

VISION THERAPY
By Marta Silvi

Another One

When you're a child
you learn
there are three dimensions:
height, width, and depth.
Like a shoebox.
Then later you hear
there's a fourth dimension:
time.
Hmm.
Then some say
there can be five, six, seven ...

I knock off work,
have a beer
at the bar.
I look down at the glass
and feel glad.

Ron Padgett

The work with which I first met Iulia Ghiță, "Running angle", 2016, was one double life-size projection in which the artist's father, an Orthodox priest, appeared intent on dressing and then undressing his priest gone inside the sacristy, before and after the ceremony, in a ritual gesture, as repetitive as it is overwhelmingly intimate. The subject, though aware of being filmed, indulged in automatic actions carried by a sort of emotional-liturgical transition towards the symbols of his practice and towards prayer just whispered to himself.

I kept thinking about that work for a long time, so simple and powerful: for the vision that the artist offered us without filters and for the rare confidence with which she transformed us spectators into voyeurs, making us feel the inadequacy of a mixture of embarrassment to the curiosity of a child who peeks at the parent in a moment of extreme intimacy.

When after some time together with Iulia we began to think about this exhibition, I felt that gaze return little by little, in the need for an essential relationship with the little things, delicate but pungent, that have always settled in her work.

Today, therefore, different temporalities coexist in the exhibition space: the enchanted gaze of first meeting, the exhibition of March 2020, suspended but thought out in detail, and the exhibition of April 2021, conceived and then necessarily reshaped. In between a year of breaks, of exchanges, of empty and full, of work and uncertainties, which have fostered reflection and birth of new jobs by re-signifying existing ones.

In the universe of Iulia Ghiță it is necessary to enter on tiptoe, with deference. The grace that envelops her work is precious and she needs a sensitive and slow eye to be perceived, an eye able to stop and abandon itself to the time of observation that, like a pupil in the dark, gets used to see the slowly emerging forms.

Iulia's work addresses things as they are. She does not use artifice to show herself, she does not construct lies. And it is precisely in this apparent simplicity that she hides her

intrigue, the detail that destabilizes, the truth as obvious as it is unsettling, the epiphany. Iulia's work does not pretend to explain a fact, but it is that fact, it is a subtle vision. Indeed, it is properly placed in the infra-thin, in the Duchampian inframince so well explored by Elio Grazioli in the homonymous book. In paintings, as in drawings and projections, nothing really happens. There is no story to tell, a narration, a development. Instead, there are images, suggestions, apparitions in which the color, the nuance, the light, the glare, the variety of the support come alive, creating synaesthetic dimensions. In the atmospheres of the paintings and videos we breathe existential white spaces that question us.

This universe made up of small things has often led me to rethink an ethereal and brilliant film by Jim Jarmusch, "Paterson" (2016), in which poetry, that useless, aimless act of creation, to which the protagonist is so attached and which materializes in the verses of Ron Padgett, serves precisely to dig into the deposit, to find the internal rhyme between things, to make a sign come out of them and to give them a name again.

Thus Iulia's subjects are often taken from the daily life: her children ("Milk", 2015, "Untitled", 2020), the details of the landscape captured between Italy and Romania ("LANDSCAPE2", 2017/2018 and "LANDSCAPE4", 2018-20), the an affective objects ("There was a beautiful vase at her home / The truth lies in the object, not in the word", 2019), the flowers just hinted at graphite ("Life from herself", 2020), the geometric signs repeated as a therapeutic mantra ("Closed Circle", 2018).

The act of faith is as complete as it is impenetrable and is placed in the mystery of everyday life that Iulia's work has always placed at the center of attention. The artist is interested in the relationship / conflict / tension that is triggered between the limit of human measure and the attempt to give a finite form to incomprehensible things: from the sleepy gaze of a child (her son) to the minimal details of the natural environment (a cloud that glides on a blue sky, a blade of grass that vibrates in the wind, a forest furrowed by a snowstorm).

Human measure and incomprehensible things are the combination/mix/union of this tension that generates the field of research on which the artist has always investigated and which, this last year with greater evidence, has become the horizon and limit of daily considerations. Iulia explores ways of knowledge that are difficult to accept: dreams, revelations, premonitions, prophecies, visions. The artist questions the form and location that boundless themes such as trust and knowledge can assume.

The figure of Archbishop San Luca, Valentin Feliksovič Vojno-Jaseneckij, lived between 1877 and 1961, known for his important scientific achievements in the medical surgical field and for the profound pietas that accompanied his actions both in secular life which then in the consecrated one, becomes the beating heart of the exhibition with the large canvas "THEY BELIEVED THAT THE MERE TOUCH WOULD HELP THEM HEAL FROM ANY ILLNESS", 2021, which, like a wall painting, creates its central pause.

Valentin, who has always been tied to art, surrenders to the idea that it cannot bring immediate physical benefit to human pain and in the face of personal defeat experienced by assisting the war-wounded, he began studying medicine. After the pain of his wife's death he decides to convert to religious life by continuing to practice his scientific skills with dedication (he will advance important ophthalmological studies and help to fine-tune the local anesthesia technique), however, combining them with extreme skill to therapeutic spiritual needs.

What can art in the front of objective critical situations? The artist seems to be asking himself a difficult and very topical existential question. The ways of knowledge, Iulia Ghiță seems to tell us, are numerous and multifaceted. But we must not be afraid to take them straight, without filters, taking them in their apparent simplicity and in their relative and unfathomable mystery.

Art cannot, perhaps, respond to physical, timely, immediate needs. But it can and must develop alternative forms of knowledge. The artist can exercise his power by asking the viewer for an act of faith: the confidence to cross the mirror and to abandon something of himself on the other side. The display device thus becomes a "sensory environment where the material 'says' about the immaterial", explains Dario Evola in a recent article on "Engramma", while art is transformed into an awareness that is useful for building in a correspondence of loving senses between the human soul and the world. that satisfies the thirst for learning inherent in the human being.

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