

Vittoria Chierici: Sorcery and Charm

Vittoria Chierici (Bologna 1955) was one of the Italian names that Milanese artist and art critic Corrado Levi, the organizer of her first solo show (Milan 1986) suggested for his group show “Spunti di giovane arte italiana” three years ago in Buades . If all the stir caused by bringing so many artists together did not facilitate knowledge of individual works, at least it was useful in that the gallery was able to get the word out about each artist.

So let's focus on Vittoria Chierici. Born in Italy trained in the United States, more specifically at the New York School of Visual Arts, she navigates between two cultures. With the protagonists of the new North American scene she shares a great interest for the sociological implications of art, for the fate of images in a consumer society. One of her first known series was one in which she offered a version of the 1962 Andy Warhol's universal Coca Cola bottle, lending it greater pictorial quality. Following this track, she developed a series of silk screens from a painting in which Mike Bidlo had revisited some of Picasso's best known images.

All this is connected to the well known game of mirrors best loved by appropriationists and their commentators, but in Vittoria Chierici's case we are dealing with another type of attitude. Already last year, in introducing her for the catalogue of an important group show in Japan, Corrado Levi pointed out that she belongs to that “neurotic” legacy of Italian painters, albeit so different from each other, such as Filippo de Pisis or Mario Schifano.

As a matter of fact, in Vittoria Chierici's work there is a kind of painterly sensitivity, a kind of simplicity that acts as a redemptive quality against the tendency to turn it into a mere intellectual and pedantic game.

Vittoria Chierici, whose work is based on the obsessive repetition of certain themes is forever oscillating between sorcery and charm. Thus, from a trivial photographic image, a building being demolished in Saint Louis Missouri, to the almost impressionist lightness of the little paintings with which she translates that image. Propagandistic effectiveness spread by the media, as the Rumanian flag waved by the insurgents in the winter of last year, and the grace and freedom of

Vittoria Chierici's treatment of it, encompassing childlike stroke work and a lyrical abstraction à la Sam Francis. Lastly, the fragility of her paintings starting from a figurative representation of tennis balls painted in fluorescent yellow over white and the quirkiness of the result achieved by the painter, as she delivers images laden with the byzantine intensity of Galla Placidia's mausoleum in Ravenna.

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