

The folds of time | Angela Madesani | 2018

In two exhibitions by Andi Kacziba, one at the exhibition space at PwC Milan and the other at the Galleria Raffaella De Chirico in Turin, it may appear the artist lives in a fairytale world, in the secretive meanderings of some of the tales that have irreparably marked our childhood imaginations: textures and spinning wheels, as in *Sleeping Beauty*, "Bad Queens" who won't accept they're growing old, magic mirrors that steal the imagination, as in Snow White, and long threads that help us find the right pathway.

That's the world inhabited by this Hungarian artist - who has lived in Italy for many years - a quest for an existential matrix. The subject of her works is time, not just time in the broadest sense, but the times of life, above all else.

We can affirm, without any fear of denial that her artistic research begins with her biography. The works shown here are a testimony to it, and irrefutable proof. At 18, Andi started working as a model, and a make-up artist told her: "One day, your face will be priceless".

Now, many years later, that somewhat prophetic phrase often returns to her. Despite the great battles of feminism, and the undoubted social on, it still appears that one of most urgent problems of our time, especially for women, is to remain eternally youthful: we undergo cosmetic surgery on every area of the body, injections of botulism and other magical substances, total epilations and anything that might help. The dream is to live up to be 100 years old, and maybe even longer, with the body and face of a teenager.

Is beauty more important than everything else? It certainly seems to be. And we women, in spite of ourselves, are still objects that cannot grow old, get fatter or turn grey. The world of appearance triumphs. It seems like we're living on the set of *The Great Beauty* by Paolo Sorrentino. Emptiness and stupidity triumph. Society puts us through strenuous tests. So Kacziba, now just over forty years old, has decided to fill in the wrinkles with a special preparation of vinavil and gold. Over time, as wrinkles get deeper, your body becomes more and more precious.

*A wrinkle is a baroque fold:* so said Gilles Deleuze who in his book on that topic also mentions the Franco-Hungarian painter, Simon Hantai, a fellow countryman of Andi Kacziba. One of life's strange cases. After all, our redundant and vacuous times call, precisely, *mutatis mutandis*, for a certain Baroque. A wrinkle is the representation of the world, to infinity. Body folds, wrinkles, signs of age, experience, which the artist fills with gold, the colour used in the Central European baroque tradition.

So, she's been photographed with her precious wrinkles. A series of Polaroids were created, which all offer her face in the same front-facing position: repetitions and differences, to paraphrase the French philosopher himself: «The wrinkles I've accumulated, that tell people about my life, are golden ». That gluey gold effect used in some works, is gently torn from her face, using a mask, like a fresco, and then placed onto a glass. It's a track of time, a footprint, a footprint that's freed from the image.

In Turin a series of oval, round and three-compartment mirrors were on show. Those who mirror themselves in the right measure will have those experiences mirrored in their faces, in the wrinkles of Kacziba, which perform a game of removals and substitutions, making the golden wrinkles appear in object that serves as a symbol of vanity par excellence, but also a symbol of fear. To make the mirrors she used antique glass, which was damaged and scratched here and there. A parallelism between the object and its contents.

The mirror also reminds us of the omnipresent *selfies*, a phenomenon that's turned into the burden and delight of our times: I photograph myself - therefore I am. A means for us to affirming ourselves, and our presence at certain places and situations.

In the PwC Milan Exhibition Space, Andi's panels were in front of large mirrors that reflected the works. They were not part of the artworks, merely items that were connected to the exhibits, which, however, became conceptually load-bearing. Opposite them were her enormous woven threads on wooden frames. The technique used was that of tapestry. The result was wrinkled skin, hardened by time, perhaps marked by the sun, that fascinate by shape and material far more than by colour.

In each of her works, whether photographic portraits, wrinkles on a glass or in a mirror, she has woven the threads of her experiences and life, which day after day are affirmed by the precious, even if rather annoying, signs of time passing.