

The Organ of the Pieve di San Cresci

AMARCORD

FEDERICO BORSARI

To tell you the truth, I have to say that sometimes I lose heart. I look inside myself and find that all of the high hopes that were born years ago are vanished, turned into dust, forgotten.

The 70s, the years of my youth, brought a volcanic explosion of culture at all levels, and we lived during this time absorbing and assimilating as much as possible. They were the times in which on television, in the first evening shows, one could see and hear Karl Richter at the keyboard or at the consoles of the fantastic Ottobereun organ. One Saturday evening, we heard Fernando Germani on Canzonissima, playing at the organ of the RAI Auditorium in Naples. A week later, we listened to his record "Cantata per Venezia," a phenomenal example of "elite" music arriving at a popular level.

In stores there appeared the first full Bach release, which came at the same time as the legendary vinyl of the group Genesis, of the ELP, of Deep Purple, and so on. Walcha and Peter Gabriel, Chapuis and Greg Lake inhabited the same spaces together, each retaining its own individuality. We were immersed in an experience of the organ that was on one hand classical, and on the other hand derived from a pop-rock culture, and we must not lose sight of the fact that most of the major exponents of pop and rock in those years came straight from fine conservatories.

Those were the years when, in the afternoon, hidden within the walls of our parish, we would attempt to explore and understand the function of pneumatic transmission, and in the evenings, we would transform our cantina into a laboratory, soldering iron and electrical parts by hand, assembling improbable circuits for synthesizers that often worked for less than ten minutes. Those were the years in which, once a month, we from the provinces went by train to the city and spent hours in bookstores and music stores, returning in the evenings loaded with tomes of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, as well as discs of Bach, Franck, Mozart, Reger, Widor, PFM, Banco, ELP, Exheption, Soft Machine, etc.

In those years we put aside savings to go to Rome for a week in September to listen to the September organ concerts. Each evening there would be a concert, performed by the

greatest interpreters of the moment. Sitting on the ground in churches packed to capacity, we listened to Marchal, Germani, Litaize, Tagliavini, Heiller, Langlais, and many others. In the daytime, with a lot of bold nerve, we told the sextons our stories as we went to visit the organs of various churches and basilicas.

In those years we ordered from France scores of organ music (unavailable where we were). I remember when we got the package with the complete "Pièces de Fantaisie" of Viernewer were almost afraid to open it.

Today such sensations of novelty, related to cultural offerings, have largely disappeared from our lives. Ignorance, related to music as well as other things, is rampant and young people lose themselves in a pseudocultural and pseudomusical reality vomited out cyclically by a media apparatus whose aim, now very nearly realized, is the homogenization and mental incapacitation of people.

Among the Spice Girls, Trash literature, The Lion of Lernia, bodybuilding, discotheques, bars, idiotic advertising, and the zany carnage of a Saturday night out, I see a widespread brutalization of today's youth, for whom the term "canna" is not recognized as meaning a part of the organ, but only something you smoke. How sad.

In Italian, the term "canna" is often used to describe a joint of marijuana.

In the LITERATURE

In my walks through the city I heard the organ playing two or three times near the outskirts, but I never really focused on it. Another time, turning again to these parts, I became fixated on the music of Bach. I found the door closed, and since it was a deserted street, I sat myself next to the church and listened. It was not a big organ but a good one, and whoever played expressed the music with such feeling that it seemed like a prayer. I had the impression that the performer had to know what treasure the music contained for him and was searching for that treasure with every note he played. As for the technique, I don't know much about music, but as a child I knew the feeling that music could evoke in my soul and I listened to music as a matter of course. [...] Whenever I felt depressed, I begged our organist Pistorius to play the old passage of Buxtehude. In the dark church I would listen to that strange music, and each time it was a benefit for me and rendered me more willing to give credit to the voice of the soul.

Hermann Hesse, *Demian*.



THE HISTORY

MICHELE MANGANELLI

The Pieve di San Cresci holds within its confines a valuable organ, constructed in 1865 by the renowned artisan workshop of the brothers Cesare and Luigi Tronci of Pistoia. These origins were discovered in a hidden scroll which read: "Luigi and Cesare of the late Filippo Tronci and C. of Pistoia, makers of pneumatic organs of any size. Year 1865, Organ 313."

The instrument, blessed with a good number of registers, is placed over the wooden choir located above the front door of the church. It is a typical mechanical organ with a wind-chest.

The Parrocchia di San Cresci most likely acquired this organ in the second half of the 19th century from the workshop of the brothers Tronci, active and known mainly in Tuscany. At that time the Parrocchia was a significant benefice, rich in centuries of tradition and various possessions.

Later, the parish carried out two cleaning operations on the organ. One was performed by Felice Panerai and Giuseppe Paoli in 1885, and the next in 1886 by Ulisse Paoli. During these procedures, carried out in quick succession, the register of the bells was added. Like many other chapels situated in the countryside, Pieve di San Cresci is rather far from the great urban centers. Because of the progressive depopulation of rural places and many farms, a phenomenon well known in Italian history, the Pieve di San Cresci also experienced a slow decline during the twentieth century, in particular in the aftermath of the second world war. As I have noticed in similar situations, the decline, if not the abandonment, of a sacred edifice is essentially a very negative thing, but in terms of an organ it often reveals a positive aspect. In fact, if we consider that the maintenance of an instrument has always been very expensive, and that an organ is closely connected with liturgical use, it is clear that in the moment in which celebrations are rarer and less frequented, interest in the instrument itself declines. When it is no longer functional, it is left in disuse, replaced maybe by some harmonium or a solo voice. Left unattended in this way, it is true that the organ undergoes normal wear and tear, but it is also true that, if there are no unexpected damages from external agents such as fire or water, it will be saved from clumsy restorations which try to impart upon an old instrument changes tied to the capricious fashions of the moment.

I would particularly like to highlight the fact that the moment of stasis for the organ at San Cresci took place in the very years in which electrification, enlargements, changes in register, substitutions in transmissions, etc., invaded many instruments of our churches, wreaking irreversible damage. From the 1950s the organ has remained silent, but at the same time protected in its choir, so at the time of this restoration it was preserved in its original form, and, I would like to say, has retained all of its particularities as well as consistency of parts. In terms of the phonic materials, there was no need to reconstruct from scratch any register or any missing tube.

The organ's restoration

Text taken from the book published on the occasion of the restoration

The basic criterion that guided the restoration project was to renew in full all the original components of the instrument. The operational phase was therefore articulated through the use of materials and techniques that on the one hand impart maximum flexibility and legibility, and on the other hand produce a result as similar as possible to the originals. The ultimate goal is the restoration of a work of art produced according to the best Tuscan organ-making tradition, rendering the instrument in the best condition of efficacy and historical integrity as possible.

To achieve this result it is clear that all the various phases of restoration were accompanied by a careful "reading" of every single part. In particular, the close analysis of all the phonic materials demonstrated how the alterations effected in all of the previous tunings of the organ did not compromise the primitive nature of the original sound--it was possible to fully recover that sound. One part revealed to us a surprise: that the instrument was built using a half-tone temperament. This may seem strange, given that this is an instrument of the second half of the 19th century, but we already had the means of verifying that Tuscany remained loyal to the half-tone temperament for a much longer time, even until the turn of the century.

IN PRIMO PIANO

Concert October 29, 2011

James Gray
Organ
Angelica Cortini
soprano
Maria Teresa Palosits
soprano

Art

From our region and from abroad *two extraordinary artists: these are their stories*

THE VISION

LISA KERESZI



Cat on plywood, 2009©Lisa Kereszi

Lisa Kereszi was born in 1973 in Pennsylvania. In 1995 she graduated from Bard College with a Bachelor of Arts, finally settling on a concentration in Photography after double-majoring in that and in Literature/Creative Writing.

In 2000 she received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Yale University School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut. She is now on the faculty as a Lecturer at the Yale School of Art, and as Acting Director of Undergraduate Studies in Photography. She has also taught at the International Center of Photography and School of Visual Arts and has been a visiting artist/critic at the Yale School of Architecture, NYU, Massachusetts College of Art, Parsons, School of Visual Arts, Vassar, UNC Chapel Hill, Eastern Tenn. State and for George Madison University.

Her work is in many private collections and in that of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Altoids Curiously Strong Collection of the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, the Berkeley Art Museum and the Yale University Art Gallery. Her work has been shown in group shows.

Her editorial work has appeared in books and magazines, including The New York Times Magazine, The New Yorker, Nest, New York, Harper's, W, The London Telegraph Sunday Magazine, Details, GQ, Black Book, Jane, Newsweek, House & Garden, Penthouse, Nylon, zingmagazine, Flaunt, wallpaper* and others. She was included in the 2003 list of the 30 top emerging photographers by Photo District News, and was granted a commission to photograph Governor's Island by the Public Art Fund in 2003, which culminated in shows at the Urban Center Gallery and the Mayor's Office at City Hall and an exhibition catalog.

Kereszi lives and works in New Haven.

Lisa Kereszi has been artist in residence at La Macina di San Cresci and completed her project called "Untitled", a series of photographs inspired by the landscape and the art history. She explored especially the Tenuta di Vitigliano, on the road that leads from Greve to Panzano.

"I often photograph empty interiors and details in them, and focus on places of entertainment and fantasy. Such places include movie theatres, resort, motels, bars, strip clubs, night clubs, haunted houses, rides at amusement parks, to name a few. The pictures depict spaces devoid of participants, full of empty stools, hangers, stages. Sometimes the places are abandoned, sometimes they just appear that way. I can see where the fantasy fails, however, in the décor. When you look at a nocturnal place in the light of day, it looks strange. Reality becomes surreal. I am interested in that point when things fall apart."

IL TEMA

THE CAT

Compito di bambino di nove anni
Le Figaro, may 6, 1952

The cat is an animal that has two front legs and two hind legs, and two legs on the left side and two on the right side.

The front legs are used for running, the back legs are used as a brake.

The cat has a tail that follows its body. It ends abruptly.

He has hair under his nose like rigid wires. This is why he is in the "feline" category.

Every now and then a cat desires to have babies. So it does, and in this moment it becomes a lady.

THE HAND

DANIELA FORTI

Daniela Forti was born in Rome in 1960.

She earned a degree in Architecture and Design from the Art School of Rome; after which she had the opportunity to learn in-depth techniques and knowledge by practicing and working at the glass art studio "FORME".

She developed a particular expressive mastery of this material succeeding in manifesting her own creativity in the divergent process linking fluidity and heat to colors as to the hard and rigid transparency of glass in its natural state.

She became immediately fascinated with famous international glass artists such as Dale Chihuly, Toots Zynsky and Cuny Jutta. In 1982 Daniela Forti transferred to Tuscany and opened a fully-equipped professional studio. She was given the task to illuminate the prestigious "LYONS CLUB" of Rome while at the same time collaborating with various Tuscan glassworks.

From Florence to Empoli and all the way to the Arno Valley, her work began to receive praise and success, and not just in Italy. From these fortunate events, she received many requests and opportunities to develop her independent creativity as follow-on orders multiplied. Passing from interior design of prestigious shops to exposition space decoration, to honing her skills in artistic glasswork for sacred and religious places, Daniela Forti consolidated her mastery in the correlation between light and glass.

Once the initial decorative phase was over, these elements became established as a purely sculptural vocation giving birth to personal techniques and independent structures. That's how, cycles and expressions come one after the other, evolving from "TraMe" to the lyrical series of "MEDUSE" passing into the series of "CACTUS" and finishing in the complex and transparent fluidity of the "FRUTTIERE (Fruit baskets)" where fantasy, forms and colors intertwine with plasticity, composition and pure expression of sculptural innovation. Form, color, taste and transparency linked together with a deep understanding of the materials used, translate the silent language of Daniela Forti's glass sculpture across a glimmer of light and plasticity simplifying the artistic message while facilitating the immediacy of understanding.



THEY SAID

TYRANNY is the name that ought to be given to any government which those responsible for the execution of laws can make them, destroy them, break them, interpret them, prevent them, suspend them, or even just elude them, with confidence of impunity. Therefore, any person or government that behaves in this way--whether they have inherited power, or have been elected into power, or have usurped power is a tyrant. And every society that endures and accepts tyranny becomes a society of slaves.

Vittorio Alfieri, *Della Tirannide*, 1790

One Page

SATURDAY OCTOBER 29, 2011

ENVIRONMENT

DEMETRIA VERDUCI

About one month ago, in the early morning, I heard the sound of a large grinding machine under the window of my bedroom. I had the sensation of experiencing one of those moments which one has desired for so long that one starts to think it will never come true, or at least to think that the duration of our lives would not allow us to see it realized. They were laying asphalt on the road. We were taking back the colors of the land: the green of the trees, the black of the olives, the brown clods of earth. This made me proud, for it is well-known that Chianti is known and loved for its splendid colorful landscape.

Years ago, after having completed the long restoration of the entire complex of Pieve di San Cresci, the oldest parish church in Chianti and a prime example of Romanesque architecture, we organized a convention called "The Enhancement of the Architectural Assets The Potential of Historical Places to Develop the Cultural Value of a Region." Our idea for this exhibition and round table, sponsored by FAI, was born in part for reasons of professional development, in part because we believe that the conservation of historical places should be part of the collective consciousness, and in part because the revival of some of the old places which we are so in love with had become a challenge and a commitment for us. "The church of San Cresci is a gem, we ensure that the will of many takes precedence over the will of few in the complete restoration of the landscape," wrote Prof. Moretti. The actions of the Environmental Heritage Office of Florence during the meeting were focused on the analysis of what had been achieved, and ended with the hope and call to complete the *last missing piece*: the accommodation of the municipal road complex adjacent to the Parish and a decent adaptation of the square. Invitations were addressed repeatedly by the Superintendent of the office to various municipal administrations of Greve over the years that followed.

It is the merit of the current administration to have taken up this solicitation and to have understood that protecting the crops, vegetation, and buildings involves protecting and improving the quality of the roads. The quality of life of the inhabitants of the land is also greatly improved by a better road system.



Bare roads originated when there was less mobility across the land. It was a rural world, and travel was done by foot, or, for those who had the means, with the use of a gig. The farmers used wagons pulled by oxen, and at the most there were the postal wagons, rare and shabby though they were.

This whole world, along with many other things, vanished with the advent of mass motorization. Now, the viability of our countryside is for all intents and purposes connected with an elevated volume of car traffic, even if our region is not primarily urban. This increased traffic is due to the celebrity of Chianti wine, which gave the region a notable push forward, and the proliferation of agriturismo, connected with the spreading fame of the lovely Tuscan landscape. This fame was proliferated by historians and geographers such as Braudel, who described the hills of Tuscany as "the most moving countryside that exists," and Desplanques, who said, "the Tuscan countryside was constructed like a work of art."

Today bare, unpaved roads are anachronistic: too dusty, not very secure, and needing constant expensive maintenance. They are bad for the environment, as the dust creates pollution. Even if it is not as harmful as PM10, is nevertheless an inconvenience not to be underestimated, nor is the major financial commitment necessary to keep a dirt road in working order. Thus, the resurfacing of those roads where there is high automobile traffic becomes a way of preserving the environment. Moreover, even the ancient Romans, when they had a busy road, concerned themselves with finding adequate solutions. It is not by chance that the Appian Way was paved with flagstones, as were the streets of Pompeii. For the Romans, roads were fundamental instruments. They were on average three or four meters wide and were composed of various layers, to a depth of about a meter and a half. The bottom layer (*rudus*) was formed of large pebbles which allowed water to drain through, on which was placed an intermediate layer (*nucleus*) of sand or gravel, and on the surface, the pavement (*statumen*), composed of a layer of smooth stones beaten well into the sandy bed. This final layer was constructed with a convex profile, in order to facilitate the flow of rainwater along the lateral margins. The cobbled Roman streets are among the ancient works most resistant to degradation. They resist rain, frost, and floods, and have had virtually no need of repair, as it is possible to see even today.

Now more than ever, the principal problems associated with unpaved roads are maintenance and dust. The security of a bare road depends on regular maintenance. To keep an unpaved road in a perfect state of efficiency it is necessary to do work on the road at frequent intervals, as opposed to the sporadic maintenance required by paved roads. Puddles, mud, and potholes with time become craters, you either end up stuck in one or learn to do the slalom while driving or walking. And the dust. If the dust deposits on the furniture in our homes, we hasten to remove it. But why then must the cypresses, vines, and olive trees be covered in dust? Perhaps we think that the landscape that surrounds us is not our home? Colors: Why in Germany are the so-called "romantic" paths covered in asphalt? Why in Trentino are the small roads that lead to the nature shelters paved, even if they are closed to traffic? And why are the streets paved along the vineyards of France? It is to prevent the dust that rises with the passage of cars, which covers like a toxic cloud everything around it and ruins the experience of the road because it kills colors. And colors are Chianti.



The goal of paving roads, therefore, is accommodate the reality of increased mobility and car traffic with minimal impact to the environment. Unpaved roads frequently run through areas of natural beauty and value. "How can we achieve this goal?" I asked the manager of the company who came here about a month ago to do the paving job. "It is possible with new technological methods," he replied, "that make use of computerized machines and special types of emulsions, which, sprayed cold among successive layers of grit, create safe and impermeable road surfaces." His theory was interesting, as it dismantled all the usual arguments in favor of bare roads. "This cold-spraying technique," he explained, "is designed to eliminate dust while improving regularity, adhesion, and water resistance, all the while maintaining the natural context of the environment. There are several factors which define this process as ecological: first of all, the emulsions work at cold temperatures, which avoids the emission of smoke and fumes in the air and damage to operators and environment. Also, low environmental impact is achieved through the use of different typologies and inert colorings which allow, from an aesthetic standpoint, the integration of the road with the surrounding context."

I wanted to play the devil's advocate, however, and said that perhaps the purpose of the particular characteristics and quality of these interventions was to charge a higher cost than standard treatments. He smiled at me. "But there is a double saving here: economic and environmental," he said. "Bare roads will continue to incur high maintenance costs. If we return to your main objective of preserving the environment, the only other option to what we are doing now would be to keep the roads as they are!"

In the end, my curiosity was directed precisely to natural landscapes. Since this man was at this time also paving another road next to a building registered by the Ministry of Environmental and Landscape Preservation, I asked him, "What is your relationship with this institution?"

"We developed the relationship because of the characteristics of our work which I described to you earlier-- this system of treating roads is approved by the fine arts and natural parks with whom we have collaborated for years. We have executed works in particular situations with strict landscaping and environmental constraints, such as at the Presidential Estate of San Rossore, the National Park of the Tuscan Island of Elba, the Consortium of Bare Roads of Montalcino, the Presidential Estate of Castel Porziano, Cimolais Park and many others still."

It is necessary to preserve landscapes, and to do so with technology that today is finely tuned and adapted to an increasing environmental conscience. A landscape is an area with a particular value, due to being developed in a "morphogenetic" fashion. That is, the generations and societies which took turns to use the land did not obliterate the marks left by previous peoples, but instead reworked them and added to them, all the while respecting the same fundamental principles that define the place's identity.

In viewing the beauty of the Chianti landscape, it is possible to understand the extraordinary amount of work and knowledge, accumulated over centuries, that this landscape contains. The foundation of this beauty is a complex structure that still plays an important role in preserving the environment. All of this, needless to say, also translates into the economic value for which this region is known.



This intervention in our municipality was realized in an experimental fashion, and was chosen for this particular stretch of road because the Superintendent had requested many times for a solution to the road problem here. Nevertheless it is an intervention relevant to the entire territory: all who live in this area, all who pass through for various reasons, all tourists who come to us on foot or by car, all who love and sense the significance of this landscape. My personal thanks to Alberto Bencisti, Mayor of Greve in Chianti, and to all the municipal administrators who worked on this project, and to Riccardo Giubilo of the company SlurryItalia who executed the ecologically sound treatment of the road.



COMUNE DI GREVE IN CHIANTI

