

Christelle Lheureux  
*Non ricordo il titolo* – *I forgot the title*

text by Marinella Paderni, translation by Janet Minichiello

A man and a woman meet on the island of Stromboli without an apparent reason. The video camera first follows the man, who moves about the lunar, desolate landscape of the volcanic island. It is daytime, and the man seems to be looking for or waiting for someone. Then she appears, immobile, seated on a rock. They talk but without succeeding in truly communicating: they speak different languages, their questions echo in the silent landscape; they await responses from each other that do not arrive. He seems to recognize her, she does not seem to recognize him. He pursues her in order to receive confirmations that she is not capable of giving. He recounts things about themselves that she does not understand, or does not remember. Suddenly, the night covers everything in a curtain of faded, impalpable sleep: they continue to search for each other, to speak without really saying anything, to uselessly call a third person named Anna. Only at the end do the intense and impetuous images of the volcano's lava bring us back to a dimension of reality, forcefully shaking us from the state of gentle unconsciousness into which we had fallen.

The breathtaking vision of a nature that flees from human control, that threatens to overwhelm that control with its fury, causes us to reemerge from the visual apnea of this «daydream» that Christelle Lheureux has ironically decided to call *Non ricordo il titolo*, in homage to the various cinematographic *déjà-vus* that comprise the video and also to the semi-unconscious fantasy that wafts throughout the work, leaving the spectator in limbo between dream and fable, between memory and oblivion. «...no dream is entirely a dream,» Arthur Schnitzler tells us in his novel *Dream Story* with regards to that limboesque territory between wakefulness and sleep, between conscious and unconscious, in which the terms pervade each other to the point of total confusion and the dream seems to acquire the same realistic solidity of experience. A *second* reality, this, that has the contours of dreamlike ecstasy, from hallucination or transcendental meditation; a reality that in these cases allows the body to be present and active, while the memory and imagination participate in the magic of everything that is possible and truer than truth. In the middle ground that is the semi-unconscious, images generated from the deep are combined with memories from conscious life and dreamlike images, like when one watches a film and projects parts of oneself onto the story.

In this video, the excess of reality and the control exercised daily upon our imaginations by the largest producers of images – that transform the spectator into a consumer of false idols – are baffled thanks to Christelle Lheureux's work on the processes of perception, the psychology of depth, and the incommunicability of certain languages. This artistic practice is able to reinvent desire and to liberate the imaginative intelligence, restoring to the spectator the possibility of being an *interpreter* of

other people's dreams or of inventing new dreams through a work of post-production of visual suggestions and preexisting excerpts (cinematographic images, personal memories, music, *tranche de vie*). Christelle Lheureux explores the spectral value of the filmic image, its character as a simulacrum of the world, implementing deviations and derivations in the visual structures of the current reality-screen. With the dictatorship of the screen, tele-reality has imposed upon us the spectacularization of the world as well as a kind of blindness. Whoever consumes images today does not have to «see» anything besides the spectacle – which is a partial and deceptive copy of the world without, however the original; it is a hollow and illusory image of reality that implies a transformation of the visible into a visual phantom destined for the production of the spectator's pleasure.

Self-representation is a fundamental characteristic of the contemporary nature of the twentieth century, a period in which «the image of the world» prevailed thanks also to a powerful reinforcing *medium* like film. The filmic image is the image of this epoch; it appears as an impression of reality and instead reveals itself as a differential doubling of the world as a simulacrum. It shows itself as a double of the world, to then expose itself as something else both with regards to its duplication as well as to the world itself. «It is an image that masks, it masks itself and it unmasks itself above all,» an image that oscillates between hollow appearance and the simulation of the phenomenal. The simultaneous being and not-being of the filmic image, its evanescence, its ghostly quality (it is a phantom of a magical, imaginary world) generate a state of intensification of psychic activity very similar to that induced by dreaming.

With regards to *Non ricordo il titolo*, Christelle Lheureux recounts having imaged the history of an impossible cinema – a totally de-structured mental narration in images and dialogues, a filmic collage without a story, with cinematographic *flash-backs* of Italian Neorealism and French Nouvelle Vague. As after a night spent watching films d'auteur, the mental residuals of those visions – together with nocturnal dreams and individual memories – collide in a «space open to the imagination of the spectator» and to every possible narrative phantom. This phantom is symbolized by two protagonists, professional doubles of Marcello Mastroianni and Ingrid Bergman, that act as simulacra of identity.

*Non ricordo il titolo* is not a *remake* or a work comprised of citations. Roberto Rossellini's *Stromboli*, Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'avventura* (for its masterly look at the world), and Alain Resnais' *Last year at Marienbad* (for the *nouveau roman* dialogues written by Alain Robbe-Grillet) are present insofar as they are subliminal traces of a reality generated by art and elaborated in a dream «with eyes wide open.»



*non ricordo il titolo*  
(*Eravate come morta*)  
2008, photographic print  
mounted on aluminium d-bond,  
50 x 90 cm, edition of 5  
Courtesy Artericambi

*non ricordo il titolo*  
(*Ho aspettato per molto tempo*)  
2008, photographic print  
mounted on aluminium d-bond,  
50 x 90 cm, edition of 5  
Courtesy Artericambi

right page:  
*Non ricordo il titolo*,  
movie poster, 2008,  
by Katya Bonnenfant.

