

Interview with Ilene Sova – Womenoclock

Barbara Gramegna (shewolf)
7-9 minutes

by Shewolfoclock



Ilene, you are a young and determined woman, which I appreciate very much. When did you begin thinking of doing ‘social justice’ painting?

I began thinking about painting about feminist and social justice issues when I was radicalized by a Psychology of Women class in my second year of University. The professor in that class pointed out so many inequities in our society that deeply affect women and I was very moved and changed by this course. I became so passionate about feminism and wanted to read and learn everything I could. At this point it made sense for me to combine my two passions: paintings and feminism. When I did this my artwork matured and developed so much because I cared so deeply about what I was painting.

Ilene risponde sugli inizi della suo impegni per la giustizia sociale attraverso la pittura. Questo risale al periodo universitario frequentando il corso di Psicologia delle Donne . Il sentire quante iniquità riguardano le donne anche in una società moderna l’ha indotta ad occuparsi in maniera appassionata di questo e coniugarlo con la sua altra grande passione: la pittura.

Your portraits of Missing Women look like those far west posters where a man was searched ‘dead or alive’, they offered money for him...here no money is offered for finding missing women but dignity, is that so?

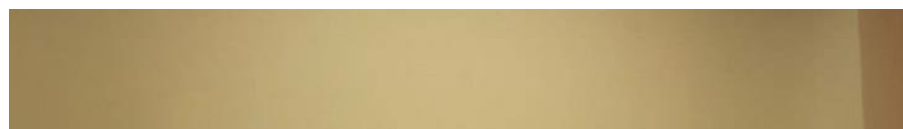
The portraits were taken from the Missing Person’s images that the police use on the posters so that is why they look that way. Part of my idea for the project is that I took this small image and I make it huge (the paintings are 76 x 100 cm) and it confronts the viewer in a different way because of the size.

I ritratti di donna della Sova sembrano mutati da quelli dei ricercati del Far West, ma qui si tratta di donne scomparse, sulle quali è sceso il silenzio e per la cui ricerca non c’è alcuna ricompensa. In effetti Ilene ha usato le immagini della polizia e le ha ingrandite credendo che dare risalto a un problema sia anche una questione di ‘dimensione’.

What is your opinion about the role of painting in a society overflowing with images?

I think that people do see many digital images but when they see a painting they stop, pause and contemplate. This is the role that painting may have now – to cause people to look and think about the image that they are looking at rather than moving on to the next one. There is something very precious about the handmade when we live in the technological world. People find it fascinating and interesting because we don’t see it very often anymore.

L’inflazione di immagini a cui siamo sottoposti parrebbe un deterrente a cercare ancora attraverso di esse l’attenzione del pubblico, ma la pittrice crede nella potenza dell’immagine artistica nel senso tradizionale e quindi la tela, la pittura. La gente vuole emozionarsi di fronte ad un manufatto, sente in questo prodotto la vita, che nelle immagini digitali spesso non si avverte più.





You are a Canadian, in Italy and Europe we think that is a country which has equality for women and that there are no serious problems for women there? What is the actual true situation for women in Canada?

In Canada women have achieved a lot in terms of equality. However, there are three areas of life where there is still a massive gender gap. Violence against women, pay inequity and political representation. Currently 1 in 4 women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime in Canada and on average 70 women are killed a year by their intimate partners. Canadian women only make 70 cents of every dollar that men make and less than 1% of women who are working hold senior management positions. Lastly, we rank 39th in terms of political representation in the world. Canadian women only make up 20% of the political representatives.

ilene è Canadese, ma l'immagine che si ha solitamente del suo Paese non è di uno in cui vi siano così grandi problemi di iniquità sociale. Purtroppo invece i crimini contro le donne sono molti, la quota di donne presenti in politica e il loro accesso alle carriere professionali sono ancora molto bassi.

What is the best compliment that you can receive as painter?

The best compliment is that my paintings changed someone's mind about an issue – that it made them think, created a discussion or initiated some action in that person's life.

What is your favourite compliment as woman



or do you not like compliments?

Sure I like compliments! The best compliment is for someone to say that I am passionate about what I do.

Chiedendo ad Ilene cosa le piaccia sentirsi dire come pittrice dichiara che sapere di avere contribuito a modificare con la sua pittura l'opinione di qualcuno su un tema , avere suscitato una riflessione , una discussione sia la più grande soddisfazione e come donna sentirsi dire che è chiaro che quello che fa, lo fa con passione.

Coming back to the exhibition in Barcelona, what kind of 'Heroínas' are the Spanish women that you painted?

The "Heroínas" in the Mutuo de Arte show in Barcelona are women who have dedicated their lives to social justice and activism. People who fight against anti-austerity, women who fight for gay rights, women who are lawyers and fight against domestic violence and women artists who have dedicated their life work to communicating about gender issues. I am very inspired by them and what they have done for equal rights in Spain. The fact that they would give their life's work to these issues is very honourable to me and I am very inspired by that.

La mostra di Barcellona è dedicata a molte donne spagnole impegnate per la giustizia sociale, che hanno dedicato la loro vita a combattere contro la violenza domestica, artiste che si sono rese tramite, con la loro opera, della trattazione di questioni di genere e insomma donne da cui Ilene ha tratto forte ispirazione e per le quali sente ammirazione.

What are your next projects?

This year I founded and coordinated a large Feminist Art Conference in Toronto that was completely full. We received over 60 submissions of art and it was a great success for all of those involved. I am now working on planning the second one and I am really excited about that. The other thing is that the Missing Women Project will be travelling to different cities in Ontario so I am working hard to co-ordinate that. Lastly, I have a show in October with my artist collective 3MW which consists of women who have a mixed racial background. We are making work to create a discussion around racism using portraiture.

Ilene Sova è sempre attiva e ora , dopo avere ideato e coordinato una conferenza d'arte femminista a Toronto, per la quale ha ricevuto oltre 60 adesioni, oltre a lavorare alla seconda edizione, si occuperà di rendere itinerante la mostra Missing Women Project per tutto l'Ontario. Inoltre per ottobre è già in cantiere una mostra realizzata da donne con origini etniche miste.

Here is the link for the Feminist Art Conference:

[ABOUT](#)

Here is a link for the 3MW Collective

<http://3mwcollective.org/>

Ilene I thank you very much!

[Foto Heroínas](#)

A screenshot of a rich text editor toolbar. It includes a bulleted list icon, a text color selector, a background color selector, a font face dropdown menu (showing 'Aa Sans-serif' and 'Aa Serif'), a font size dropdown menu (showing 'Aa'), a bold button, an italic button, a text to speech icon, a voice selection dropdown menu (showing 'Voice: Default', 'Default', and 'Alice (Italian)'), and a small grey square icon at the bottom left.