

Collection

Marisa Albanese

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Marisa Albanese, *Via Settembrini*, 2012-14; *Spazi privati*, 2014 (veduta dell'allestimento). Courtesy l'artista e Studio Trisorio, Napoli. In comodato a Madre · museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Napoli. Foto © Amedeo Benestante. | Marisa Albanese, *Via Settembrini*, 2012-14; *Spazi privati / private spaces*, 2014 (installation view). Courtesy the artist and Studio Trisorio, Naples. On loan to Madre · museo d'arte contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples. Photo © Amedeo Benestante.



Tension and traversal are the topoi that thematically unify research and aesthetic strategy of **Marisa Albanese** (Naples, 1947) and structure them conceptually. The traversal is essentially physical in the artist's early work, with the perception of it being related to its dynamic function, as in the palindrome writings that necessarily required the adoption of a moving viewpoint. In the *Grande Gioco* ("Great Game", 1990) by contrast, it is the very morphology of the sculpture that entails a visual, "performative" movement, within the sculpture itself.

Over the years Albanese's development has gradually become more metaphorical; it is configured as an effort to protract itself, tending towards something elusive, investigating the energy flows within and without the work, as in *Le resistenze* ("Resistances", 2002), a sculpture animated by high voltage wires which becomes a prism of pure energy, a metaphor of the artist's energy, seeking to give a representation to the utopia of art itself, so as to change the world, and to the thirst for knowledge that goes beyond the phenomenological limits of reality.

At the same time Albanese's interest is focused on the recovery and reformulation of the roots of proto-classical sculpture, an approach that was already apparent in the *Korai* (2000), works whose name evokes an idea of hieratic sculpture, as well as in the formal rendering, frozen in a compact, immobile and solemn geometric volume.

The references taken from the history of art were then subtly contradicted by the artist in the unusual choice of the postures, the gestures of the hands, which opened up to a large symbolism, and in some features of the figures portrayed, such as the helmets-headaddresses, which return these figures to our own time, giving them a resistential attitude with a feminist ancestry.

The same *modus operandi* is taken up and developed in works such as *Le Combattenti* ("The Combatants", 2000), a permanent installation created for the Quattro Giornate subway station in Naples, and *Le Allieve* ("The Schoolgirls", 2005), sculptures caged and suspended off the ground, in which the gleaming helmet becomes the sole attribute of diaphanous, slender women, emblems of an unripe and androgynous femininity.

More recently Albanese has focused on housing conditions, displacement, nomadism, and the intimate and social flows of energy associated with them. To this period belong her most recent works, such as *Vento del Sud* ("South Wind", 2012) or the series of *Diariogrammi* (2009-14), drawings with shaken, nervous lines, in which the viewers are given the opportunity, in each case, to find their own interpretational key: recordings of the unconscious, mappings of an inner journey triggered by the physical nature of the drawing, by its intrinsic and uncontrollable energy, the inner dialogue between landscape/passage and artist, with the polysemic value that at times may take on the familiarity of a dreaming (open-eyed).

Via Settembrini ("Settembrini Road", 2012-14) is again a work on traversal that directly evokes the history of Naples and its multiple urban and cultural stratifications, its being ultimately, to borrow an expression from Georg Simmel, a palimpsest city. The installation, specially designed for the Madre, consists of a video and two maquettes that represent the plan of San Lorenzo district in which the museum is located and operates: the three-dimensionality of the buildings, the interplay of voids and solids determined by the proximity between the buildings and the streets, or alleys, is rendered by the superposition of a mass of meticulously carved sheets of paper. In this maquette the paper is therefore elevated to a sculptural medium, relating to the research that Albanese has conducted ever since the *Grande Gioco*.

In the video we see the gradual scattering and final reconstruction of the museum itself among the surrounding buildings, an action that renders the image of an institution metaphorically strewn across its territory and which, in dispersing, becomes a creator of community, of shared identity, a mobile but always recognizable embodiment of a collective landmark of the "necessity" represented by the museum.

This work, in its restrained metaphorical quality, though bound up with the artist's whole output, yet favors the evocative component of the object and an impulse of relationship that set it apart from the composite artificiality of earlier works, by their nature akin to bachelor machines. The work in this case becomes a skilful exercise in communication, a conscious form of redemption that gives utterance to the ineffable, makes tangible the invisible, takes position as an active part of the process of creating meaning: it not only contributes to the construction of a symbolic imagery, but it has the power to convey to society the energy of that imagery, making it possible to come to terms with its needs, with its aspirations and iniquities, creating before our eyes the chance to reinvent itself, to rethink its values and goals. Starting from a fragile museum of paper, which yet exerts the attractive and pervasive power of a plural monument, stratified in its multiple proposals and rooted in its lively territory.