

PRESENTATION OF THE GROUP SHOW "RIPRENDO IL FILO" ("PICKING UP THE THREADS"), FOR RENT/FOR SALE #1, 10 VIA STOPPANI, ROME, FEBRUARY 2014

Dear Everyone, I unexpectedly decided to pick up the threads of the discussion where I had left it seven years ago, a discussion which I had to interrupt because of force majeure events in June 2007. I say unexpectedly because in November of last year the idea of getting back in the game of contemporary art and artists was a million years away from my thoughts. At that time I was still fully immersed in a very particular project, almost impossible to make, of a historical exhibition. But things never happen by chance. If it wasn't for the perception of being in a dead-end street with my project, and with a need to distance myself from that walking cliché I had become ("the happy mother" who also felt confused, frustrated of not having a personal identity beside that of being a parent) I would have probably never made that phone call (to a dear old artist friend, who I wanted to visit) which turned out to be crucial for the birth of my new project "Arte e Altro", and this first exhibit. As soon as I set foot in P.'s studio I was stunned, and in awe: large canvases, new colours, and his same calm, balanced, wise and serene voice. A somewhat surreal dialogue ensued: one made of out-loud questions that I asked him, but was in fact really asking myself, and his well-balanced, open and invigorating answers, which, by reminding me my past as a gallery owner, opened up new scenarios and prospects. Exactly what my famished ego needed at the time: some attention, some recognition! Elisabetta: "It would be great if I organised an exhibit, don't you think?" P: "Well yes, you were great, you left a mark" E:"The idea of organising a nice exhibit in an original place would be really stimulating" P:"It's the right time, the kids are grown up now" E:"You are right, why not?" Now I was ready, and I had an idea about the location of my first new exhibition: "I have an idea!" I said, "Yesterday I was in a home that a friend of mine had borrowed from another friend in order to show a jewellery collection of hers, and I learned she wanted to rent out her apartment" ... You know what? I'll take some apartments originally for rent or sale for two weeks at most, and I'll make exhibits in those spaces, calling the project "Artists for rent/hire". P. had restored my confidence, and I was ready to go. I thought of nothing else for the next 5/6 days, and I could hardly restrain myself from telling my project to my friends. On the seventh day however, without a real reason, I decided to abandon my endeavour. But a series of circumstances made me change my mind again: I met by chance, when I went to pick up my kids at school, the friend who was renting out her apartment, and who I had never called, and when she questioned me about me never giving her a call about that matter, in a few minutes I explained my original idea. We discussed things over barley and coffee, and she seemed enthusiastic about my project. I have just explained things in detail just to show you how exactly this new "Arteealtro" idea came into being. Finally, I was able to distance myself from the restrictive dynamics of the art world, and especially of owning a gallery (the bills to pay, the compromises), and I could finally move freely, both in my choice of artists, and of the "end-users" of art. With "Arteealtro" I don't intend to hold an elitist "artsy-fartsy" discourse, but I would like to be at the forefront of a higher and more universal form of communication, made of empathy and resonance, of a welcoming warmth. With "Arteealtro" I will be even more determined to make room for new talent, but also to give voice to those who have been working earnestly for years, without the proper recognition, those whose human and artistic parable is at risk of being forgotten. With "Arteealtro" I would like to create synergies between different cultural sectors and welfare-related social endeavours, so that the threads which I unexpectedly picked up where I had left them can be reinforced, can grow and leave a trace of their passage. Dear Everyone, I am happy and moved to be working again with You, and pleasantly surprised of rediscovering your work, which I now inevitably find has grown, changed, evolved...

Elisabetta Giovagnoni, Rome, January 30, 2014