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Landscape traits and city layers

Donatella Lanzeni was born in Vaprio d'Adda, and spent her childhood in the Lake of Como area before moving to Milan, where she studied foreign languages and proceeded to start her international profession. At the same time she developed her curiosity for painting, which may have started off rather uncertainly yet soon allowed her to refine her technical foundations by working within specific painters' studios: first alongside a Chinese painter living in Milan and later under the supervision of Max Kuatti, the first painter to propose an exhibition of her work. Donatella possesses talent, strength, unique features, a determined and secure style. However she never planned to become a painter: such a difficult profession, and one that, all in all, she never elected to be her exclusive form of work. It became her profession, although never her only one, later on, when she understood that painting is perhaps no different than any other language, just like those (French, American English, German and a hint of Spanish) she learnt in order to travel from East to West, from Tokyo to New York, from London to Berlin, from Paris to Los Angeles, from Madrid to Chicago. A splendid short story* by Tommaso Landolfi tells us how one should only learn a language to the extent that he/she is able to express his/her own impressions, and never to the point of fully mastering it, therefore allowing it to lead us within the impossible significations of art and words. In the story, when the pupil returns to seek out his teacher and ask him to read his marvelous narration, he can no longer find him and nobody is able to recognize the language the teacher has taught him: yet his masterpiece is written in that very language. Donatella's paintings could easily belong in Landolfi's stories. They inhabit precisely that impression of towns, of cities, of views of the sea, lakes and mountains: from the immensity of the Pacific to the poetry of the lake of Como, to the alleys, monuments and light of Milan, with the sometimes subtle, sometimes intense colors of the central city streets and the waterways, flowing underground and sometimes reemerging near the Navigli or the Martesana. This is Donatella's Milan: international, open, broad and large, the city of Leonardo and Manzoni, of Constantine and Ambrose, of Saint Charles and Federico. Borromeo, of The Last Supper and of Brera, of the Duomo and the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, of the Theatre at La Scala and of modern skyscrapers. Fabiola Giancotti, researcher and art critic.









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