

PRESENTATION OF INDIA EVANS' SOLO SHOW "MOTHER NATURE", Galleria 9 via della vetrina contemporanea, Rome, NOVEMEBR 25, 2005

Dedicated to the one who suddenly left but still looks out for me and advises me with love and wisdom as always... To those who are about to arrive: unexpected, beautiful, mysterious, magical gifts...

When India Evans came to see me at the gallery I was struck by her femininity – she moved like a miniature woman – and was fascinated by her collages. By telling stories of women of another era these art works transpired a sensuality and seduction proper to their author, and they immediately felt like they were telling India's personal story. Chatting over dinner, India told me about her father – the artist John Evans, known in the US for having made one collage a day for forty years – and I discovered she was connected to and belonged, in a way, to the magical world of "twins": she had a twin sister, her maternal mother had a twin sister, her partner had a twin, her cousin had three twins! So, it wasn't a coincidence that I had felt her work was somehow linked to her personal life! When she lived in the US, India never felt the need to make collages. It was only when she came to Italy, in order to fill the void and the distance separating her from her twin sister, from her family and loved ones, that she started her first collage, following in her father's footsteps, while at the same time undertaking a backwards journey of her life. The first artworks of the artist (shown at the collective exhibition last December) correspond to this existential phase, in which the importance of being a twin emerged: the image of a woman who was spilt in two, or looked at her reflection in a mirror was recurrent; in the series "Inside-Out" – silhouettes of pregnant women made with collages of old clothes having belonged to unknown women – a certain innate memory of the nine months shared with her sister in her mother's womb emerged. During her first personal exhibit at my gallery the artist made a new series of art pieces which coincided with a new existential phase and a "re-birth" of herself. The personal story of India Evans runs parallel to her artistic path, as well as my personal life and my pregnancy, through the work of her series "Mother Nature". With "Nine Months" the artist deals with the theme of gestation, and the bond between embryonic life in its suspended state, and the universe, a theme exemplified by the thin silver thread connecting all collages to the central one. In the medium and large collages, her interest is focused on the direct actions of Mother Nature, whose metamorphosis is apparent, and in which the tree branches represent the connection between the earth and the sky, its centuries-old rings represent the relation between past and present, and its leaves embody the cycle of birth, death, and re-birth. With the art piece "Branching Out", composed by nine canvases forming one large unit, which can also be observed individually, India Evans creates not only a link between the two gallery storeys: she also reminds us our bond with the universe, and the ethereal figures first dance as joyful souls, then, when they take human form in the lower storey of the gallery, they presence becomes disturbing. Through the eight compositions – buttons, stones, fabric clippings – which look like fetishes or fossils – India Evans prepares us for the large project-room installation, entirely transformed for the occasion in a "forest of symbols", composed by sculptures made of pantyhose and black laced stockings filled with foam. Hanging down from the ceiling as stalactites, and popping up mysteriously from the walls and the floor, these unusual art works invade the entire room and transform the space in a magical and mysterious place, where

the boundary between what is real and imaginary is almost imperceptible. In this sort of trans-organic paradise India Evans' erotic themes come back to the surface; these themes are not linked to the past erotic life of the former owners of the used undergarments exhibited (pantyhose, laces, stockings); they are fragments of the artist's life, reminiscent of the growth of a forest, which in turn bring us back to the start of the exhibit's journey: the gestation process of the baby in the mother's womb. If on one hand the work marks the beginning of a new existential phase for the artist, and it symbolises a conscious, more mature "re-birth", ("Nine Months" series) there is still space for uncertainty and mystery surrounding her life, as well as ours: the indefinite shadows appearing on the large collages, and again in the nine paintings on canvas, which herald the restless spirit of the project-room installation.

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