

(Luca Francesconi)

Dear Katja,

recently I've seen some picture about your last solo show "Macro Expansion" and - apart the topics of the project - I've explained to myself a very common observation: by now our culture about the Visual Arts is builded "on the screen", by images of artwork seen "on the screen". When you make a show, or a room inside an your show, with the photographic silhouettes you create the same effect "at screen" than I've previous described. The final effect is a perfect sovraposition by the empirical image and his thought. What do you think about?

(Katja Novitskova)

Digital images are a special kind of product. I haven't had an artist studio for most years I have been an artist, but I've had a laptop since many years. This is a simple way to explain how the images and thoughts in my work are so related. When I am preparing an exhibition I sketch not just the ideas I have around the exhibition or single works, but the potential visual documentation of it. It is also a moment when I assess the work before deciding to produce it – its forms, its stories and how things are connected and expressed. The aspects of the immediate reality of the work, the institution it is being exhibited in, city, season and other factors that contextualize the exhibition are included in this initial visual sketch, the work itself. Although born on the screen it is 'context based' both in relation to the actual experience and the screen. These days I have a physical studio, but the works are still often born on the screen from a process of a kind of collage-making from raw materials: usually a collection of digital images. The conceptual layer of the work is intimately related to this activity, but it would take a long essay to explain how exactly. Image-making is probably then the best way to talk about this practice – no matter how big are the resulting physical installations, their origins and final products are images. And as another by-product of this visual alchemy, value is being translated from one source to another, allowing me to make a living.

(LF) Yesterday I have bought a kg of mandarins, and the ortolan given to me a orange plastic bag. This seems a sort of involutary tautology... but I utilised this funny situation for to take some photos



This is a common mandarin





and this is a mandarin mummified on the windowsill of my studio.



On this other the Time has played an strong effect, but also the context is a

sort of semantic field for our subject. Do you think this "change" is only a fact of circumstances (light, setting, context and other subject - the bronze bull etc...) or do you think this is a really mutation of subject? As a change of substance in the same shape...

(KN) I am familiar with mandarins – they are fruits of the mandarin tree and are quite a common product where I live. I eat them and they are often featured in different kinds of representations around me – from advertisements to cartoons to paintings to etc. Mandarins are bright orange, sweet, juicy, rich with vitamin C and delicious. It is one of the fruits that people chose to grow on an industrial scale; as a species Mandarin tree is doing fine. I get mandarins at a market or supermarket, and yes they often come with packaging that somehow contributes to their already attractive look. Eventually mandarins dry up if left uneaten, rot and sometimes get covered in mold. Rotting and molding is caused by tiny organisms consuming the fruit, in case other animals pass on their chance. The matter that once was a fresh mandarin filled with nutritious chemicals becomes a host to other beings, its cells loose their water, crucial structures break down taking life with it. Does the mandarin become something else when it is being disintegrated? It is a complex process; what one thinks of as shape and substance is something that we as humans assign to it for the sake of our conversations, not the nature of the body or object.

What you showed me is a series of images with mandarins as main elements in them. A single mandarin that first comes in a group is isolated by you and captured in several different situations over time. The ‘mutating’ state of the fruit contributes to the impact of the images: molding mandarin, spider-net and a bronze bull affect me in a very different way compared to the freshly bought fruits in a bright plastic bag.