

Ein Sonntag in Wiepersdorf ... ich möchte nichts machen, nur hören...

Eine Bandaufnahme des Ortes... Wind, Blätter, Gänse, Enten, andere Vögel, Hunde, menschliche Stimmen, Autos, Flugzeuge... eine Klanglandschaft."

"On a Sunday in Wiepersdorf... I don't want to do anything, just listen..."

A recording of the place... the wind, the leaves, the geese, the ducks, other birds, dogs, human voices, cars, aeroplanes, a soundscape".

Using these very words, in December 1996 I presented a project dedicated to a lady, to her husband's family house (where she spent several years of her life), and to the woody landscape surrounding it. Four card-sized photographs on the wall, four guides/biographies of the lady of the house, four beds placed in the shape of an irregular cross, where one can lie down; and all of this immersed in the sound surrounding the exhibition area.

The lady, Bettina Brentano von Arnim, is an important – if not fundamental - political and literary figure of German (and maybe European) culture in the 19th century. She was one of the first romantic souls, who maintained - throughout her existence – the same rebellious and revolutionary spirit typical of youth and of young first-generation romantics. An inclination which these very romantics – and, indeed, we ourselves, in this day and age – often tend to trade for the pursuit of a wisdom-imbued maturity, which often turns into reactionary pedantry.

A woman who didn't talk about feminism (probably the times weren't ripe enough), but who, like other women, such as Henriette Herz and Rahel Varnhagen, organized intellectual salons and dinners deemed threatening in early 19th century Restoration Berlin. A proto-socialist who wrote about and protested against social inequality, poverty and racial discrimination in Germany before anyone else.

Fifteen years later, I present this project once again, 1.200 km away, in a hall of more or less the same size, and with all the openings concealed by curtains. There is no link to the outside world, the attention to Bettina and to "her" woods is complete. The only intrusion is one single climbing plant, hanging from the skylight of the ceiling. A green invasion which stands as a reminder to the forest, an ancient metaphor for German cultural identity. A metaphor which inspired the German Romantics. Romanticism which triggered revolt.

Luca Vitone, 2011 (translation by Valentina Maffucci)