

Giovanni Morbin, *Rock and Roll in Alta Val Pellice*

As a result of gravity and erosion, the world is destined to flatten. Therefore, in that world we will lose the natural notion and sensation of relief.

Through slow and repeated actions in different places, I bring back that which in the course of time has rolled down into the valley.

(G. Morbin, 2016)

Giovanni Morbin has devised a personal version of the Sisyphus myth, reasoning (as a lover of the mountains and an avid climber) on a phenomenon so common for those who frequent the mountains as to pass unnoticed, although it is always in progress, constantly and almost even imperceptibly. Rock, the quintessential material of those places, found everywhere up there and increasingly abundant as one ascends, is crumbling through the secular or millennial work of disintegration operated by natural elements, and in losing weight and size, tends to descend to the valley. Streams accelerate this action, caused by the eternal, ceaseless effect of gravity - a real natural performance, not enacted by mankind. Although this is a fact that is difficult for us to verify given the brevity of our existence, it is certain that a rock, not too large, is transported by the water of the stream towards the valley, undergoing a constriction by the force of gravity acting on the water, to which neither the water itself nor the stones or pebbles can resist.

In the days of July 2016 when the artworks of "La collera delle lumache" (The Snails' Wrath) took place on the alternative path to the Prà valley in the stretch between the entrance immediately after Villanova up to the ford in front of the Pis waterfall, Morbin tried, with his limited human resources and without any logistical or technological support, to intervene in this process by inverting it.

Each day, starting at 10 am when the workshop on the trail started, he collected as many stones as could be contained in his backpack, as well as a flattened one, similar to a book, held under his right arm and another smaller one held in his mouth, gripped by his teeth, perhaps to figuratively represent the Word (the message). Slowly and laboriously ascending the path along the Pellice stream until reaching the ford, Morbin undertook an act of subversion to the immense natural forces that had dragged those stones downstream by reversing the direction of the arrow of time, actually going back in time, presumably, a few years. This action was repeated many times for two consecutive mornings, on July 21 and 22, and each time an imprecise number of stones were brought by the performer back in time and placed near the stream, ready once again to set out on the inevitable, fatal journey to the valley.

C F, May 2017

Giovanni Morbin is rightfully considered a master of artistic performance, especially on the physical side, denoting resistance, fatigue, and even risk. His actions, often performed outside conventional art spaces, are always strongly framed by his thinking, as well as carefully prepared for a long time before their execution.

(translated by Laura Culver)