

Frozen Images

by Adele Cacciagrano

Frozen Images. I notice a massive use of images, offering a narcissistic representation of the female body, which has already been used in the pornography and in the mass media. The same rabbit, the Playboy magazine icon, with one eye, which is an abyss, an immense black hole, like that sex organ, which is meant to scrutinize...

In my mind, I connect this group of images and provocative dances with the work of Barbara Kruger, who combines the images from the world of the media of the contemporary society, with the photos and words borrowed from the television, film, newspapers and magazines, and by means of the same effects and strategies of the mass media communication, splits them in two, when injecting a new critical charge. In this way Barbara Kruger creates her own messages, which invert the sexual, social and political stereotypes, imposed by the mass communication, and put in crisis this kind of definitions, pre-constituted social relations and the shared political choices.

In the article from the 1984, which is focused on the work of Barbara Kruger, the art critic from the United States Craig Owens developed the concept of the "rhetoric of the pose". The pose embodies those cultural codes that have been confirmed for a long time, including the codes of the West, regarding the objectivization of the female body. When following the traces of Lacan's work, Owens claims that "assuming the pose means presenting ourselves to the look of somebody else, as if we were already frozen, blocked - or, as if we were a painting".

The provocative use of costumes, slip, lascivious stockings, wigs and erotic poses reiterate the tropes or the common areas of the visual heritage of the feminine, especially the figures of the homosexual, the prostitute, and the blue angel, set by the Marlene Dietrich's interpretation or the girl-lover Lolita.

Simone de Beauvoir in her work *The Second Sex* claims that the patriarchy seeks to separate the immanence of women from any possibility for the creation of knowledge, personality or transcendence. A woman's body is placed in a patriarchal regime, objectivized and alienated from the contact with itself.

The screens represent the area of the »double alienation« of the woman, when reiterating the repertoire of the stereotypes of women. In her essay *Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema* Laura Mulvey writes that the western movie culture, when using the hierarchy of expression, places the bodies of women as being the objects of the scopophilia and voyeuristic pleasure, presenting a woman as the incarnation of the "pleasure in observing".

In this sense, the acoustic dimension can represent for a woman an out-and-out escape, where the rhythms of the voice and the modular flows of sounds of the throat, varying from the whisper to the spoken word, developing into the scream, laying bear the dimension of the carnality and animality of the speech organ, as the place that has not yet been alienated, a means, probably the only one, which is still at woman's disposal, to reappropriate herself and to construct her own subjectivity.