

Sandra Ciccioni – The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

*"Sublime should always be big;
beauty might be also small"*

Immanuel Kant

Art operates like water: constantly seeking how to filter through tiny and inaccessible spaces and from that almost imperceptible smallness, it builds empires. Art can take a stand and present a closed point of view where there is little place for alternative interpretations, but it can also move in the cornice that divides incompatible or perhaps additional instances. The artist acts as a messenger armed with a tool as noble as complex, as brutally honest as delusive and as seductive as dangerous. There are artists who identify with a type of representation and are faithful to it; this doesn't make them better or worse but specialized in the recognition of a territory with all its implications. Landscape is a genre itself with outstanding ingredients and beyond the point of view assumed, it will always be its magnificence which primes above the rest.

Sandra Ciccioni establishes a particular connection with the landscape and tries to replicate in her work a concern that crosses all her production. Her speech plastically integrates the landscape to a mode of representation where the places are not geographically recognizable and traceable. Nature has the necessary amount of *veritas* so as to be captured at once but its high dose of absence of spatiotemporal allusions makes us loose references: it can be a place everywhere. The landscapes are plausible but not real, we have no evidence about whether they were or are inhabited, no human figures that establish relations of symmetry to understand the magnitude of those dark forests overlapping the layers of branches -such as vales or transparencies- creating scenarios that we recognize but perhaps they only exist in the artist's imagination. If I had to risk a sentence, I would say they are places multiplied by millions in reality, in the depths of the most dense and inaccessible forest to the human hand, never journeyed beyond the fantastic images that we create in our imagination through tales, stories, films and myths that led us to weave these kind of trunks, leaves and scrawny trees passages, with total absence of the vital color of the sap that runs through nature's veins. Something captures and seduces us as well as it repels us and we feel safer thinking them as a product of artistic creativity. However, we all know them one way or another because that crochet impossible to unravel, echoes in our lives.

Sandra Ciccioni's work develops between the real and the fictional using the landscape as an excuse. Using multiple techniques such as photolithography, monoprint, graphics, ink, pastel, collage, drawing or intervened lithographs, she experiences on the creative processes within the visual arts, also intervening in space when the work requires passing from the drawing to the three-dimensions by making the materials participate: branches and trunks lacking of any signs of life, try to join once more the vital flow where man and nature are part of the primordial One, in Nietzsche's words.

Art can afford to flirt with the impossible, walk the abyss, put an eye on the beauty while the other contemplates the sublime and immerse in its confusion, its vastness, and its unfathomable power to the human mind. Sandra Ciccioni is dangerously close to these borders where the familiar image, friendly or sinister -but still "governable" for our perception- can become in a split second in a threatening scenario that immerses us in absolute uncertainty. What happens in her work, that darkness running through the clear and rising like a serpentine flame, represents man's moods that suddenly change as the desert sands. Disruption is sometimes enhanced by the presence of

impossible geometric forms within the logic of landscape, which don't fulfill another role than evidencing the inability to "foothold" and understand everything completely. I once said that Sandra's work seeks to reach an essence of what these roots, branches and leaves were in the recent past and, from that place, try to rescue from the shadows what might still remain, overcoming the inevitability of life cycle which is immortalized through art as the evidence of an existence. We are enchanted by the beauty of the drawings because of a remarkable technique and a seemingly familiar figuration to place us later in shady paths that make us realize of what it once was, but never behind a pessimist point of view but a brave one. Beauty lies there: in the shapes, the stroke, the bounded palette, in the elegance and subtlety of the work. And just crossing the fine line lays the sublime: in the strength of the message, in the unbearable lightness of being.

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*Title of Milan Kundera's famous work