

Giulia Piscitelli

On the occasion of the exhibition *50 Moons of Saturn*, by explicit request of the curator, the Neapolitan artist presents *Rodolfo centodieci* (*Rodolfo 102*), 2002.

Shot in 2000, two years before being edited, soon after the death of 100-year-old Rodolfo, the protagonist, the work is a full shooting of the old man's lunch, without interruptions or editing interventions on the filmed material.

The old man shows concentration but apparently lacks an object, and performs the mechanical act of consuming the meal in his dish, alternating the savage gesture of tearing the food to pieces with a state of complete devitalization.

The man is seen in a three-quarter view, against the background of a council house interior, a cupboard, and the soundtrack of Federico Fellini's film *La dolce vita* (1960).

Rodolfo performs his cannibal act fluidly, seconding the passing of time, whereas the artist, after putting down her camera on the table—as Piscitelli herself recounts—, joins him, consuming her lunch off-screen.

Living death seems to be the undisputed subject of this work—death delivered from its time and poeticized by the voice of Marcello Mastroianni, who, encouraging the listener to buy islands and love, exclaims: “We disgruntled have become so few.”

Giulia Piscitelli carries out her job with a mythological sense of poetry: by attributing a symbolical rituality to an everyday gesture, she transposes the man's action into the domain of fantastic and religious narration and, triggering a mechanism that revives archaic meanings and restores life's existential intensity, she turns Rodolfo into a mythical figure. This melancholic episode drowns into its own abyss, awakening a primordial essentiality, a severity apparently derived from the authentic image the artist sets her eyes upon every day—the Gulf of Naples, the crystal air and the volcano, which is nothing but another devouring Chronos. The same look gets amplified, melting in the practice of devouring, through which—in the words of Calvino—we imagine, along with the artist, “the sensation of his teeth on the palate, bathing me in saliva, then pushing me under the tip of his canines (...), in order to propagate myself in the body of the other, in a mutual, complete relationship that sucked us in and overwhelmed us.” (MV)