

Marisa Merz

Monica de Cardenas, Zuoz

"I can only write about the show by Marisa Merz in Galleria Monica de Cardenas from a very personal point of view." This was my first thought after seeing the show. I have to travel back in time to when I had my first ideas about art as teenager. In this fragile moment, in 1995, Marisa Merz played a strong role with her exhibition in Kunstmuseum Winterthur. She formed my understanding of art, and she subsequently opened a wormhole through my subconscious that links directly to these moments. Some of the works from the 1995 Winterthur show are also on display now, in Zuoz. They immediately grasp your attention; when you enter the gallery they pull you into the space.

The first term your consciousness produces in an attempt to understand is: "icon." Marisa Merz creates icons. The subtle impressions of faces in her paintings and drawings give an idea of the very first icon, in which Jesus marked a cloth with his face. The coins, metal sheets and copper wire in the paintings refer to the gold used in orthodox icon painting. "But this is just an art-historical attitude. Much more important is what happens in the act of seeing the painting. It is a spiritual experience, an illumination." At the same time, you ask yourself: "How can I think something like that?" You begin questioning yourself about these expansive thoughts, until you realize that these questions raised by Marisa are in fact questions about yourself. She shows you that the sublime is not very far away, but actually right here, very simple and banal. In viewing her untitled faces from the past two years, which are all painted on small boards, you take a step further toward this simple experience of the sublime. Even if the faces look somehow lost and sad, you start to smile, as in a moment of bliss. Marisa's work provides a powerful hint that such bliss comes from everyday things.

by ADRIAN NOTZ



Installation View at Monica de Cardenas, Zuoz. All courtesy Monica De Cardenas, Milan/Zuoz Photos: Andrea Rossetti
Marisa Merz, *Untitled (deep blue)*, 2010-12, mixed media on wood, cm 23 x 23.