any « real artist ». Lili does not know who she is and thus enables her audience to gain understanding about who they are. There is a certain paradox here, because Lili does not like her body, yet she reproduces it full-scale, perhaps to learn to accept it better, by framing it again. Let us not forget either that repetition cancels out the function. Lili may then duplicate herself to efface herself, she attracts the spectator's attention with an image of herself to distract them from the artist's « real » body.

In her recent work, we note a series of balloons, also made of resin, of which the most naive but significant : an unpainted balloon, on the ground, ready to fly away, on which the artist has written « one day I will be pink ... ». A piece of work whose strength is equal to its simple and naive form. The strength due to the hope it represents. The hope due to Lili's desire to grow up. Lili Fantozzi : an angel who carries us away !

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