

Leonardo's "Anghiari" found again and re-interpreted

Interview with Vittoria Chierici by Alain Chivilo, La Piazza – Venice

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This interview with multitalented artist Vittoria Chierici, granted during the preparatory phase for her "Variazioni, riproposizioni, modifiche" exhibit in Budrio (Bologna) at the Torri dell'Acqua, until May 5, has become very topical because of a piece of news from Florence. In Palazzo Vecchio pigments have been detected under Vasari's fresco that are compatible with the colors used by Leonardo da Vinci in different works, and consequently in his 1503 "Battle of Anghiari", which because of its overall incompleteness was covered in 1557 by a series of frescos by Vasari. It is only natural, therefore, to mention this to the artist and ask her what fascinated her the most about the battle scene portrayed in the painting?

V.C. In 1996, I started to study the events around the Battle of Anghiari, a fresco painted by Leonardo da Vinci that had been lost in the past. It was never completed by Leonardo. I continued my research for almost ten years, trying to understand what had been Leonardo's composition plan for the painting. Just two years before I had completed my cinema studies, and this helped me frame in an almost cinematographic way. I positioned the episode of the Battle taken from Leonardo's original drawings as though they were scenes from a movie, using photography rather than perspective to give field depth to my painting. I have never really felt a close relationship with the history of the Renaissance, even though, in my work, I see a kind of simplicity that could be defined as classic. But it is a very general idea, not one that specifically relates to the Renaissance. In the "Battaglia di Anghiari" cycle, I wished to give an emblematic meaning to war, through an iconic and unfortunate painting, such as the one embodied by this uncompleted work. I had fun using digital techniques together with traditional painting. I did not interpret Leonardo's figures, I enlarged the original drawings so that I could move them from one plane to another of the pictorial surface, following not my instincts but studies made by Leonardo scholars trying to reconstruct the Battle. Actually this was the most theoretical of my works. It must be said that in art history battles also represent different schools of style. As my understanding of the Battle of Anghiari developed, it gave me the opportunity to compare the different techniques new and old ones as well, and relate them to each other. When I am in Italy it is impossible for me not to "see" the tradition. The past is everywhere, in the food, in the streets. Even in the

Milano Abstractists. You notice it from the composition, the division of space, the elegance of shapes. The Battles are born from this attitude, but also from my personal past. It is unthinkable for me to express myself only in an autobiographical way on a solid historical platform.

Some of Vittoria Chierici's painting series: stars, coca-cola, flowers. A brief analysis: many series are thought of as processes, as mental games that evolve over time, even technically. They were born in the 1980's and are influenced by Pop Art and Minimalism, with the playful spirit typical of Alighiero Boetti. All these topics are connected with history and they are repeated over the years besides belonging to a single installation like the 10 pieces on Coca Cola Classic and the Galla Placidia stars.