

... and then there'll be somebody who shows a table with two legs on one side and four half chairs, and to emphasize the precariousness of it all and of living in general (comfortably), they'll call it *campo impraticabile/unworkable field*. Then they'll raise two fingers in a "v" for victory sign like those who've found peace in the market and naturally, themselves.

Others, instead, the ones who still nurture doubt, will face a blank canvas and write:

- I plod on, head down; it's hard to turn the paint into a painting, but I try to go all the way in the things I believe in.

This, as you must have certainly understood, is Beatrice.

I didn't know Bea; ten years have passed since then. That night, she called me.

- Two lines for a show? Embarrassed to ask.

- Why me, of all people? I've always wondered.

The show bespoke white clothing, baby brides...the age of innocence...

As often happens, I spoke of other things, but even that seemed good enough for her.

Now, I remember something of the time and what I wrote, and I write it again.

- Is Beatrice's work conceptual? I've been wondering myself for the past few days.

The word *conceptual* is gelid, evokes desk studies and drawing boards. Too many calculations, too little heart...

I think it's fairer to call it clear-sighted affectionate remembrance. Wishing the best for things.

Ten years have passed and we never even saw each other much anyway. We talk over the phone.

Once she came to visit us in the country and laid her work out on the grass, up against plants. Defying nature is an arduous task but that time, she won. My wife was content, too, because she'd been pulling for her.

I learned the meaning of the world *grafting* from Bea in that show that spoke of books with books and which to me seemed the exact opposite here, having Emilio Isgrò's moody and gloomy blackened-out deletions clearly in mind.

- Do you know Luc Tuymans, Sean Scully, and the New Leipzig School?... I used to ask her.

And those telephone calls that never seemed to end. Looking back, I don't think I ever talked to her about Sigmar Polke at all, also because I'm sure I never even understood him myself.

*Voler bene alle cose/Wishing things well*, that might be the theme of Bea's latest works.

Still life after Morandi. It can't be easy.

- I wouldn't want to paint the object, but rather the memory, she tells me, perhaps its shadow, the mark that it left on the furniture, in the dust, or the fragment it produced that time it fell.

- It's always the cat's fault anyway, I said, just to keep things on the upbeat. Take heart. You can do it...you learn by making mistakes anyway...

- Well perhaps I make too many. Bye.

She hung up.

Mario Canepa