

Geneva UnderCover presents an excerpt of the monograph *Coquille de lumière* (“shell of light”) Rita Mancesti’s first publication, and the result of a complete collaboration between an artist and an art historian since 2009.

The book launch coincides for Rita Mancesti with the autonomous repossession of her once shared gallery-studio in Coppet (renowned for the occasion Artiswiss) and the presentation of a new cycle of artworks. “City Slices” is an oil painting declension of an urban journey, mixing figment and realism. It follows the thread of an exhibition tour that began in Versoix (Geneva), then channelled to London. The artist’s first show outside Switzerland, is displayed at The Brick Lane Gallery, from May 27th, to June 9th, 2014.



The Way of The Collection

Rita Mancesti’s artworks, stigma of oil, clay and bronze or “the Eden lost and found”*

The collectors of Rita Mancesti’s depictions found themselves for the first time in front of an artist’s canvas, conquered by the emotion aroused by the vision of the painted landscape. Caught in the warmth of the soothing brick shades, the silky bluish blurriness of the Lake Geneva or the fresh ethereal luminosity of the northern beaches, admirers will inevitably burrow into the pictorial microcosm, reminiscence of a universe, which is often familiar and cherished. If Rita Mancesti masters the elaboration and equilibrium of colours, composition and vivid contrasts, she primarily has the ability to capture the affect, a landscape or situation awakened in her, then using her brushstroke in oscillation, to transmit on canvas and finally to the beholder, what moves her.

Few artists living in the Lake Geneva area paint local landscapes and the lake particularly. As for Rita Mancesti, she savours spending time to absorb variations of the light and colour of the lakeshore panoramas in perpetual change; panoramas that constitute the crucible of her daily inspiration. Her international buyers are specifically fond of her paintings with the theme of the Lake Geneva, and thus return home, in possession of a vision bred in the course of what the artist has lived and felt, recalling a landscape, which had enraptured them during their stay on the lakeside.

Rita Mancesti’s work, however, is not confined to Lemanic paintings; the diversity of topics, techniques and material, delight buyers and collectors. She sometimes draws her inspiration from the lessons of her masters, and most importantly, she experiments, she innovates; and as a genuine and conscientious artist, her art is in constant evolution. Oil thus sometimes egresses of its two dimensions to germinate a skilful acrylic heap; and alternating with her works on canvas, she creates small formats in bronze, with adroit and graceful human shapes, which to the beholder, function as real sensitive mirrors of oneself or a loved one.

*Geneva UnderCover, 7th Edition

On the side of genre paintings, narration twists towards the unexpected and the jolly, and the artist passionately gets involved with the wishes of her silent partners. A couple that went to Amsterdam, recounts what had enthused them. Rita Mancesti listens, imagines, then embodies on the canvas, architecture, patterns, pigments, sounds, voices, anecdotes. She confides: “I like to mix a personal story with a painting. Melting a particular moment of life into a painted scene fascinates me. I think of specializing in projects in oil, each of which will function as a pictorial narrative of a silent partner’s life sequence selected by him. This idea came to me during the making of *Slices*, I then experienced to integrate in this cycle of artworks, my own story and emotions which were related to it. I wish to share such personal elements to the viewer, make him get in the scene and establish a dialogue through my paintings.”

Slices, *Mosaics* and *Pearls of Engadine*, named as such by the artist who playfully associates them with “beads that are threaded in a necklace”, can be considered as the “pearls” of her art in the precious sense. Rita Mancesti excels in these polyptychs occasionally separable, each requiring a month of work and she conceives only three or four per year. Since any rare piece arouses the infatuation of a fervent collector, especially the *Mosaics* become sought after by connoisseurs of the artist’s oil paintings and therefore see their prices increase every year.

However, the increasing mercantile value is not the primeval attraction of the paintings to collectors. The collector, an expert in continual hunt for a coveted imagery, indefatigably entails the encounter with the object of his desires. Hazard guided by a trenchant curiosity, uncovers a lethargic marvel in dereliction; emotional receptacle, the object, the image, the artwork, crystallizes as the taste of Proust’s madeleine, the memory of an instead, the inevitable association with a loved one, a state of mind, an atmosphere, a sense of nostalgia that goes back to the roots of childhood.

It is in this sense that Rita Mancesti’s landscapes and subjects enthrall collectors’ mindfulness. Warm and bright colours seize, mesmerize, transport within a universe once explored through travel, reverie or a distant ordinary day, barely sublimated, revealed by the misty brushstrokes, recalling the scent of flowers and laundry drying in the sun. Reason, disoriented by the lack of temporal, geographical and mathematical landmarks, surrenders. The mind can then freely wander in the aesthetic space designed for each composition.

Knowledge of landscapes and Swiss traditions — including the “désalpe” (Alpine winter driving) — and Mediterranean habitats, reveal the artistic signature of Rita Mancesti, by the empirical and emotional experience. Therefore, each work of art is unique, materializing the supersensible, sealing the creative process, eternizing a fragment of time, according to the artist’s purpose.

Celina Orli Kosinski, art historian / proof reading in English: Alexandre Jeanson

« Du côté de la collection », in *Coquille de Lumière, Rita Mancesti – Une rétrospective de 1984 à 2013, Renens, 2013*. © Rita Mancesti, www.mancesti.com.

This edition is accessible on hard copy at the reading room of the Art and Archaeology Library, at the Art and History Museum of Geneva. Website & access:

<http://institutions.ville-geneve.ch/fr/mah/bibliotheque/informations-pratiques/acces-horaires/>

The monograph *Coquille de lumière* is available for purchase at The Brick Lane Gallery or at: info@mancesti.ch

Current and future exhibitions:

_ “City Slices”, May 27th to June 9th, 2014, The Brick Lane Gallery, London/UK – www.thebricklanegallery.com

_ Permanent exhibition at the gallery-studio Artiswiss, Coppet/CH – www.artiswiss.ch

Information on www.mancesti.ch