

Solo show, Almanac Inn, Turin, Italy – 1 November/20 December 2019
by Guido Santandrea

From the beginning
I hear what is Beyond
Invisible
Indescribable
Inexpressible

Greta Schödl's work investigates what is beyond the visible. Writing loses its semantic use to address and distribute meanings, instead becomes an abstract medium to record the flow of life.

An a-signifying rupture brings language on the same territories of feeling and touching, using empty configurations of signs, sounds and repetitions to score the intensities and traces of lived experiences.

Schödl's artistic research explores the state of poetic ambiguity that is constantly redefining the relationship between subjectivity and its exteriority. A subject defines itself through language, which simultaneously is a point of connection and mediation with things external to us. The linguistic event defines the tension of a duality between subject and object, between inside and outside: our relation to an environment.

The constant mutability and changing of the self and of our experiences arise on the works in vibrations, weavings, overlaps of empty signifiers. These marks often reiterate the names of the objects that function as support for the writing, repeating themselves as a ritual to rejoin word, name, object and subject.

These vibrations have a personal and intimate nature, yet they resonate in rhythms, refractions furrows and textures of a more complex and universal totality. Junctions of universes that start from a point and a line, constituting singular components of a plural whole, where shapes and movements define each other. The semantic draining enacted by these gestural repetitions deny any image or representation, leaving space to the affirmation of the self, in a shared lived totality.

Time and nature are at the root of the Greta Schödl's practice. The experience of a present moment informs her work, which is simultaneously in between the past which no longer is and the future which is not yet. Often the materials she uses already had a life, they carry with them the signs of time: reused fabrics from an old linen bedding, an ironing board, a female mannequin, handmade papers, gauze, leaves, barks, maps, musical scores, pages of books. Her intervention then joins different temporalities reframed in the present in a mass of vibrations, punctuations and marks that becomes a body.

She attempts to give voice and a new life even to the smallest scrap. The unique shapes of a leaf or the random pattern drawn by a gauze fallen on the floor become the letters of an alphabet; every wrinkle of a fabric or a body can carry countless information and stories. In Schödl's work the imprint of the skin, an arm or a nipple become scores of lived experiences and encounters; each plant has its own language. The repetitions and the preciousness of Schödl's writing - she uses gold to fill part of the letters she traces, she calls them "points of light" - assimilate her works to a herbarium or a book of prayers, where words and their meanings are emptied out to give space to feeling, reinventing the relation of the subject to the body, to the passage of time, to life within a shared world.

In a collection of prints and poems composed between 1957 and 1999, in a note Greta Schödl cannot forget to thank “what is not visible, what happens between things”. The book includes a poem, which the first half has been used as the title of this exhibition, it ends like this:

From the beginning
I hear what is Beyond
Invisible
Indescribable
Inexpressible

Is it the end?
No. I keep bringing myself
up to this door
to open it and to go through.
(Greta Schödl)

Guido Santandrea