

*Most people see the problem of love primarily as that of being loved, rather than that of loving, of one's capacity to love. Erich Fromm*

There are few existential concerns that have been written about as much as emotions and feelings related to love. Writers, musicians and artists of all disciplines and eras have devoted much of their production to unravelling the secrets of a particular emotion that possesses the capacity to be both beautiful and disturbing. However, it is curious that contemporary art has evolved along other paths more linked to reason with an art increasingly more conceptual and tending to archive rather than to emotions.

Moreover, more than a few contemporary philosophers have reflected on the inability to love, the impossibility of building healthy relations in contemporary society, where no one is truly prepared to love but rather where all human beings become an object of consumption, where we consume each other rapidly and mercilessly. It is in this conceptual framework where we can locate Legarda's work.

We can place Legarda's multidisciplinary creations in this emotional desert. Throughout her career we see how the vast field of emotions is developed in order to investigate and propose a challenge to viewers. The challenge arises as soon as the artist breaks the intimate and personal nature we bestow on emotions and shows her corporal and emotional fragility (given that the artist is both the performer and the main character) in front of an astonished audience.

*Dark Beauty* is a great example of how the artist uses photography to fix the system of symbols of any work. The spaces in which the action takes place constantly refer to abandoned aged places, architectures destroyed or half done, absolutely devastated spaces where the only thing that still persists is the protagonist's body (also abandoned and mistreated).

The protagonist is an anonymous woman, an individual who personifies the idea of

the search for female perfection while only knowing how to exist from a relationship of domination, of absolute subjugation and total abandon. The protagonist is above all a character full of physicality. Her emotional involvement is reflected by her body, which is directly humiliated and mistreated by one of the great protagonists of the piece, the viewer.

Although Legarda eschews simple narrative, on this occasion she gives the viewer a decisive responsibility in the course of the work. To move through the installation the viewer must make decisions concerning the protagonist; in other words, the viewer decides on each occasion how this peculiar love story, where the protagonist is absolutely vulnerable to the viewer's desires, will evolve. The involvement of viewers in this case is absolutely central, as it is not only occasional participation but involves going further and they end up identifying and becoming involved emotionally in the relationship. **The aim is for each of us to ask a double question: on the one hand, about how far we are capable of abandoning ourselves for the other and, on the other hand, how far we are capable of dominating and taking possession of what is left in our hands. The latent question perhaps concerns whether we are really capable of loving without victimising, without harming or mistreating.** And trying to respond to this question the viewer is not just another element but the inventor that makes the piece possible.

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