

The Material Painting of Verdiana

Mila Tenaglia (April 14, 2016)



The visionary work of Verdiana Patacchini on view at the Consulate General of Italy, which continues its initiative to foster young talent in Italy. The latest effort is “Unconscious Mind: Matter and Primordial Figures in the Visionary World.” The pictorial universe of the artist known as VIRDI is curated by Roberta Buldini of Rome’s Galleria Emmeotto.

A woman with a serious gaze drinks in the room at the Consulate General. Stretched out and with her hands in her lap, the sculpture – by Verdiana Patacchini, or Viridi – monopolizes the room. There's also a painting on canvas, "Arazzo" (Tapestry), and another titled "A New Technique I'm Trying Out," a huge collage made with iron and Styrofoam.

The "material" painting plays with different matter, leaving viewers with a bewildering visionary world. That is, at least, the joint effect of Unconscious Mind: Matter and Primordial Figures in the Visionary World, the exhibit inaugurated on March 17 at the Italian Consulate General and on view until May 9.

"I wanted my works to 'live' in the Consulate hall," says Viridi, "like furniture. I sought to recreate the feeling of entering someone's house for the first time, to make you curious about all these objects.

"Invited by the Consulate, I had the privilege of mounting the exhibit before opening night in celebration of President Mattarella's visit. It was a privilege, and I really appreciated it. I thought it was a very generous act for the work of a young artist." Verdiana is the kind of painter who approaches her materials spontaneously – "it's a way of expressing myself" – enchanted by a rough, unfinished quality clearly linked to the materials being used. It's as if the work had many strata and were seeking out feelings, sensations mixed with consciousness.

She likes to challenge herself by using different materials, like Styrofoam, acids, metals, paper, frescoes. "Making this exhibit happen is all thanks to Roberta Buldini, a curator and gallery owner who works in New York and Rome, where she runs the Galleria Emmeotto, which invited me to be the artist for this exhibit. Not to mention vice consuls Isabella Periotto and Chiara Saulle and, naturally, the new Consul General Francesco Genuardi, whom I got to know as a result of the exhibit."

Marrying art and language

Viridi relishes telling us about how, thanks to her artwork, she has been able to encourage kids to study Italian. An Italian teacher from Paramus High School in New Jersey, Costanza Campagna, suggested a trip to the Consulate with American students of Italian so that they could see the exhibit. "Their enthusiasm was incredible," says Viridi.

"I've discovered a large Italian community in New York. During his meeting at the Guggenheim with President Mattarella, Governor Cuomo reminded everyone that the number of Italian Americans in New York is equal to the population of Rome! Incredible!"

"Our country has a huge cultural impact on language and literature and thanks to the immensity of our artwork, aside from being one of the most beautiful places on earth! So I'm not surprised at how loved we are abroad, too, nor that there is an effort in the States to keep the culture healthy and pass it down to young people."

Journey to New York

Originally Umbrian but Roman by adoption, while enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts Verdiana immersed herself in the paintings and sculptures of Carlo Guarienti, to whom she would eventually apprentice.

Her artistic achievements began at home and included her inclusion in the 54th Venice Biennale, at the Italian Pavilion directed by Vittorio Sgarbi in 2011, as well as other artistic prizes and art festivals, before she was recognized internationally. Her anthropomorphic images composed of signs



and words flew to Mexico and London. She debuted during Italian Culture Month in Monte Carlo, participating in the project “Mediterranean: The Faces of Metaphor,” and would later, naturally, land in New York, where she has worked for a long time and feels at home.

“Right now I’m doing a residency at Mana Contemporary in New Jersey. It’s a great opportunity. I have a studio in a beautiful arts center. There are four house over a hundred artists’ studios, exhibition spaces, a foundry... Everything serves to facilitate the artists’ work. You have the opportunity to come into contact with tons of people every day, emerging and established artists, who come from various cities and cultures.”

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