

PLAY

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Play: EPVS

Time to take partial stock of a long-term collaboration with Elena Panarella Vimercati Sanseverino, EPVS to be exact, an acronym where the V is pronounced like a U, like in the Latin alphabet, affecting the semiotics of letters, that become a logo without a location. I have always been fond of this name, whose sound is pervaded by a neutral sexuality and an explosive impact. Its graphic design works very well in its own way, letters spin around, driven by a centrifugal force. It impresses itself in your memory straight away: you have to think about that ambiguous V, but then you will never forget it and, most importantly, you will not mix it up with the name of other artists. Let us try to imagine that logo on the cover of an ideal diary, a visual book containing the artist's thematic cycles, her creative history spinning around the changeable rhythms of everyday life, softly kinetic, as it happens with women who are aware of their talents and their fortune. An intimate diary where words are substituted by images endowed with a high communicative power. Page after page, with the support of a website which is a mirror of her inner self. EPVS widens her range of plastic, chromatic, recreational, environmental, immersive artifices...

Rewind: "Hops", 2003

...Every time she stimulates the physical senses with polyphonic works following transversal patterns. Colours hit our sight and massage our eyes; matter becomes increasingly tactile and softly warm; our taste would like to sample the sugary and hyper-feminine surfaces; each step creates fragile percussive effects that caress our hearing; shapes mould relaxing rooms for our smell. A corporeal staff of different techniques and formulations to look into the physical nature of materials, into their emotional and spiritual dynamism. A journey through the poetical meaning of shape, permeated by references to the sphere and the square as symbolic elements. A sinuous course, where femininity moves between inner and outer, micro and macro, sharp and transparent, real and virtual, reasserting that only the sensitivity of a woman, gifted by nature with intuition and poetical sense, can build significant fragments of the fateful foetal look...

Play: life and project

EPVS is a woman who conveys happiness and completeness inside and outside her artistic activity. This aspect, yet, does not prejudice the deep meditation, the melancholy behind the colour, the endoscopic surgery of feelings. The female artists we have been used to are suffering, solitary, inspired and racked at the same time. Women with a happy and positive attitude towards life, whose approach to the world and to their own art is not troubled in any way, who managed to strike a balance between a full private life and a productive creativity, are less frequent. I do not mean to generalise, let it be clear, also because easy social equations are particularly subject to the limitations of any personal judgement. Yet, my personal experience is based on percentage figures that support my statement. Let me repeat it: long live a mature and conscious woman, within a creative system where family, friends, home and personal interests become an inspirational source and a driving force. Her approach does not include any division between life and art; on the contrary, family events inspire the **sublimation of inspiration**.

Rewind: "Strawberry Field", 2010

...Epvs's path resembles the journey of the female body from puberty to maternal life: inflated air-balloons that fly within closed spaces (as fetuses grow up in a protected environment), semi-transparent pillows on which to walk or lie down (as the Woman welcomes and renews the course of Nature), coloured pigments (like face powders). Even her paintings confirm the dynamic nature of sculptures: portraits modify the appearance of the depicted subjects, playing with their ambiguous nature, veiling and unveiling the social and cultural gender codes. Even apparently abstract paintings are actually a sort of endoscopy of the bodies around us, closer look that magnifies the manifold natures of life...

Play: recreational attitude

The manifold facets of play...without being afraid of an open exchange between play and art grammar books. The artist has always thought back about the stereotypes of play as conscious act, choosing shapes and mechanisms that can be easily understood, in order to create new creative matrices from things we have all experienced, or at least known. Whether it is Barbie or beach marbles, manga characters or mutant animal-like creatures, inflatable air-balloons or wigs used as a disguise, the phenomena on which EPVS's eyes rest are always transgenerational, immediate to catch, universal by nature. Traditional plays, that create physical interaction, tangible and tactile in their use, simple and cheap, items that belong to the biological rhythms of liberated time, fragments of a collective vision filled with memories, human relationships, pieces of childhood and adolescence. Those plays are moulded by EPVS into an adult fetish that maintains the original spirit, adding a new dimension, almost always emphasising the playful level through operations of enlargement (marbles), multiplication (air-balloons), transformation (animal-like creatures), (lenticular) distortion...solutions are manifold, yet the sense does not change: it is always about **energy fields with a high figurative volume**, moved from their own origin, so that their shape gets beyond the archetype and turns into a new archetype itself, within that adult "play" called visual art.

Rewind: "Barbie", 2006

...Feminine sceneries, more or less blurry images, naked or barely dressed bodies, glassy eyes that keep the observer at arm's length, a smooth skin reminiscent of a sexually lively androgyny. The scene opens and we discover women of alcoholic charm, whose studied postures suggest an athletic eroticism. Their eyes radiate all over the scenic space, asking for desire and fair distance, arousal and wait, more desire and spasmodically voluptuous silences. Yet, they are dolls, splendidly and irreparably Barbies. Now they are wiry, with straight blond hair. Now they are brown-haired. Now they are black-skinned, with long, curly hair. Now they are more ambiguous and lecherous. Naked or in chic evening attire. But it is always and only them, sexy and provocative, absurdly real in the humanoid dilemma between plastic and reality. We see them in the long-depth field, standing or sitting, lying down in the petals of a glossy world and striking the most sensuous poses, or in medium shots emphasising knowing faces, malicious profiles, magnetic motions. Barbies have the most ambiguous, desirable eyes, thus proving themselves as the ultimate object of sexual lust, as point of no return between desire and passion. Epvs realises her scenes in the environmental silence of her studio. She takes care of each element with the same precision of a video director on a real set. She forces postures, reinvents the scenery, adds details. Reconstructions are meticulous, so that each framing can reach the perfect level of visual

ambiguity, making it so plausible that we get confused between epidermis and plastic, shapes and volumes, micro and macro...

Play: artificial natures

The whole path revolves around **artificial nature**. Plastic and rubber elements recur coherently, a common thread that investigates the playful universes and spreads to night lights, which look like cosmic filaments, to flowers made surreal by their overdone colours, to urban writing that throbs like living bodies. EPVS creates a world in her own image, moulding the normality of reality with vibrant and electrified movements. She makes a pop blood flow into her elective forms, always coming to the very extreme verge, where explosion and implosion are the next -if avoided- passage. Her pop attitude plays on controlled excesses, on forcing natural codes to nourish the artificial nature to the point of maximum calibration. Controlled excess, we could say. The control of the excessive nature of things, we could add when considering the artist's long path.

Play: real spaces

As well as the forcing process affecting the nature of objects, there is another forcing process, involving the nature of physical spaces. EPVS likes to fill rooms with air-balloons, as to change the perception of surfaces, but also of bodies that move within literally immersive perimeters. In other cases, she places inflatable pillows on the floor or creates an accumulation of the same pillows, asking the observer for an active gesture towards her work. Therefore, places change their own nature, turning into energy containers, prostheses of the body surrounding the mobile physicality, providing the container with a new weigh.

Play: unreal lights

And then there are the lights of the city, the lights of the house, the lights of the mind...different versions talking about almost solid filaments, electrical discharges, out-of-focus abstractionism, a coherent way to insert the unreal light into the artist's mental journey, within the magnetic universes of her cheerful yet nocturnal fetishism, the liberating and cathartic creature of curious eyes that retain some parts of the real world. EPVS experiences the light as an immersive environment, a suspended area where artificial nature finds its foetal space, a sort of intuitive origin from which fetishes take shape, starting to move.

Rewind: "Strawberry Field", 2010

...The name Epvs starts with an E, like Energy, an increasingly central word, that waters in different ways the creative tissue of an artist who is open to the entropic movement of bodies. Energy and movement: two non-antithetical words that adapt to her pop-organic world, to her glimmering chromatism of sensorially alive materials. Her works appear like flashes of solid light, and imply a kinetic movement, a muscular interaction, something that touches (and retouches) the work itself, modifying its never-static presence in the physical space. The artist usually arranges pieces according to the principle of cellular ramification, playing on seriality, that branches like a constellation of sharp colours. When she uses white, the alchemical root of elements, the similarity to microscope enlargement or with the cosmic areas of supernovas is still more evident. In the case of pink, an inner urge arises, the urge to elevate the feminine side of the aesthetic approach, the soft nature of the Woman, with her fragile yet resistant worlds, as elastic as the womb, on the border between epidermis and deep spirit...

Play: identity multiplications

The artist watches her hyper-pop universe with the consciousness of Narcissus within vibrant waters. EPVS's physical presence is hardly ever seen, concentrated in her lenticular portraits, where we perceive the movement and catch an impression of truth, something that moves with meteoric and repeated jumps. This image provides a good explanation of the **Electrical Narcissus**, a sort of archetype of the action of hiding inside the recesses of progress, almost appearing, then disappearing, then appearing again, but without the sharpness of a limpid mirror. The identity play of the artist lies here, in her being in the work, without actually being there as a physical stamp. I significantly pointed out that EPVS rarely appears, while we usually see her fetishistic sublimations, the artificial objects that talk about her. This is how I imagine the Electrical Narcissus, as a presence trying to appear in the recesses and then hide behind the luminous vibration, behind objects and installation shapes, behind animals and writing, behind the many souls of a happily restless artist.

Play: prismatic portraits

Identity multiplication means opening up to other people, as to develop photo-digital portraits that justify what has been said so far in terms of approach and action. For first, one thing should be made clear: the portrayed figures are friends of the artist, people who undress or dress up with a common playful consciousness, as if EPVS multiplied herself through the physical presence of other people. Portraits preserve the attitude of playful performance, defying the rules of photographic eroticism, and act on that implosive limit, between unnatural realism and realistic visionariness.

Play: fetish

I can only conclude by lingering on the feminine fetishism of the artist, on her caressing objects in a tactile and watchful way, involving five senses that dress and move artificial shapes. EPVS acts emphatically, she must deeply feel her reference points, experience their facets and follies, surfaces and hidden recesses. A deep tie that mirrors her emotional nature, her way of supplying organic energy to objects that preserve memories and stir future visions.