

**2013, January**

## **In Conversation:**

### **Verdiana Patacchini Interviewed By Alessandro Berni**

**Alessandro Berni:** You were selected for the Italy Pavilion at the Venice Biennial in 2011. What memories do you keep of that period?

**Verdiana Patacchini:** Lots of positive situations - the sort that give you a boost - make you more determined and willing to go all out in order to achieve your dreams. These satisfactions keep you going.

**AB:** At 28 years old, you are seen as one of the most promising painters of your generation. Does this make you feel proud or worried?

**VP:** There are always things to worry about. In any case, I believe it is normal when one has a conscience. As for pride, I will only be able to be proud in the future. If I manage over the years and with my next works, the recognition I have obtained so far will be confirmed.

**AB:** Does Verdiana Patacchini of today feel she has grown up?

**VP:** I'd say no ...

**AB:** "La Veronica," is a work that was recognized with the Catel Prize in 2012. When describing this picture, you stressed that this work was 'Italian' and that it originates from an ancient world. Is "Italy" a word that still has a future?

**VP:** "La Veronica" is a work with signs and inscriptions that cannot be conceived from a blank sheet of paper or anything else. When I think of signs in painting, Basquiat immediately comes to my mind. For this particular work, however, I searched for the image of a Veronica that was painted in the present tense and was Italian. I feel as if I can say that my origins are in Italian tradition. I consider it valuable if one knows how to let one's identity seep out through their work. If you ask me whether the word "Italy" has a future, I say it certainly does. Saying we're living through a difficult period doesn't seem very original. It is innovative, however, to acknowledge how lucky we Italians are to be born in a country that is unique in its culture and beauty.

**AB:** Is Verdi's future going to be Italian?

**VP:** I hope so. Yet, whatever the general situation in one's own country may be, it's always good to get new experiences and take in other cultures. I've just got an artist's visa for the United States. So for a few years, I'm going to have the chance to try living and working in America.

**AB:** So you're switching countries?

**VP:** Let's say that I'm on the move. I have got various bits of baggage and works in New York, but I'm about to buy a home in Rome.



Verdiana Patacchini, La Veronica

**AB:** In your works, one can glimpse an on-going investment inside you. In regard to color and theme, your natural elements seem to be fire and earth. With your signs and your subjects, you show a recurring notion of uneasiness. Does Verdiana Patacchini paint in order to stand firm?

**VP:** “Painting is the art of deception” and by this I do not mean the technique of simulating. I mean that it can trick one’s memory. Painting can be a way of evading truth. You can paint and draw what is around you, but in my opinion reality is only a pretext. I do not know whether I paint to stand firm. In fact, what occurs is probably the opposite. It is true that my elements could be fire and earth. My art is one that uses various materials, and I love playing with and confounding what people see. I use heavy materials like iron and corrosive ones like acid, but I treat them as if they were sheets of paper or watercolors. In spite of this, I’d like to go after the air element and perhaps I’ll get to lighter forms.

**AB:** Your figurative works feature single subjects or two people at most - a sort of “me and me style.” Why are groups so rarely present in your works as they generally are in figurative arts?

**VP:** That is a good question. Regarding the figurative concept, I consider this aspect can even be found in works where there are no figures at all. I mean that the importance of color or contrast can count as figurative elements in a painting. On the contrary, a landscape or a mountain can become an abstract shape. I believe the sense of

collectivity and of living together without having everything under control is intrinsically present in my art. I entrust the oxidation of iron, with its ability to create haphazard stains. This trust has a crucial role and is almost ritual, yet it requires interpretation for how much time is needed until completion. With regards to the dualism present in my paintings, it does not just come from the "me and me style." I like to look for the meeting point between casualness and intention, as well as attraction and the presence of two opposing and irreconcilable principles.

**AB:** You sign your paintings with the pseudonym "Viridi." Why?

**VP:** While I was at the academy, I painted figurative subjects (nudes) of an academic nature. Then, I felt I had to get away from all that and I started to disarrange some still life compositions using collage exercises. Proceeding on this path, I found it boring to think that you could grasp the sex of a painter by looking at a picture. I did not want to do female paintings. With "Viridi," you couldn't necessarily grasp the female or male characteristics of whoever had painted the picture signed with this pseudonym. I liked the idea right away and I'm still signing as "Viridi."

**AB:** Would you like to share with us the names of the people you met in your life who were most professionally crucial to you?

**VP:** I can very enthusiastically say that I had the luck and chance to meet some special people of an extraordinary level of culture and intelligence. I can mention names like Jan Claire, Alain Tapiè, Achile Bonito Oliva, Alberto Agazzani, Giuseppe Appella, Walter Rossi, Vittorio Sgarbi, and Marco Goldin. However, everything started with the most important encounter: Carlo Guarenti. I could go into a lot of detail about everything he has taught me, but it would deserve a separate section on its own. I can assert that I would like to be able to see an exhibition of Picasso, Caravaggio, Vermeer, Brueghel, or Soutine with the same eyes as him.