

UN'ARTISTA ITALIANA A NEW YORK

Speranze, illusioni e delusioni di una giovane artista

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Peter Reginato

Enter the house - studio of sculptor Peter Reginato, is like stepping into the pages of a magazine of architecture and design.

We are in a loft in SoHo green street, fifth floor, the windows from which an amount of light entering unthinkable, there are not curtains. Dipped in white furnishings and yellow of the sun that hits us.

Reginato, in turn, seems to be a Hollywood actor, Hi is happy to introduce me his twenty years old son, coming out of his room flooded with the music of the Rolling Stones. When he opens the door I am faced with a model, or so it seems, his father asks him to turn down the volume.

The artist invites me to follow him, hi shows me works perfectly installed in some area of the loft.

He tells that living in this space for forty-five years, arrived in New York in 1966 from San Francisco with his friend, the painter Ronnie Landfield.

"Ronnie and I had met at the San Francisco Art Institute, we became friends and rented a studio together, at some point I decided that I had to go to New York. I loaded my stuff into a van and told Ronnie that I was leaving. Of course he asked me if there was a place for him in the van. Since then, both of us never left New York. "

I follow him in the studio where he shows me a large sculpture in progress, while I ask him if he has Italian origins. "Yeah sure, I was born in America, but my grandmother was immigrated ... remember that she spoke Italian, I regrets not having studied it now! I could show it off with you "

Reginato is an artist that puts us at ease immediately, with his polite personality, with his spontaneous smile, but especially with his work.

Born as a painter, but soon turned to sculpture that became his primary medium for expression, however, never leaves the act of drawing and in part painting, infact it shows me three recent paintings, seriously wants to know what I think of. I really like and I say that I would like to see more.

This is something new for me, I've known for years his work as a sculptor and not as painter. Hi shows me the sculptures that are in the studio, I look at his instruments, proper equipment for the use of metal and steel. It reminds me of a garage where to fix cars, he proudly explains that it took him years to have all the equipment I'm looking at.

I like to feel a sense of history that you breathe in his studio, one senses that the artist has spent many years here, despite the loft is perfectly ordered, but I think this reflects his personality.

I would describe his art as: a woman's sensibility, color of children, men's material.

I try to explain my thoughts based on personal feelings, Reginato's sculptures, not just the ones I see in the studio now, but all those he has created since very young age (he shows me the long history on the computer) speak of an artist who has chosen as personal expression the freedom before sculpture.

Freedom is the medium used by children early in life, when play and discovery lead them to pursue forms and colors and combine them together like a collage.

Watching every single piece that makes a sculpture of Reginato will remind us when as children we were put in front a box of mixed colors, shapes and construction and we had to choose pieces according to our taste, our attraction to a color, and then our imagination create a play like a piece of art.

In his sculptures can be viewed butterfly wings, fin fish, leaves, insects, plants, game pieces, pieces collected from the street, candy, cakes, geometric shapes, you name one? It's there.

Children are also coming to mind in his big sculptures, the one that Reginato think for exterior of a garden or a museum. Automatically they remind us of those articulate houses in metal found in the parks where children climb under the watchful eyes of parents.

Sensibility of woman: its forms are delicate, never aggressive, its colors are pastel shades, truly delicate, there is an atmosphere of grace in his sculptures. Even when the forms become more complex, as if they were unable to extricate themselves, as if caught between the iron or wrapped steel, never give us a sense of constraint or violence. If anything, there is once again the sense of play. The shapes, colors and materials chase each other, dance together, they run, they mixed and they separate. His works are elusive, as sensuality is, more we look at, most we found something beautiful that escapes and so attracts us.

Man's material: such a sense of grace, however, is built from materials that could be called "manly", steel, metal, iron, occasionally wood. The artist uses a blowtorch in a gesture full of self-control, masculinity is also in its presence. We look at his work and think about a child, a woman, but then look at Peter Reginato, a tall man with a cover face, a deep voice, and a robust figure. So we think that everything has a meaning in his works.

What may seem a contrast is rather natural, an artist who has kept a child's freedom and that is strongly inspired by the beauty of women. An artist who communicates with his life: nature, love, art.

If you read some of the titles of his works that dialogue is even more evident.

In dialogue with the mysterious world of women he addresses to love as: "Cold beauty, Radical Love, The woman and the night", and then talk with the artists: "Dear Henry, Dear Vincent," then speaks with softness to color: "Little Pink" and then quote a poet "Michael the Poet" and a dear place "Coney Island".

There is a sense of respect and curiosity about the mysteries of life in all its forms. Invites the viewer to interact with his work, through titles, but not only.

In front of a sculpture by Peter Reginato, would be tempted to turn around, climb, untie a knot, to set free a form that is about to fall off from the rest, but still can not.

We imagine see a piece of his work to fly in the sky like a balloon that is take off from the bunch, bring a color, perhaps that "Little Pink" in the clouds and watch it disappear.

Reginato has become more subtle over the years, at first, young, arrived in New York, his sculpture was more marked, heavy and experimental.

My favorite work in fact, is called "Strange Brew", (Please Peter put the year!) in the photo which is the only documentation left, appears on the roof of this loft. Reginato explain that at the time had not been able to sell or store for lack of space that series of sculptures, thus leading then to the roof and there they remained for years.

I ask him where they are now, and he says seraphically "I have no idea, when I was asked by the owner of the building to remove the sculptures I lent "Strange Brew" at Electric Lady Land Studios, a recording studio often attended by Jimi Hendrix where I use to go because I had friends there. Nobody knows what happened to my sculpture, I think it was thrown or destroyed. I destroyed many works in my turn, if I had not space and not sold them after a while I was obligate to destroy, I had no choice.

Things began to get better in 1976 when I won the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship for sculpture and other grants, then I could afford to save some work ... "

Both in front of the computer continue to flow through the eyes the images of sculptures on the screen, while David Bowie make us a soundtrack (his son has never turned down the volume, but the father has close an eye noticing that I do not mind), Reginato jumps up and goes back in front of the three paintings in progress on the wall, "Amalia come here please, I'm not convinced, what do you say?" We look together again, I have no doubt, "I like them as I like your sculptures, this gray canvas is my favorite, " I reply.

He looks at me with his smile and asks me "Are you sure you do not want a coffee?"

www.peterreginato.com