

WEAVING MEMORY

Artist: Eeva Kukkonen

Curator: Bortolotti Frediano

February 1st – March 15th 2013

The title of the exhibition refers in first place to the formal interaction between painting and embroidery and in second place to the reception of these two, historically opposite, visual art practices in two diverse artistic, cultural and social context; Finland and Romania.

The contemporary eye, the global-industrial eye, perceives the European textile art very much alike but considering the special relation of the female subject in this art practice and the different gender positions of women in these two countries I believe that the topic is perceived in very different ways.

The figurative pictorial search of Eeva is concentrated on the anonymous representation of human faces in the memory of the subject that observes it, while the sewn and embroidered shapes are researched in the memory of the tradition of Karelia, area that is found in the South-east of Finland, a big part of the region was taken by Russia in 1944.

Interest towards the karelian traditions arises from a personal history, part of the family of Eeva originates from the Russian part of the region of Karelia, where the memory of their presence has literally been cancelled and contemporarily absorbed, transformed and forgotten by the Finnish part. She begun this project after having visited those earths, where by now the houses in which her ancestors lived are barely discernible. Imagining as a woman the activities of her grandmothers in those places and thinking about creativeness expressed in the decorations they produced, even though in so simple and poor context brought her to endeavour , as painter to reconstruct the memory of that tradition conjugating the painting with the textile art.

Eeva's work is inserted in different actual critical contexts in reference to art, culture and society. The use of the pictorial technique and that of textile on the same level represents a criticism to the traditional position attributed to women in comparison to art: until when the painting was understood, in 'hegelian' terms the most elevated among the visual arts, female creativeness was relegated to the textile art and to decoration. As today women can be painters and as a woman painter for her it's important not to cancel from a proper past a memory that is part of that memory, the tradition of the textile art. To analyze the creativity expressed through techniques of 'handicraft' in the preindustrial era and to compare it with the increasing loss of opportunity to create objects with our hands stands as an aesthetic criticism on how the creative part of today's life is used. The search of a forgotten memory at the end represents an effort to maintain the differences of the traditions in front of the present brutally homologated cultural levelling.

Together with the search on a personal memory, the works contribute also to the survival of the karelian culture and support the interest for the traditional activities generally, that I don't consider forms of work neither surpassed nor nostalgic, on the contrary they offer an example of an opportunity to reason how to give individual form to our own time. To speak in these terms of the national confinements represents the possibility to know and to make known a different historical-cultural experience and to reflect on common problems, dealing them from different points of view.

Within the international opening allowed by the actual EU, I consider dutiful for an artist to reason on the present differences between different languages and traditions, like I consider important on a social level to search in the difference an enrichment and not an impoverishment of a proper culture. For this reason I believe it's important to make known the various cultural aspects of Karelia, Finland, Romania, and of any different cultures in general, to whom they aren't familiar. To think about art as a tool that is able to influence our society and to change its habits, simply furnishing different model of production and of work and therefore different times of life, is a choice that tries to look an alternative at the dominant capitalistic culture. (text by Bortolotti Frediano)

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Eeva Kukkonen (b. 1985 in Turku, Finland). She graduated from the Academy of Fine arts of Bologna (IT) in 2009, and was an exchange student in Bucharest, National University of Arts (RO) in 2008. She lives and works in Berlin. Solo shows (selections): 2010 *Every man's memory is his private literature*, Anca Poterasu Gallery, Bucharest, Romania, 2009 *Vi presento la mia famiglia e qualche amico animale*, Skip la comune Palermo, Italy. Group shows (selections): 2010 *Sogni, segni e sintomi III*, Villa Fortuna, Acitrezza, Italy, 2012 *Open studios*, Bethanien, Berlin, Germany, 2012 *MMX Open Art Venue*, Berlin, Germany, 2011 *Dobiarteventi*, Dobialab, Dobia, Italy.

Bortolotti Frediano (b. 1983 in Trieste, Italy). Frediano collaborated with various collective art exhibitions and festivals in Berlin and Italy. The fundamental aspect of his work is resistance to forms of nazi-fascism, nationalism, racism and different discrimination of gender, politics and cultures, still present today in incomplete democracies.

Partners: Corcova Roy & Damboviceanu, Pârvu și Asociații, Pygmalion Adv.