



ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA
NEW YORK

THE FORCE OF CREATION: A FRAGMENT OF ETERNITY
by Monica Nucera Mantelli

Every 'thing' is a life, and every 'life' is part of a whole. This is the inspiring mystical approach that many artists adopt whilst creating their works. But for MariaLuisa Tadei it has still deeper significance. She compares the physical manufacture of her art pieces to a spiritual conquest.

According to the Ancients, 'Spirit' and 'Matter' are two expressions of the same principle: everything has a spirit to it and every spirit has some form of 'body'; thus nothing is created or destroyed but everything is constantly transformed. This never-ending cycle was connected to the knowledge that the 'spirits' within elemental matter could 'talk' and reveal secrets to mankind. This process of talking to matter is said to involve 'stages' requiring the application of great spiritual forces emanating from the classical geometric shapes - such as squares, triangles and circles - in an *ad libitum* (improvised) process.

An Italian artist who has learned this lesson well is MariaLuisa Tadei, born in Rimini, Italy, and educated there and in Germany and Britain. She is open to the meaningful experience of art making, with the awareness that direct communication can be established between oneself and any other divine, comprehensive 'self', whether spiritual or material in form.

Tadei uses geometrical forms such as circles to symbolize and assemble precious fragments of eternity. Her work deals with the transmutation and preservation of 'living' forms - inspired by anatomy and nature - through a mystical and spiritual perspective. She endeavours to find points of contact between the human frame and the world around us by designing art that looks as if it could be found in dreams. They remind us of another world, such as the biblical Garden of Eden. She looks for a dialogue with this and constructs elements of it, like jigsaw pieces of a bigger picture, in the hope of establishing faith in a life after death.

This 'Eden', which in Hebrew means 'delight', is represented by Tadei through highly tactile installations which use the physical transmutation of matter to convey spiritual content. She makes elegant and intelligent life-forms inspired by a long-desired paradise, not a geographical place as such but rather a kind of memory sought by those who yearn to see beyond mortal vision.

In Tadei's artistic code, each spiritual force in the universe is a composite being made up of some non-human but living form: feathers and textiles, mirrors and mosaics, perspex and iron. While it may well be that this anthropomorphic conception of nature is all that is visible to us on the surface of MariaLuisa's creations, her art undoubtedly makes us reflect on why we ourselves take the form that we do, and thus live with a non-eternal destiny.

Tadei tries to answer these questions by mastering works which deal with polar opposites: weight and lightness, life and death, the organic versus the technological. As



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she often states about her inspiration “Art must contain everything and nothing: where one exists, the other exists too”. Following this axiom, MariaLuisa Tadei is sure that there’s a eternal divine garden waiting for us somewhere just behind the corner of our vulnerability.

Torino, Italy, January 2007

Una leggiadra ossessione perseguita, animandolo in direzioni imprevedibili, il lavoro di Marialuisa Tadei. C’è qualcosa, come una dolce mania, che spinge l’autrice, ormai abilissima nello sposare materiali e linee, leggerezze e metalli, immagini lavorate e materie elementari. La vedo come una femminile guerriera, che espande la sua capacità visionaria dall’elemento più intimo (qui, addirittura, la sua propria retina) fino alle linee dell’aria, la cui presenza è data sia dal suo segno piumato sia dalla nettezza dei profili in plexiglas o in metallo. Come se il mondo fosse sempre all’inizio e la sua arte ne fosse una precisa e però per nulla accigliata sentinella. Non vi è traccia, a differenza di quel che si vede in tanti artisti contemporanei (e in tanti artisti contemporanei annoia) di risentimento o di acre delusione nei confronti del formarsi del mondo. C’è una grazia che letteralmente emerge da una gratuità di sguardo e di sorpresa dell’esserci. Mai leziosa, anzi a volte quasi “fredda” nella sua proposta, l’arte di Marialuisa Tadei non cerca facili vie seduttive (e pur ne avrebbe le chance, le capacità) ma preferisce trarci in uno spazio da lei ricreato, che, si badi, non è uno spazio concettuale, ma puramente, verrebbe da dire quasi monasticamente formale. Un arte raffaellesca. Lavorando sugli spazi minimi della percezione, sulla sorpresa come elemento normale e quasi rituale di uno sguardo educato a cogliere il mondo come evento, le installazioni o le grandi lastre ci tolgono dallo spazio oramai consumato del nostro previsto, del presupposto o del pregiudicato per lasciarci marchiati della loro libertà. Restituendoci al dovere e al piacere di guardare le cose solite assecondando il loro movimento, il loro segno sempre ulteriore piuttosto che i confini che abbiamo già assegnato.

Davide Rondoni

PRESS RELEASE

For information call 212 879 4242 ext 330 or 337

You are invited to the opening of

“Eternity”

an installation and exhibition by **Marialuisa Tadei**

Essays by Davide Rondoni and Monica N.Mantelli

Opening reception:



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Thursday, February 8, 2007 6:00 pm

La Galleria

Italian Cultural Institute. 686, Park Avenue NYC

The exhibition is on view through February 28, 2007.

www.marialuisatadei.com

Marialuisa Tadei was born in Rimini and lives between Italy and New York. She has many academic qualifications, including a Diploma di Laurea from Accademia delle Belle Arti in Bologna (Italy), an Art Degree from D.A.M.S. in Bologna (Italy) and a Masters Degree from Domus Academy in Milan (Italy). She also attended a course with prof. Jannis Kounellis at the Kunst Academy in Düsseldorf (Germany) and holds a PgDip from Goldsmiths College, part of the University of London (UK).

This exhibition shows clearly how Marialuisa Tadei deals with the idea of gravity. She takes heavy materials, such as steel, and tries to make them light and, viceversa, light materials, such as feathers, and tries to make them weighty. She likes to work with polar opposites, on a conceptual grade too: life and death, organic versus technological. “Art must contain everything and nothing: where one exists, the other exists too,” says the artist. “This is the path which is instrumental as an opening to the infinite, to the inner freedom which is one of the most precious things a man can possess.” When Marialuisa Tadei was seven she wanted to invent a machine to make dreams visible. She believes that we are at our most creative stage during the night, when our mind is less attentive and our subconscious can flow more freely. Poetic instincts give birth to her work which looks at anatomy and nature through a mystical and spiritual perspective; she strives to find points of contact between the human frame, astronomy and the world around us. She creates works of art that look as if they are found in dreams, reminiscent of another world. She thinks that inside each one of us are signs of this other world, of a universal essence that produced the cosmos and all life therein. This belief is the foundation of Marialuisa Tadei’s ideas and art, which seeks to make shine this divine spark which exists in everything.

The installation at *La Galleria* will allow you to enter into a water world with feathers and also features “eye retina-mirrors” digitally manipulated with deep colours, clearly reminiscent of psychedelic art. A work made with mosaic tiles will also be on view. Mosaic is an ancient art where the forms represented emerge slowly from the hundreds of tiles of which they are composed. When watched for a long time, they seem to change and oscillate in a dance of light and colour, an interaction between the artist’s personal microcosm and the surrounding macrocosm.

For this exhibition essays have been written by Davide Rondoni, one of the most interesting voices of new Italian poetry, and by Monica Nucera Mantelli, renowned art critic.