

## Z, in the sign of Zotta

Recently, in Faenza, the International Prize and the relevant money (26,000.00 euro) have been divided between two persons, both of them women: half of the prize was for Silvia Zotta, Italo - Argentinean living in Faenza (1969), the other half for the Japanese Tomoko Kawakami (1957), emerged earths of women's ceramics. Equal merit, 0 0, nothing done between art and manufacturing, between hands and artist's head.

The Architect Franco Bertoni, responsible for the M.I.C.'s OE900 collections, explained and justified this choice on the part of the Faenza Museum, which is an attraction pole for tradition and innovation, artistic ceramics and design-articrafts. In the two vases of the Japanese Tomoko Kawakami, the Preciousness, the Silence, the Fixity and the properly technical aspects were praised, which are and remain very important in ceramics, in tradition. In the installation of Silvia Zotta, on the contrary, what was praised was the relationship between ceramic specificity and today's more palpitating art, and its relationship with the environment, the installation, the mobility.

Hence, technique and art, the vase and the invader, long shot and zooming: the Faenza Competition wanted to document this double aspect which has been its fundamental feature since ever, particular and general, soldiers and strategists, trip and home – in this instance, the vessel (Zotta) and the cradle (Kawakami), two aspects of today's feminine.

To win the Faenza Competition is like winning a lottery; you never really know why it happened, how it was possible, among so many world competitors. Well then, why did Silvia Zotta win (equal merit)? Maybe because her installation is an intriguing and playful mix between Mondriand and Pinturicchio, a ring between mobile and immobile, between old and new Earths' world.

Only an Italo-Argentinean who was conceived, if not born, in the transatlantics could make such an oceanic, fresh and full-sounding installation, manufactured with a laugh which is rich in homesickness and supported by a classical, Italian measure. Disinhibited and free-spirited, intense and "paisan", Silvia Zotta thus brought into the formal and regimented ceramics world of the Faenza Competition an air which was apparently domestic and cheerful, teaser and pleasant, even confidential, exactly like her loft studio in Milan, located in a multicultural district which perfectly fits to her (visit it to believe); joyful and thoughtful, I was saying, refined and paisan at the same time, with clear references to her Italian-Argentinean childhood in the "Mi Barrio", exactly as per the title of Zotta's cera-mobiles.

Silvia Zotta guaranteed to the Faenza Competition's Wunderkammer an opening, a new playfulness (and lucidity). Faenza in the sign of Zotta! Her installation would have needed an entire exhibition environment for itself, being a typically Mediterranean ceramic, part of a culture, which, far from being as perfect (and maniacal) as Nordic ceramics, does not aim at zooming the single piece, but is similar to an inclusive bee drawing on thousands of flowers and colours for then harmonizing them (and this through a mental and factual process which is contrary and opposite to that of a spider, self-centred, exclusive and hostile, spinning its web-trap).

The work which won in Faenza, Zotta's one, is a ceramic mechanism similar to a clock, a clock like the antique, primordial, enormous clocks, with swing-wheels, balance-wheels and many fascinating small rollers. The work of Silvia has something to do with the time, with a feminine time: in fact, clocks were conceived, in modern times, as equipments for measuring praying time in cloisters and nunneries; and it is known that Zotta is "par excellence" a very smart woman and, like all aesthetes, she is distressed by the time going by.

De Chirico, in his squares of Italy, removed the hands from the public clock, Dali made them melt in the sun: in a word, artists are engaged with an everlasting fight against time-measuring tools, they fear them, since they are in favour of an eternal time, the sacred time shunning contingency.

Moreover, as we know, time must be filled in, must go by, must flow like the water of a river. Carpe

diem! However, it seems that Silvia Zotta is acting on a hint which is contained in the “TV-set” of Guido Gambone, praised at the Faenza Competition in 1960: the loss of depth and perspective which is inborn in TV societies and even more in today’s, computerized societies, flat screen, with no depth: Zotta’s installation instrumentally adheres to the world of decoration, it becomes a wall and/or a floor, it simulates the art and feigns furniture. Here lies the secret of its charm and success: the audience believes to understand her, but Silvia is fleeting like the time. In this sense Silvia’s ceramic is feminine, you think you possess it, but it is she/it who/which chooses the interlocutor and dictates its “contagion” time.

The Faenza Price for artistic ceramics which was bravely awarded to the young Zotta’s cera-mobiles, the “zottiles”, ceramic installations with a variable and participatory configuration, thus represents a precious hint at the artist with no categories and borders, who is part of the show/information society (and vice-versa). A laugh will bury them !

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