

ERICA RAVENNA

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SIMONA WELLER fragments of a discourse on the method

Erica Ravenna Gallery

Dates: 7th October 2023 – 15th January 2024

Catalog texts by Benedetta Carpi de Resmini

PRESS RELEASE

The new exhibition season of the Erica Ravenna gallery will be inaugurated on **Saturday the 7th of October at 11.30am**, with a solo show of work by the Roman artist **Simona Weller**. In the 1960s her artistic research focussed on naturalistic forms, but there was a turning point in her artistic approach in the early 1970s, when she discovered the power of the world of infantile signs. On this basis, she developed a very personal form of writing-painting, which would be the protagonist of her work in the following decades.

The title of the show “**fragments of a discourse on the method**” recalls the Cartesian philosophical treatise “Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences” and refers to the function of artistic activity and creation as an integral part of a cognitive process.

In Weller's work an assortment of notes, describing memories, experiences and epiphanies in detail, are presented in childish writing. This is transformed into paintings by a process of repeated overlapping approach, in which graphic and chromatic elements interact, with the writing being covered by short brushstrokes and drips of paint, so that all of these individual marks and signs come to dominate the canvas, forming a sort of abstract synthesis.

The works on display have been selected to highlight the most representative moments of the artist's creative development: the blackboards, the wall diaries and the landscapes.

They include the work “Diario al Muro” (Wall Diary) dating to 1978, consisting of a series of mixed media drawings in which writing is conceived as a synthesis of handwritten lettering with monochromatic colour schemes, or as articulated collages made from overlapping strips of paper. First exhibited at the 1978 Venice Biennale entitled “Materializzazione del linguaggio” (Materialization of Language), it recently featured in the exhibition “Re-Materialization of Language. 1978-2022” from 1st Oct 2022 to 3rd June 2023,

at the *Fondazione Antonio dalle Nogare* in Bolzano and then at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, from 5th July to 10th September 2023.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE ARTIST

Simona Weller (b. Rome 1940) lives and works in Rome and in the medieval village of Calcata (in the Province of Viterbo). Having graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome she embarked on several long periods of study in the East (notably in Bangkok and Cairo), and in 1973 she came to the attention of the critics at the 10th Rome Quadrenniale thanks to her large abstract canvases, in which painting was combined with writing and lettering. This kind of painting with words is a recurring element in the work of Weller, who chooses specific words for their conciseness and particular structures. She has always combined her activity as a painter (and as a ceramist) with historical research into the role of women in art. She actively participated in the feminist movements of the late 1960s, and in 1976 she published “Il complesso di Michelangelo” (The Michelangelo Complex), the first anthology dedicated to the contribution of women to 20th century Italian art. She has participated in numerous exhibitions in Italy and abroad, including the Venice Biennale in 1978, the São Paulo Biennial in 2022, the “Re-materialization of language” at the *Fondazione Antonio dalle Nogare* in Bolzano, September 2022 – June 2023 and “Diario al muro” at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome 5th July – 10th September 2023.

INFORMATION

Exhibition: “Simona Weller – Fragments of a discourse on the method”

Location: *Galleria Erica Ravenna*, via della Reginella 3, Via di Sant'Ambrogio 26 – 00186 Rome

Opening to the public: 7th October 2023 – 15th January 2024

Opening hours: 10.30am – 1.30pm / 3.30pm – 7.30pm. Saturday morning 10.30am – 1.30pm

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<https://ericaravenna.com>