



LETIA - Letizia Cariello

MERZBAU QUANTICO

April 6th 2025 – June 28th 2025

Opening April 5th 2025

9.30 a.m - 12 p.m

via Valpetrosa 1, Milan

Critical essay by Caroline Corbetta

«Adesso fo' la finestra» («I make a window»)

In *Daunbailò*, an indie comedy filmed by Jim Jarmusch in the 1980s, Roberto Benigni, playing an imprisoned Italian tourist, draws a window on the wall under the skeptical gaze of a fellow prisoner. A gesture as absurd as it is necessary. Not a childish attempt at escaping from prison, but an imaginative act of transcending the limitations of space and time. Like Lucio Fontana when he surgically slashed his canvases, finding the Universe. Or Kazimir Malevič, who, around the time of the October Revolution, said things like, “I put all the colors in the bag and tied it in a knot: here is the free white abyss, the infinite, it is before us.” In this sense, his squares are not tautological signs, precursors of conceptual art, but gateways flung open to the beyond. Just like the wardrobe in *The Chronicles of Narnia* that leads the young protagonists into another dimension.

These are just a few of the many references that Letizia Cariello, known as LETIA, cites and is inspired by in her exhibition *Merzbau Quantico*. Visual art and quantum physics. Imagination and intuition. Tools that enhance perception, revealing energy beyond appearances. Nothing is as it seems. Scientists have been telling us this for almost a century, and artists have been saying it for many centuries. Drawing windows where there are walls is by no means trivial; it is a challenge to the conventional—and constricting—perception of reality. With her exhibition, LETIA takes us through an ontological journey that attempts this breakthrough into the *super-reality* where spirit and matter are on the same level, intertwined.

Merzbau Quantico is the installation that gives the exhibition its title and serves as its threshold. Using red ropes (the distinctive color of her artistic practice), the artist reconfigures both space and time. Upon entering, one stops seeing and finally begins to glimpse: *seeing through*, *seeing beyond*, intuiting the *truth*, *imagining*, and even *predicting*, *having an intuition of future things*. “Imagination of the present and the future: I sometimes experience it in front of certain events that are novels, music, environments, drawings, and works of all kinds that live in a condition not subject to the linear conception of time that we drag along like a ridiculous certainty,” LETIA wrote a couple of years ago.

In this timeless dimension of *Merzbau Quantico*, one can *glimpse* some *Gates*, mini-organic architectures inspired by the order of Nature, boundary surfaces between *inside and outside*, and *Calendars* that move



forward and backward through days, months, and years, rewinding personal and collective time in order to cross it, while gaining the awareness that we are here *now*. But there are also other portals painted directly on the walls, which cannot help but be linked to Malevič's squares or Benigni's window. And, of course, the *Merzbau* by the German artist Kurt Schwitters, which he built starting in the 1920s. Spaces within spaces, dimensions inside other dimensions. Pieces of personal and shared memories that layer and connect with an order that only seems random. A deconstruction of the linear concept of time in favor of the simultaneity that quantum physics will soon prove to be the *true reality*.

The works of LETIA are tools that help us correct and expand our view of everything because “everything that surrounds us has a visual and narrative charge,” and in this “everything,” they help us find the fissures through which to make real mental and spiritual crossings. Cariello is not afraid to talk about spirituality. But she is keen to make distinctions for the more distracted: it is not about esotericism, new age, or pietism. “We are all connected. Not from a moralistic or charitable point of view, but really because it is a physical law that governs the universe,” she declares without hesitation. She, who deeply studies the lives of saints but calls them by name (“so I honor their identity, which is divinity, just as it is for each of us”), the theories of Einstein, and the theosophists. She, who even takes the risk of doing elegant things. Specifically, it is about harmony, a dynamic balance resulting from a continuous tension of forces under a controlled appearance. For those who can see them, beyond the smooth and seductive surfaces, many vital energies, even painful ones, bubble up. The works of Letizia Cariello, a descendant of a family of sculptors for two hundred years, are also imbued with *dry humor*, as in the case of the wall sculpture *Il Re Bucranio*—a white lacquered deer head crowned with a golden cardboard ring taken from a cake box—which offers a striking commentary on the vanity of power. Sometimes, beyond appearances, they are even ruthless. Like the petals of roses photographed and sewn with small red cross-stitches, an endless sequence of crucifixions. Or covered in dots, also embroidered in red, which are “like seismographs or electrocardiograms of the spirit.”

Let the artist speak again, as she explains the reasons for choosing the name LETIA, clarifying many things while leaving the enigma of art and life intact: “This name marks a shift in energetic state that has manifested only as an unusual perception of unity between inner and outer space and brought a different sense of physical belonging to existence. As if I realized that I moved with an enhanced perception. Or rather, surrounded by existence, which was much more generous and expansive, and completely deaf to any begging mode. The consequence, on one side, was an immediate clarity in working and labor, and on the other, the total exclusion of the theme of waiting, replaced by that of presence. A point where all dimensions are present is absolutely indifferent to expectations and all pietisms.”



BIOGRAPHY

LETIA - Letizia Cariello (Copparo, Ferrara - 1963).

LETIA, stage name assumed since 2022, has focused her research on the materialization of time in a valuable work that starts from everyday objects to weave a multiplicity of relationships that are capable of making it perceptible. Her background is wide-ranging: with a degree in Art History, she teaches Sculpture and Artistic Anatomy at the Brera Academy. She has a marked interest in music, which is an integral part of her poetics. Sound and rhythm, in LETIA'S language, are closely connected to space, to the proportionality of environments, and can be measured and visible even in the floor plan of a house. His works have a meditative, existential character and are materialized in various forms: Calendars, Gates, but also performances, installations, embroidered photos, book-objects, Red Threats that cross the most diverse materials. Calendars in which dates, months, and days define the beginning and end of a performance are a dense list of numbers and letters handwritten with chisel on marble or stone or, in some cases, on fabric embellished with gold or bronze leaf inserts. Her works open a dialogue with elsewhere, refer to other worlds, other cultures, probably evoked by the circularity of Gates or Calendars in which dates, months, days, evoke the sacredness of the everyday. A path on the wheel of history in which everything repeats, is cyclical, like an uroboros that re-proposes to us the theme of eternity and the relationship with the cosmos.

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