

MELANIE MATRANGA

Denim

February 25 - April 16, 2016

Working with drawing, sculpture, film and more generally the production of ambivalent environments often mimicking the intimate or private states of being and interrelating, Mélanie Matranga's exhibition at Indipendenza consists in new textile-based works as well as wall drawings that occupy the spaces in a sparse but explicit, head-on manner.

Greeting the viewer in the first room, the word NEED is repeated in large and loud black letters sewn on two white waxed fabric pieces. Playing with the crafty genre of sewn appliqué, they function like demonstrative, emo(tional) banners of sorts. Facing one another, the naked words reverberate a caricatural almost pubescent primal call which, rather at odds with the elegant gallery they are displayed in acts like a destabilizing mirror-statement the visitor cannot really avoid.

As generic, at once empty and open, as the chorus of a love song - the artist has left the lyrics of a brazilian song by the entrance desk for the visitor to indulge - these sewn NEEDS, straight forwardly point at the authenticity of the thoughts and desires that words like these are our common vehicle for.

As a negative space of these banners, or another surface on which expressions of the kind usually end up, are three giant standard-cut t-shirts hung in another room. These pale colored fabric pieces, pose halfway between soft sculptures and blown-up pop artefacts. Other than the presence of « labels » bearing an , their surfaces have been left blank, ready to take on any prêt-à-porter feeling the visitor would want to project on them.

About the difficulty to tackle with emotions and the notion of authenticity without falling into the pitfalls of identity or of a product-branding-self, the curators of a group show at Castillo-Corrales in 2013, entitled « Issues of our times » and that included Mélanie Matranga, stated: ...Emotions are rendered visceral and kept distant in the same gesture of making them happen and fixing them. They're a way to mark one's own otherness. What is at stake is not the search for the "right" stuff or position – it's the possibility to deal with prerequisites in order to twist the game.

The wall-drawings executed in the smaller rooms in between, are blown up scribbles representing states of the mind typical of the feeling of emptiness or loneliness that can follow collective, festive moments. Almost like an automatic response to lingering desires or cravings that are mostly irreducible to language or textual structures, their enlarged rendering erases the line between private and public, exacerbating banal and basic feelings shamelessly in a way only pop culture is usually authorized to, to the point of exhaustion. But still, desire prevails.

The exhibition plays with such counterfeit, post-romantic representational contradictions. However, resting on the idea that art is still what makes life better than art, it is ultimately also what (the spaces of) art can still be the site of, the vehicle for today, other than meta-discourses on art history itself, that Mélanie Matranga is stressing through this game of proportions, and of explicit moods and again desires. A position that inserts itself a bit further in between these parallel and quintessentially not fully contradictory narratives...

E. S.