

“INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DOLOMITES”

Initial ideas

Dolomites have always been remarkable places, so beautiful that they have been inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list from 2009.

After Tiziano Vecellio painted them in 1500, many people adventured and tried to discover all its secrets and beauties. These outstanding rocky formations are sometimes so elaborated and sophisticated in their shapes to be compared to natural cathedrals complete with pinnacles, arches, thanks to the work of the amazing architect called Nature.

I live in a small village in the Dolomites, these views are a everyday sight for me, but after I moved to a city, I truly miss their majesty and beauty. Not many places on earth are as intriguing and breath-taking as this.

Colours, shapes, lights, patterns, structures, materials this is what an artist needs to create his art and this is exactly what could be found in mountains landscape. And it's not just the mountains to enchant but everything that comes with it: clouds that become surreal seas lapping the deep slopes of “dolomia”, different rock deposits with different colours becoming a natural artist palette. From the incredible structure of the hoar-frost to the secret miracle hidden in the tiniest snowflake: perfect and unique.

For me it's still a mystery that such different mixture of colours, textures, structures come together to form such a beautiful scenery, driving my curiosity to paint them and try to reproduce these bizarre shapes, colours and texture, creating something new in a very personal vision but still tied to my original sights.

I was encouraged by the Italian painter “Renato Balsamo” a good family friend. In his career he portrayed the dolomites in a way nobody did before. My art teacher was really supportive helping me to organize my ideas and furnishing me all the suggestions and tools to complete my art “adventure”.

The first thing I was going to work on was to make a list of techniques I wanted to experiment in my artworks (Fig.1).

I started to think about which kind of paint I liked the more and which was the one I could better handle to obtain satisfying results.

Above all I liked watercolours which give this soft and haze-like effect I used to observe on place specially in the early summer hours or in the cold winters late afternoons.

Tempera went along with watercolours since, as Balsamo taught me, it will enhance lights and shades.

I was also intrigued by oil painting on canvas, very traditional although I consider it pretty complicated for me but it was still one option to consider.

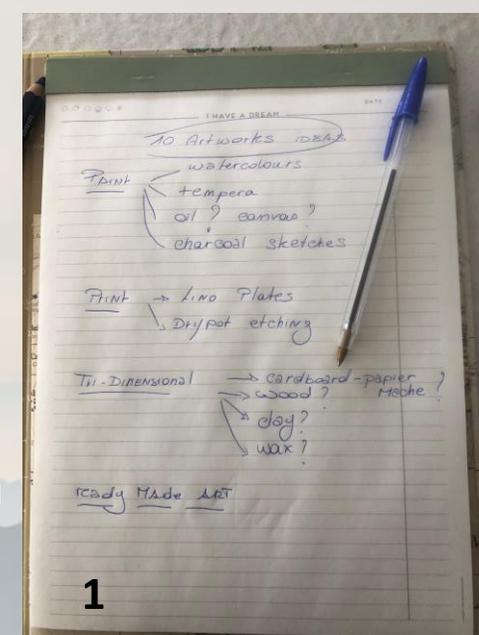
Charcoal sketches are between my favourites, specially when used to reproduce mountain landscapes or mountain villages life and I wanted to have some examples in my portfolio.

In our art class we have a big, green vintage press printer (Fig 2) and from the first moment I stepped in I was sure I would have used it. So I decided I would dedicate a couple of artworks to it. It was just a matter of deciding which technique to use. In my art studies I was fascinated by a couple of printing processes: dry point etching and woodblock colour paint and I decided to go for these two.

However I definitely wanted to experiment also tri-dimensional art using my hands.

Sculpture has always been very intriguing for me but what material had I to choose? Wood, like the wood sculpture tradition in my hometown (Fig. 3)? Clay? Wax? Cardboard or papier-maché? The decision has been very difficult but I wanted to experiment with a structure in painted cardboard which, I thought, was perfect to represent a line of mountains and their effect in perspective.

I was also determined to make a ready made art installation. I visited Venice Biennale in Fall '20 and I was particularly captivated by all the readymade artworks exposed there specially the one of the Thai artist Korakrit Arnanondchai (Fig. 4)



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Me portraied by Renato Balsamo

Me in Renato Balsamo's studio in Cortina d'Ampezzo .



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KORAKRIT ARNANONDCHAI

Sources:

<https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/partecipants/korakrit-arnanondchai>

Deciding which technique I was going to use has been pretty complicated since I really wanted to experiment as much as I could. I was conscious the work ahead would have been difficult and probably sometimes also disappointing but I was ready to take the challenge.

IL REGNO DEI FANES



Ideation



Mosaics

Liberty leaded-glass windows

Matisse cut-outs

The idea for my first artwork raised from a picture I took while hiking in the mountains surrounding my birthplace in Cortina. It's a beautiful waterfall between rocks and pines trees. (Fig 1)

I wanted to elaborate this picture and create something new out of it. I wanted to significantly simplify it in its more peculiar elements.

I tried to figure out how many techniques would it be possible to apply and I finally decided I had basically three options to work on this project (Fig. 2):

Use the mosaic technique - Get inspired by Tiffany glass décor - Matisse cut-outs

All the three techniques were really interesting for me, it was just question to decide which one would have been the one I should use and which one would lead to obtain the best results.

Basically the three techniques could each reduce my image to the basic geometric element and from there I could recompose it and was exactly what I was looking for.



I liked each one and I couldn't decide which one I had to use so it was clear I needed some more research.

Finding inspiration and experimenting

3 Sources:

<https://www.ravennamosaici.it/mausoleo-di-galla-placidia/>



4 Sources:

<https://www.ravennantica.it/en/basilica-of-santapolinare-in-classe/>



Mosaic

In summer 2020 I travelled to Ravenna and visited all the beautiful Byzantine mosaics of the V century. <https://youtu.be/pytUlajVxGk>

<https://www.ravennamosaici.it/en/>

I was specially impressed by the gold mosaics I saw in the **Basilica of San Vitale**, by the blue ones in the **Mausuleum of Galla Placidia (Fig. 3)** and by the mosaic landscapes reproduction in **St. Apollinare in Classe (Fig. 4)**.

All the scenes represented are the celebration of the political power Ravenna had in this period, as the capital of the Roman Empire. It's a triumph of colours. I was so intrigued by this old technique of the mosaic I wanted to know more and I started to study it in detail. I then discovered how the process implied more than one artist: the *Pictor imaginarius* was the one to draw the sketch, the *Pictor Parietarius* the one to put it on the walls and then the *musivarius* or *tessellarius* who was the one to cut, choose and stick the tiles. I got really fascinated by this art and I even bought some "tessere" or tiles to try to create one by myself. I therefore thought I could use these tiles to reproduce my image.

EXPERIMENTING

I started to put all the tiles on a canvas just to figure out the effect but it wasn't really what I was looking for. It was nice but I couldn't just juxtapose the tiles, I also needed to reproduce the waterfall image and this was the point where I realized this was not the effect I wanted. It was very confusing and no real image was visible. It was necessary a much bigger surface for the mosaic to have it recognizable. (Fig.5)



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Sources:
http://www.museivillatorlonia.it/en/casina_delle_civette/la_casina_delle_civette



6

Liberty stained-glass windows Villa Torlonia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu6_FyRKVIg

http://www.museivillatorlonia.it/en/casina_delle_civette/la_casina_delle_civette

During my 2020 summer trip through Italy I also visited Rome and the freshly renewed Villa Torlonia with the *Casina delle Civette* and all the amazing stained windows (Fig. 6) . When I was figuring out which technique I could use all these amazing windows came to my mind and I would have loved to try to do apply it. I also explored the Tiffany technique which is a kind of evolution of the stained glass made easier by the use of copper tape.

What I picked up from Liberty windows has been the fragmentation of the real image and the simplification of it which is what I wanted to obtain in my artwork.

Henri Matisse cut-outs inspiration

When I finally got through Henri Matisse cut outs I soon realized it was exactly the effect I wanted to obtain in my artwork. I had the chance to visit MOMA museum few years ago and I could see his works exposed.

<https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/6>



During the final chapter of his life, due to his deteriorating health conditions, Matisse moved away from paintings and started to make cut-outs. He dropped his brush and used almost exclusively scissors or even just hands to cut painted sheets into shapes which were intentioned to represent the real world.

He played with striking colours and contrasts and created an artificial world based on simple design and simple shapes.

He cut the coloured papers with a quick and spontaneous scissors work and afterward he had them pinned to the wall by his assistant Jacqueline Duheme who was than moving them according to Matisse instructions till the composition satisfied him. He was making her changing colours and changing positions and he was very accurate and sophisticated in this.

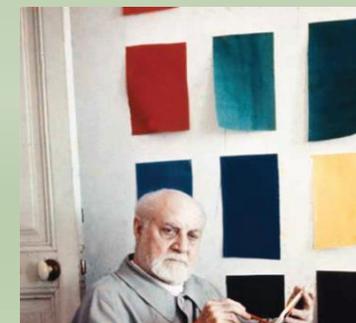
<https://youtu.be/G4NHDpaQW9s>



Sources:
<https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/6/308>

Henri Matisse. *Memory of Oceania*. Nice-Cimiez, Hôtel Régina, summer 1952-early 1953

Source:
<https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/6/313>



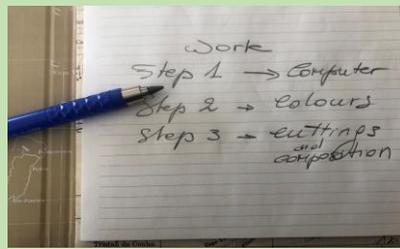
PROCESS

I elaborated a plan for my process and it would have been basically divided in three steps:

Step 1 Computer work

Step 2 Colours

Step 3 Cutting and Composition



Step 1: Computer work

I downloaded my picture in my Pc and when I started focusing on the picture I soon realized I could zoom in the picture and fragment it up till to obtain geometric essential tiles.

The close up was done uploading the picture in the computer program Pixlr (Fig. 9) and a special triangular filter called Mosaic has been applied (Fig.10).

I zoomed in the newly made picture to the most variable and intriguing parts (Fig. 10) so the result was to obtain the natural landscape minimized to its most vibrant colours and shades.

I made three different close-ups each one focused on different points of the image with different gradations of colour and I printed three copies.



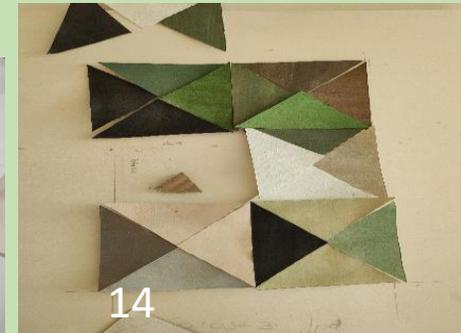
Step 3: Cutting and composition

The next step was to cut the appropriate colours, to then recreate the zoomed landscape. In order to do that I took a robust piece of carton and cut it in the form of the triangular shape with base 8cm. and high 4cm. to use it as sample for all the triangles I have to cut.

I cut out approximately hundred triangles of paper chosen from all the different colours and shades (Fig. 12). It was now time to decide for a background and I first tried with a white paper which did not give the figure much eye catching, so I decide to go more "natural" using 3 slim wood planks measuring 30 x 42 cm each.

After trying to stick the pieces of paper on the wood, the artwork seemed very monotonous and unappealing and I felt disappointed. I wanted to make it more attractive. I decided to add some tiny triangular cardboard pieces (fig. 13-14) which I then stuck on the back of the coloured papers in order to give them more movement and depth of focus. The result was much better and I felt really satisfied although it was not perfect. The cut triangles placed on the cardboard support didn't match perfectly as it was in the computer however this gave the whole a tri-dimensional effect which I liked.

At this point I was really satisfied of the result and this procedure was applied to all the three close up prints I've made at the beginning. (Fig. 15)



REFLECTION

Working on this technique has been really important to me since I realized how difficult it is to cut and combine and how simplistic sometimes is their interpretation as easy works. However even Matisse cut-outs were firstly criticized as poor and childish. The final result of my artwork represents a landscape minimized to its most vibrant colours, it's a kind of visual abstraction of the reality. With my artwork I wanted to symbolize that "digging" deep into the nature the last thing it remains you are colours and their shades. The complexity of their combination or juxtaposition gives shape to the most amazing scenery. Here I started from the big picture and ended up to the detail in my next work I wanted to go opposite: starting from the detail and landing on the big picture.



MAGO GELO



INSPIRATION

The *Breaking wave of Kanagawa* has been a great inspiration for my work since it's part of Hokusai's print series of *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. He was quite obsessed by Mount Fuji as I am by the mounts around Cortina d'Ampezzo, specially the Tofana di Rozes. Hokusai was known for his strenuous pursuit of the perfect work and apparently he said this words on his deathbed "If only Heaven will give me just another ten years... Just another five more years, then I could become a real painter" he was almost 90 years old. His perseverance has been of great inspiration for me and I learned how to keep searching and exploring art possibilities

<https://www.katsushikahokusai.org/biography.html>
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/45434>



Fig 5 *The Breaking Wave off Kanagawa*, woodblock colour print by Hokusai: <https://www.katsushikahokusai.org/the-complete-works.html>

IDEATION

When I started thinking at my second project I thought it would have been a good idea to start from the detail. While in my first artwork I had zoomed-in a waterfall landscape image, here I took a picture I've done with a 100mm. macro Zeiss lens on a full frame Nikon camera. (Fig 1) It's a picture of the hoar-frost and in the specific the rime formation

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/frost/frost.htm> natural phenomenon. This happens just in very specific weather conditions and in particular places and it transform the landscape in a fairy tale scenery. The effect is amazing and in my hometown we call it "Mago Gelo" which means "Frost the Wizard" because of the unbelievable shapes it can create. (Fig. 2-3-4) I had several pictures of this particular subject but the one I choose was my favourite because of the patterns it showed and of the colours in it. It was quite a blue monochrome. But now it was a matter of finding the way to reproduce it creating something special out of it. Because of the colours and because of the white and blue, the Japanese Edo Katsushika Hokusai's *The Breaking Wave off Kanagawa* (Fig 5) came to my mind and therefore I had no doubt I wanted to use the same printing technique

Discovering UKIYO-E - NISHIKI-E

Although the *Kanagawa Wave* image is very popular and pretty wide diffused I had no idea of it's particular style. I just knew it was a print.

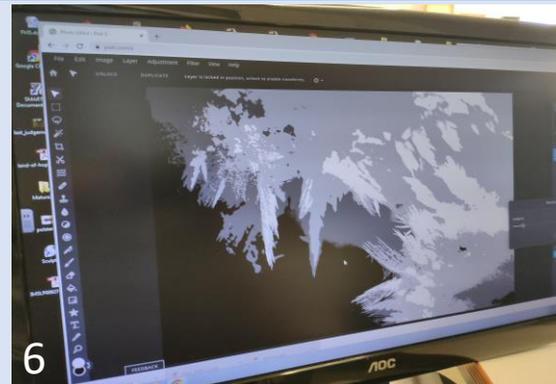
Since I wanted to obtain the same effect I discovered that Hokusai used an antique (eighth century) and traditional Japanese woodblock colour print called **UKIYO-E** which means "picture of the floating world" and it was used to reproduce scenes from history or urban life first and later landscape. At the beginning it was monochromatic but than the technique evolved in the polychromatism and was called **NISHIKI-E**. Basically three colours were used and for each colour there was a specific carved woodblock done following the artist draw. https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ukiy/hd_ukiy.htm

I was so fascinated by this technique, I learned all I could about the process to try to do the same with my work. I was really enthusiast of the idea and I started planning it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEubj3c2How>

Process

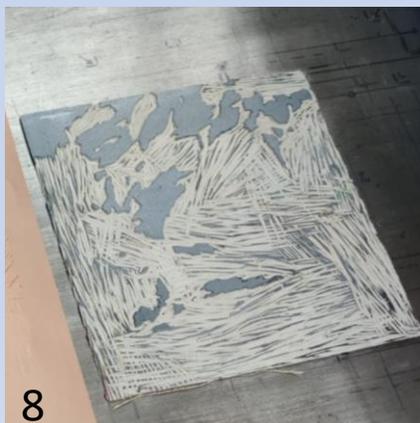
1 Processing my picture

The starting point was to obtain an image with better marked lines than the one of my picture. My PC Pixel program helped a lot. I uploaded my picture in and used a special filter called poster edges. (Fig. 6) Working with levels I managed to distinguish 3 different layers of distinct colours. Afterwards I turned the picture into black and white and the colours simplified to just three white, grey and black. (Fig 7) I printed three copies which I would use for the carving process.



2 Transferring the image

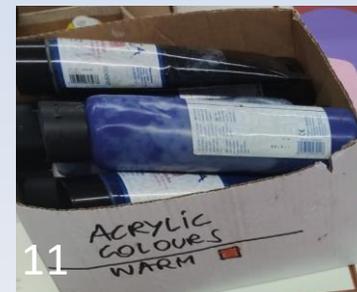
An interesting part of this artwork has been to transfer the image on the surface I had to carve. The NISHIKI-E artist used to stick the paper on the wood block and then carve the wood following the draw lines. The draw went destroyed and the remaining pieces of papers removed. I wanted to make things little easier and I first thought I could do it by a freehand drawing directly on the surface to be carved but I soon realized it wouldn't be so accurate. I therefore decided I would have used carbon paper. So I put a sheet of carbon paper between the copies and the blocks. This was a great idea since it was easier for me to follow the lines nevertheless this allowed me to easily choose the different layers of colours I wanted to print. From the black/white copies I selected one colour each: white, grey and black and transferred the profiles on the blocks.



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3 CARVING

Carving wood is not that simple and, as I learned, also Japanese artists of *Nishiky-e* didn't do the work by themselves but specialized wood carvers did the work for them. I therefore opted for another option: I was going to use lino blocks (Fig. 8) which are smoother and easier to carve. I then decided to use 30x30 cm, lino blocks. It was now time to carve! I had my carving tools with different tips I used accordingly with the engraving dimensions, lines and patterns I wanted to obtain. (Fig. 9) This was one of my work process steps I enjoyed more although it took me quite long time to engrave the three lino plates using more than one tool. Especially carving the sharpest pointed lines of the image has been particularly tricky and complicated since I wanted it to be very peaked as my original picture was. Basically the cut-out parts were the parts not supposed to be printed a kind of negative. I thus obtained the three engraved lino plates (Fig 10) with three different layers which were to produce three different images with three different colours.



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4 COLOURS:

It was time to choose three different colours and also decide the colour and the dimensions of the background paper where to print it. Initially I wanted to use a white paper but I thought the artwork would then result boring. I then decided to go for coloured papers which added one more colour to the three I had and made my colour range wider. As for the paper dimensions I decided for a 35x35 cm. A bit larger than the print so the printing would result with a little coloured frame all around. The colours I was going to use were acrylic colours which are perfect to be printed and easily drying (Fig. 11). I took some printing colour and I placed it onto a flat surface. With the help of a roll I was able to evenly coat it on the surface. It had to be smooth and uniform in order to be applied on the lino plates surface

Reflection

This was the first time I printed and artwork. The process has been very interesting and deeply involving. The last part of the process was the more engaging and creative of all this work process. Trying to find the good combination of colours was deeply interesting and exciting. And I was often surprised to try hazardous combinations which, at the end, resulted the more appealing. Hokusai had 36 views of the Mount Fuji I ended up to have 24 versions of the hoar frost image. Colours headed me to my next artwork where I would have experimented warm colours and curved lines on canvas.



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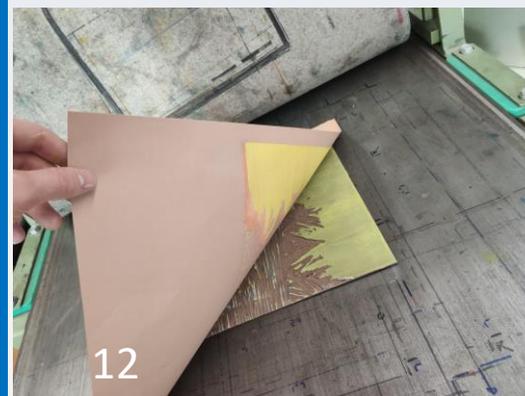


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5 PRINTING

Obviously the first lino plate I had to choose was the one with more printable surface and the second and third followed with the same criteria. This looks now so obvious to me now but I was pretty lost at the beginning. I necessarily needed a system to follow.

This passage was specially interesting for the choice of the colours, going usually from darker to lighter or from lighter to darker. I took the coloured lino plate and placed on the printing press. Over the lino plate I also placed a coloured paper accordingly with the colours I chose in advance for the three different layers. I processed the first layer under the press and controlled the result which satisfied me very much (Fig. 12). I then changed colour and lino plate and placed the just printed coloured paper on the new layer and processed through the press. The second colour and layer was done and I liked it even more. I repeated the process with the third lino plate and the printing was completed. I was very happy of the result. I processed 24 different prints and the result is an impressive coloured wall, all the images are the same but according to the combination of colours used each looks as it was a different image. (Fig. 13)



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ENROSADIRA



2 Joan Miro: Summer ("L'été"), 1938 detail
Sources:
<https://www.moma.org/col/lection/works/37242>



3 Joan Miró Woman (Opera Singer) 1934
Sources:
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/37242>

INSPIRATION: Miró

I was Looking at the image, I was trying to find a good technique to highlight colours and shapes and Joan Miró curved lines and blunt colours I saw at MOMA (Fig 2-3-4) came into my help.

Miró let his imagination draw and give shape to his lived experiences specially the natural life scenes.

With this purpose he also used colours as he stated "I try to apply colours like words that shape poems, like notes that shape music." Joan Miro' <https://www.joan-miro.net/>

I also learned how Miro' used to paint on every surface he found suitable and he often used old and crumpled jute canvasses.

Going through his works was a research that gave me all the tools I needed to adventure in a surreal experience.

<https://youtu.be/N2mrK33gCYE>
<https://youtu.be/77eSGRcojtg>

IDEATION

This artwork was inspired by the same waterfall landscape picture I used for my first artwork (Fig. 1). Where in my first artwork the zoomed-in zones basically highlighted cold colours such as blue, green, grey, here I was looking for warm colours. Cold colours inspired me straight lines and this was the reason why I opted for triangular shapes as reproduction pattern in my first artwork. However warm colours inspired me curved and soft lines, therefore the pattern I was looking for would have had souple movement and autumn like shades. I also wanted to experience canvas painting, I was sure it would have been the perfect surface to obtain a soft, smooth and warm effect.

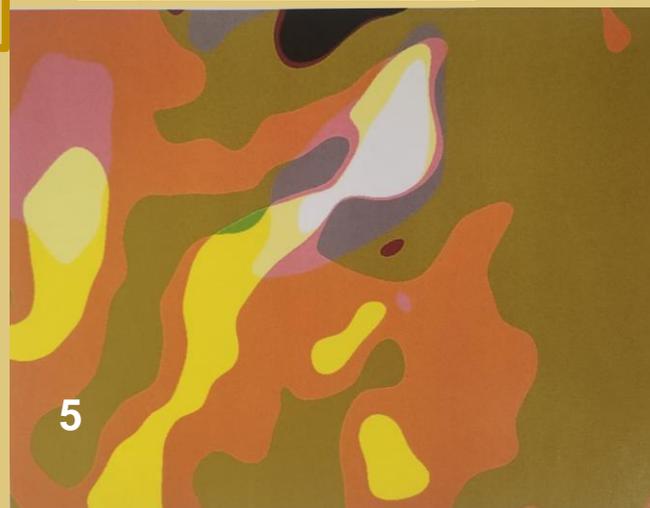


Choosing the background colour and material

I decided the background colour would have been done using spray paint since it would have resulted shaded which was the effect I was looking for. I than decided I would have used an old canvas measuring 59,5 cm. x 50cm. (Fig.6)

The Process

First step I uploaded my picture in my PC and deeply zoomed in where the warm colours were. Although I used the same Pixlr editing program I used in my first work, this time I experienced a different filter deforming my image with smoother lines and well defined patches of bright colours. It was really fun exploring the filters possibilities and I ended up with something I liked very much (Fig.5). I then printed the image and it was now time to sketch and colour.



THE SKETCH

Now I had my base and the next step was to reproduce on the canvas the image I have obtained from the filtered landscape picture.

It hasn't been easy to decide how to do it.

At first, I thought I could just copy it using a translucent tracing paper but this will be not really engaging for me so I decided to go free hand with a 2H soft pencil. I then started outlining the major lines of the painting (Fig.7). I was really satisfied with my work and the draw was done .

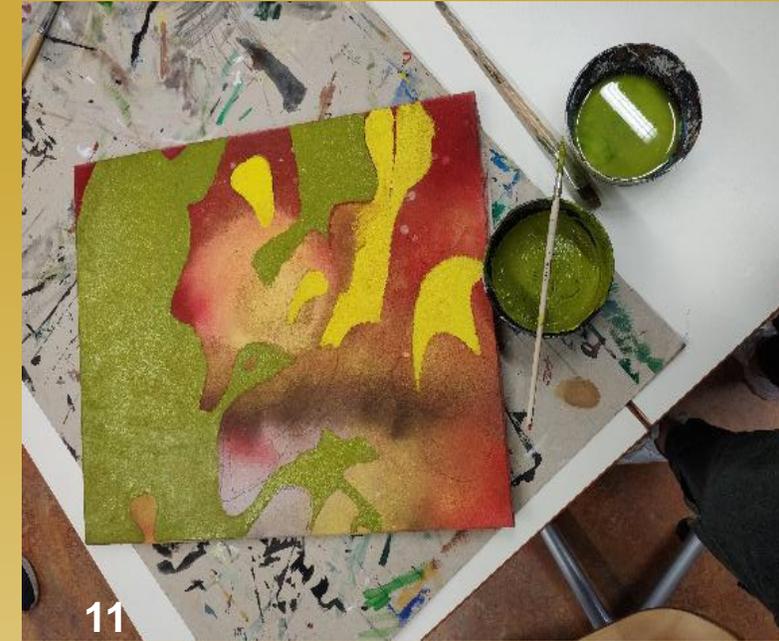


THE COLOURS

Since the canvas was pretty old and banged up, the surface was very bumpy and spoiled. It was important to find the good colours technique to cover it and making it more regular.

I therefore decided I should use acrylic paint which have a wider range of colours to choose from and higher concentration of coloured pigments which was important specifically for this artwork (Fig 8).

I started painting following the sketched lines and worked on the contours first. I needed to be more precise I could specially on the borderlines between two colours. It had to result very neat. Choosing colours and imaging how they will result or how they will finally match is something I really enjoyed doing.



REFINEMENTS

However when I started applying the colour I soon realized it didn't stick everywhere in the same way and some spots were really hard to coat. (Fig 9)

I immediately found out that this was due to the spoiled canvas surface and probably also to a sort of impermeable layer the spray colour created on it and therefore the colour slipped away like it was oil in water. I was really disappointed and I was afraid this would affect my work. What happened here was really weird since I decided to go for acrylic colours because they were the more reliable to work in such conditions. Although I couldn't find any good reasons for this unforeseen "side effect", I decided to keep painting following our original plans because, after all, the result looked great.

It was just question to wait the colour to dry and eventually applying several layers of colours till it was even. Of course this took longer than supposed to finish my artwork and I was really anxious to see the final result. The last part I coloured was the green one and it was quite extended. I used a big amount of colour and treated it several times. (Fig. 10) It took it several hours to completely dry but when I was able to look at it few day later I felt really satisfied with my work. (Fig. 11)



Reflection

Working on this specific artwork has been important to me specially from the point of view of the experimentation.

I here learned how the starting main ideas can be, sometimes, wiped out by technical issues I didn't expect. I learned how to deal with it making changes or finding solutions.

I also was so enthusiast to experience canvas painting and I considered it a very special moment.

Using the brush on this surface and spreading the dense colour on the canvas transmitted me a new sensation.

Through my fingers I could feel the irregular surface of it and the colour filling all the gaps between the textures. I really liked this sensation.

MOUNTAINS IN PIECES

IDEATION

The idea for this artwork came from some contemporary artists our teacher introduced me. Richard Hamilton's "Daddy- Pop" (Fig 1), as he was called, pop-art collages have been so innovative and incredibly conceptual in finding the epic in everyday life objects specially by the new world of advertising and commercialization of industrial design which was spreading in late 60ties and 70ties houses. <https://youtu.be/ONqK155aHWQ>

However I was especially attracted by the works of the American collage artist Lance Letscher (Fig 2) who used old postcards, pieces of old letters or books, record covers and other different papers, all carefully selected with special attention to the colour, to create a sort of quilt like collage. Letscher meticulous selections and compositions created a sort of three dimensional illusion. All the different pieces in Letscher artworks "speak" different languages and visions of the reality. They all come together in his collages to describe us a new reality. <https://youtu.be/NhxHmJ-8yrl>

Of course this could be connected to my work and to my main idea of representing the Dolomites mountains. This idea has been revealing for my artwork: I wanted to reproduce mountains landscapes images coming from different views and different reproductions. In my art classroom there was a box filled with old postcards of the Dolomites. Most of them were black & white, some vintage coloured and some just faded.



1 Richard Hamilton
Fashion-plate
Sources:
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/feb/07/richard-hamilton-called-him-daddy-pop>



2 Lance Letscher
Third Bell Sources:
<http://www.lanceletscher.com/>

DISCOVERING COLLAGE TECHNIQUE

The name derives from the French term *coller* which means glue, stick. It is used to describe both a technique and the result of this technique. It was firstly used as a technique in the early years of the 1900.

By the way Collage is not only question of cutting and sticking paper, it can also be done using different media such as painting, drawing or be tri dimensional and different materials can be used.

However it can be a *Papier-collé* where the cut paper has a specific form and it's in this way closer to drawing.

It can be a *Montage* which create particular relations between the single cut pieces.

It can even be a *Photomontage* where the main collage is done by photos.

Also *Decoupages*, which is normally considered a craft more than an art, have been experimented by several artists.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/collage>



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INITIAL IDEAS

I had my old postcards, most of them were black & white or sand, some others were colour painted, some were ruined or faded by sun exposure (Fig 3). I therefore needed some backgrounds whereto stick my pieces. I than thought I could use the discarded cut-outs of my previous works That was a great idea because those pieces would have been thrown away and I worked hard to find the good shades of colours connected to the mountain landscapes. However my watercolours papers were definitely too thin and I needed a much stronger support where to create my collage. So I ended up using a natural cardboard 21cm x 29,5 cm. My coloured discarded papers will be still used to cover the cardboard or to create a kind of frame.



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Collage 1 Refinements and changes

I had a nice old review page with a picture of Cortina d'Ampezzo and its mountain on the background. I wanted to paste it on the cardboard but of course using the whole image wasn't exactly a nice collage work so I ended up cutting out the town and leaving just the meadows in the front and the mountains in the back.

I used a synthetic resin adhesive to glue the cut outs since it doesn't leave any trace on paper.

The central image of the town with the peculiar bell tower I just cut out, should be detached and figure like it was a tri-dimensional image. But sticking it to the background wasn't so good because everything looked very confusing and quite flat. I needed something to divide the two images and I also thought to make it a little personal using my discarded watercolours papers as frame (Fig. 4).

Afterwards I glued the central image it looked quite nice but too conventional. I had a look to the famous collage I studied and I realized how, all the pieces were sometimes glued in surprisingly upside-down or in illogical positions to attract the viewer attention to the detail with the uncommon layout. I decided to glue the central image horizontal on the work so it was like playing with two different plans of the same image but discarded at the view. I was really satisfied with this first work and I specially liked the colours and pastel tones matching great with the natural cardboard and with the landscape natural colours in the picture.

Collage 2 For the second collage my ideas were clearer: I wanted to reproduce the same effect I saw hiking in the Dolomites when you approach a lake and the mountains just mirror in it and they are perfectly reproduced specularly. I had a couple of pictures I personally took and started to think how to proceed (Fig. 5). I first choose an image I liked from the old postcards and made two copies. I then started to cut-out the mountain itself from both the copies.

I choose again a pastel coloured background from my old watercolours works and glued it to the cardboard to create the “artificial” sky and lake. The watercolour for the sky was unfinished but the bushes were very similar to clouds and I liked the effect so much. As for the lake I choose a green watercolour piece of paper.

However when the image was glued one opposite to the other it was clear it was not a mirror image but a capsized one which made me a bit reflecting on it. I then had a look to it and I decided I was liking it even more because it gave more movement to the whole and made it a little bit more surreal instead of having the same image perfectly matching. (Fig. 6)

Of course there was a gap to be filled between the two mountains and I cut out another old postcard, one with pink light colours (probably a printing error) and shaped it with my scissors and covered the gap. The pink colour of the postcard was really nice to see along with the white of the snow in the mountains cut outs. Again the colours and the result in general satisfied me very much.

Collage 3

For my following collages it was just matter of finding some new and interesting ways of cutting and assemble the pieces together trying to be innovative and diversify my works.

In this case I cut several postcards and pictures together with some pieces of my watercolours papers. Here I used the cutter and not the scissors so my composition would have been more geometric. I had a cut-out white frame from a postcard I used in one of my previous collages and it looked perfect to be glued all around the pieces I just assembled in the centre of the cardboard.

Something was missing and the work looked nice but uncomplete. I finally decided to cut a mountain shape and stick it over the whole in the middle. I was pretty satisfied with it.

Collage 4

For this collage work I wanted to do something different “cleaner” and immediate.

The idea came to me observing the colour palettes or guides for the home paintings (Fig. 7). It has been always so captivating to me these useful tools. I was fascinated by the shades of colours and by the names of those shades but eventually by the round shapes of the samples.

I therefore decided I could have a taste of mountains and mountain colours displayed like on a palette. I carefully cut with my scissors 15 round images and glued them on the background image which I decided it would have been an old mountain black & white landscape, the same way the painted walls of the homes are the background for the home paint palettes. The result was really nice. Amongst all my collages this is the one I prefer. (Fig. 8)



7

Sources
<https://www.homebunch.com/inspiring-interior-paint-color-ideas/>



Collage 5

My last collage has been quicker and easier for me to realize. I had a lot of discarded pieces of postcards, reviews and pictures and I started to cut them in square shapes and glued it in the centre of my cardboard. The result was nice but not so interesting so I decided I could add some rectangular shapes over the square ones so I would have divided the image once more and added movement and depth to the whole. I proceeded in this way and the result was really interesting and I was really satisfied with it.



Reflections:

Working with collages has been deeply interesting for me. I quickly realized how it wasn't just matter of cutting and gluing pieces together without any project or intentional purpose. Every single piece had to be cut in a certain way and it had to be cut using different tools depending on the effect I wanted to obtain. Even gluing hasn't been so immediate and depending on the material used it could have ruined the work. Specially working on paper. It took several hours and long trials before I could land on a satisfying work. I gained much more respect for the collages artworks, it stimulated my creative process and it pushed my research to go deeper.

LE TRE TOFANE

IDEATION

Cubism has always intrigued me and when I visited MOMA (Fig. 1) in New York I was definitely attracted by all the cubist artworks exposed. At that time my knowledge of art world was very poor and my impressions were basically oriented by my taste and not by any deep art awareness. During my IB years I've learned brand new critical "tools" and the necessary art mindfulness to understand art expressions I liked the more and also to try to reproduce them. It's always my Dolomites mountain the main subject of my artworks and in this case I wanted to create a cubist vision of it. The deconstruction, the synthesis along with the simplification to essential are some of the basics of cubism theory and I was sure I could apply it to my artwork with great results.



1

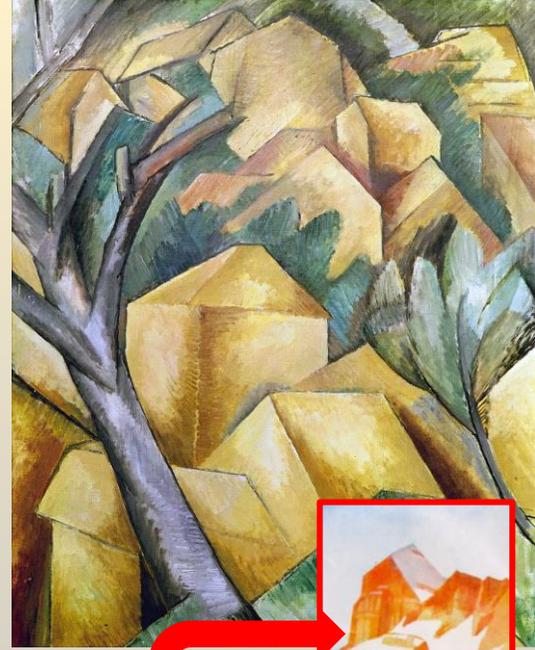
2

Paul Cézanne, *La mer a l'Estaque*, 1879
Sources: <https://www.paul-cezanne.org/the-complete-works.html>



3

Houses at L'Estaque Georges Braque
Sources: <http://www.unesco.org/artcollection/NavigationAction.do?idOeuvre=2943>



INSPIRATION

I selected a Cézanne and a Braque artwork (Fig.2-3) to get inspiration from. These particular artworks were selected because the representation of this south France little village of Estaque and the close by Mount Sainte-Victoire has been so important for Cézanne personal life. Those places have always been a safe harbour for him as my house in the Dolomites it is for me. Braque passed several months in Estaque after he got fascinated by Cézanne new technique trying to capture the novelty and reducing more and more shapes and colours giving birth to the not yet canonized cubist movement.

<https://youtu.be/1a2-nTwYEnc>
<https://youtu.be/1qbXYqcbdEs>

I was now ready to start my work, I just needed to find a nice view of my hometown Cortina with houses and mountains in the background. I ended up with an old postcard (Fig. 4). Although the composition was great, everything I wanted to reproduce was there the houses, the bell tower and the mountains, I couldn't start to figure it out. But what came to my help was the beautiful vintage posters of Cortina specially the ones created by the famous graphic designer Franz Lenhart. They are still so glamorous and Beautiful and they are so popular still today. (Fig 5) Lenhart graphic of the mountain was really essential and easy to reproduce. A kind of cubist vision of the landscape. The mountains are so essential but the particular shapes of each one is absolutely recognizable.

<http://www.artnet.com/artists/franz-lenhart/>

4



5

Franz Lenhart
Sources: <http://www.touriseum.it/en/vips/trauttmansdorff-castle-merano-vips-franz-lenhart.asp>



EXPERIMENTING MATERIALS AND DRAW

I wanted this artwork to be pretty big and I was wandering which materials and colours I could use.

My first thought was to use a canvas but I already used it and I just wanted to experience something new: new techniques and materials. My art teacher always encouraged me to do experiment and attempt different art methods and even using unconventional materials. Therefore this time I used a high-density fibreboard (HDF) measuring 70x 50 cm.

REFINEMENTS!!!

This material was so textured I was afraid I couldn't even draw on it but my concerns faded immediately after I started drawing using a 2B pencil (Fig. 6).

Thus I outlined all the main subjects, the bell tower, the houses and the mountains, very quickly and very easily (Fig. 7).

I was really happy with the result and so excited to start colouring it which has been the most challenging part of this artwork.

Colours

It was time to decide what colours to use. It was essential to obtain lots of shades and nuances to give all the shapes a cubistic four dimensional view and movement. I was enchanted by Picasso's *Femme Assise* and I wanted to obtain the same effects.

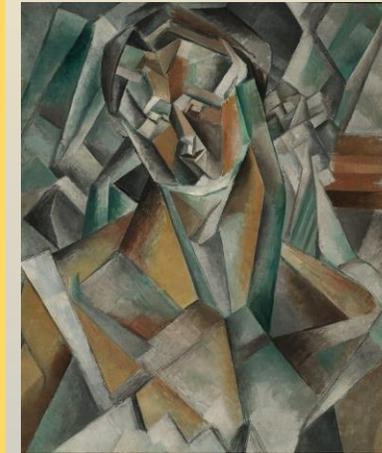
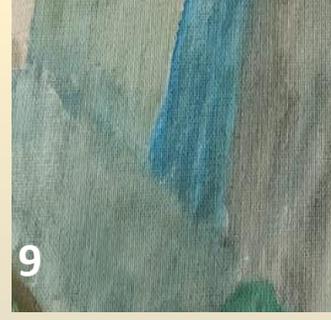
I decided to go for watercolours since it would have been perfect on this kind of surface although Picasso's artwork was an oil canvas.

When I started colouring the result was very satisfying and I enjoyed a lot this part of my artwork.

Watercolours were just perfect since they dried very quickly and I was able to brush up the just applied colours (Fig. 8-9).

I decided I would have used all the colours which reminded me the mountain landscape. I therefore used all the possible tones of green, blue and brown along with white and for this I took inspiration from Picasso *Femme Assise* (Fig.10).

As the artwork was going to be completed I was very satisfied with it. The bell tower has been transformed in a long pyramidal shape in the middle of the forefront. My beloved Tofana Mountains were on the back and Tofana di Rozes perfectly recognizable topped with white snow. Geometric figures completed the composition and they represented the town houses along with other mountains. (Fig. 11)

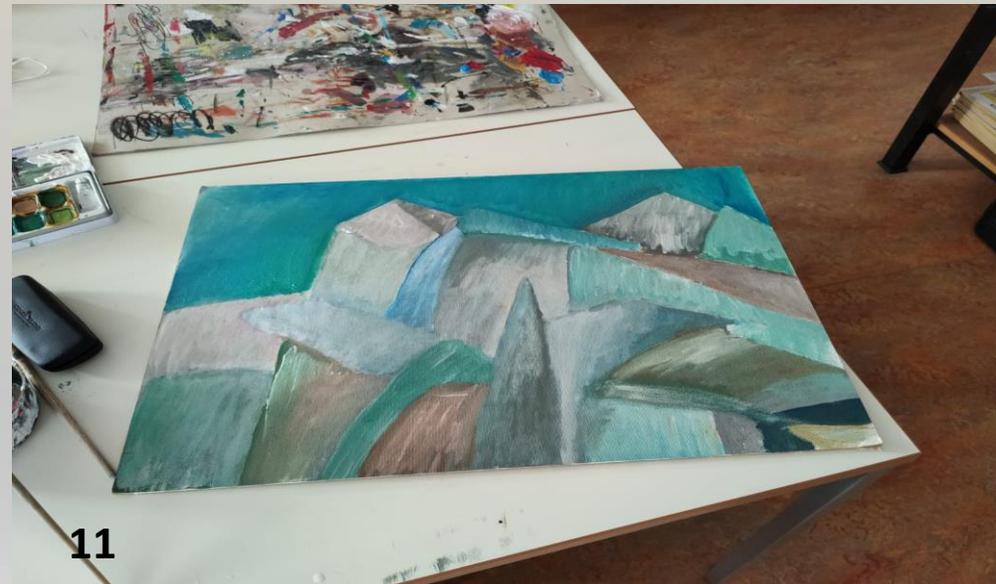


10 Pablo Picasso, 'Femme Assise' Sources: <https://www.barnebys.co.uk/blog/how-cubism-changed-the-world>

REFLECTION

I was definitely happy with my Cubism experience and I think this is one of my favourite artworks. My research has been so interesting and deep. I definitely acquired special awareness of Cubism and of its technique.

I was always been fascinated by Cubism, without having any consciousness. Working on my artwork gave me the opportunity to understand first hand and experiment this amazing technique



Mountains in Colours

IDEATION

For this new artwork I really wanted to experiment something new and challenging.

Last year I was in the artist Renato Balsamo's atelier in Cortina (Fig. 1) interviewing his daughter Maia. I was working on my comparative study and I needed more details on his tempera works.

However my attention was captured by a block of stone laying on the floor with a beautiful olive tree carved on (Fig. 2). Maia explained me it was a matrix for Acquaforate or Etching printing technique. I was so interested in discovering more and she introduced me a bit how Renato worked with this old technique. She also showed me all the etching Balsamo did with the Dolomites as main subject (Fig 3).

I was really fascinated by this complex technique and its outstanding results. I was sure I would have tried to do one by myself

The time has come and I was to start another amazing experience in the world of art techniques.



1



2



3

Discovering Etching and Dry-point Etching technique

Etching is basically an intaglio technique and it's origin dates back to the Middle Age when it was particularly used to make incisions on arms and armours. Afterwards during the XV and beginning of XVI this technique became very popular.

ETCHING TECHNIQUE: normally a copper plate is used and the surface is treated with special cleaning products. A layer of wax is applied and covered with carbon black to make the wax more resilient to the acid and to make the lines more visible. The draw is done with a steel pointed tool and the copper becomes visible. Afterwards the plate is immersed in a basin filled with acid. The acid will corrode the metal and when it will be cleaned the incision is visible and ready to be filled with colours and be printed.

<https://youtu.be/ik4FITrqaRE>

DRY-POINT ETCHING TECHNIQUE: this technique is also an intaglio technique and it differs from etching because it's easier and it doesn't require the use of chemicals or acids. Copper, zinc or plastic plates are the more used materials. The procedure consists in using an etching tool to trace the draw. The lines create a typical burr where the ink will be held in. The plate is now ready to be printed.

INSPIRATION

After my research on the technique I wanted to explore some big artists works.

REMBRANDT

I then discovered that Rembrandt, during his lifetime was more famous for his etching than for his paintings. His favourite etching subjects were biblical themes, landscapes (Fig. 5), portraits. His technique was so fine and accurate in all its details that his contemporaries thought he may have had a secret formula. In that period it was also habit to keep secret the ingredients of the protective coat formula or the alchemy of the acid used and of the proceedings. However there is no doubt Rembrandt has been the greatest etcher in the history of art. It took him long time and even years to make his incisions. He was so meticulous and accurate that you can watch his printings for hours and still finding new details. However his maniacal attention for the detail seems to become superficial when we consider the fact that etching is a reversed-right image. Here he seems not to care about it and in its self portraits he appears like left-handed while we perfectly know he was right-handed.

http://www.rembrandtpainting.net/about_rembrandt's_etchings.htm

<https://youtu.be/UxYT6k8o338>

LOVIS CORINTH

Afterwards I explored a little more and discovered Lovis Corinth landscape etching.

Corinth worked especially on the technique of the dry-point etching I was interested in.

During his artistic life Corinth experimented several printing techniques but etching has been his favourite.

He had a favourite landscape for his etching: the Walchensee landscape with its mountains and lakes and goats (Fig. 6-7) exactly how Dolomites mountains are mine.

His favourite technique has been the dry-point etching because the final result would have been more transparent and velvety. His graphic patterns are very essential and he creates a web of horizontal and vertical lines from where his subjects emerge. Like Rembrandt he didn't care about reversing the composition to be more accurate. The atmosphere and his experience comes first.

<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft1t1nb1gf&chunk.id=d0e6493&toc.depth=1&toc.id=d0e6493&brand=ucpress>

<https://youtu.be/rCHMQMvkdZM>



5 Rembrandt *The Windmill*

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collectio n/search/364149%>



6 Lovis Corinth. *Walchensee in*

Moonlight Sources:

<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/61196>



7 Lovis

Corinth *Large*

Walchensee

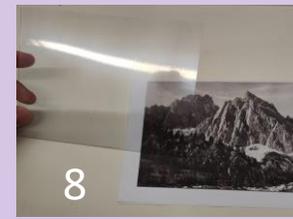
Landscape

<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/65039>

EXPERIMENTIG ETCHING

MATERIALS

I was ready to start my process. I needed to find a good picture or image of a Dolomite mountain first. I also needed a plate where to engrave and I could choose between copper, zinc or plexiglass. I choose plexiglass plate measuring 17,5 x 13 cm. which was smoother to carve and transparent so I could carefully copy all the mountain lines. (Fig. 8) The plate is also called matrix. I then needed a sharply pointed tool to make the incision (Fig. 9)



CARVING

The process of carving has been the most interesting and challenging.

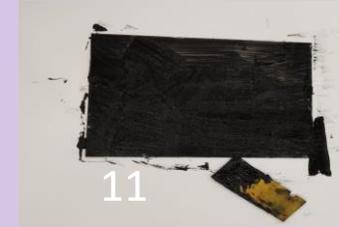
I put the image of Mount Rosà in Cortina (Fig 10) I previously choose under the plexiglass so I could easily follow all the lines and edges of the mount and start carving. I thought it would have been easier and faster but I soon realized how long the process would have been. I meticulously followed all the details and when I lifted the plexiglass I was proud of the result.



INKING

Now the process required the cleaning of the etched plexiglass.

So I passed on it a very light sheet of sandpaper just to make it smoother. It was time to ink it and this procedure is very specific and has to be done in a certain way to be successful. I applied a layer of ink on it using a spatula (Fig 11). Afterwards the exceeding ink has to be removed and I used an old phone directory paper which I knew was the best to polish it. Just the leftover ink in the lines remained. Now it was time to print. (Fig 12)



PRINTING

The process of printing has been very interesting. I had my plexiglass with black ink on it and I put it on the printing press. (Fig. 13)

I then needed to prepare the paper for printing. It was a white paper measuring 40x30 cm.

The technique required a special step here. The paper would have been to be wetted to better absorb the ink from the burrs and grooves. (Fig 14)

I applied the paper on the matrix and proceeded it into the printing press. The result was very satisfying.



PRINTING more copies and experimenting more colours.

I had my first copy in back. I was pretty satisfied with my work so I decided to try to do more colours. In order to do that the plexiglass needed to be perfectly cleaned specially when I wanted to use bright colours like yellow. I cleaned it under running water and using a brush. Some of the lines remained stiffed with solid ink but this wasn't a great issue since the ink was dry and of course not interfering with the new colour. The only difference would have been a thinner line since less ink would have been received by the grooves. I made 8 Copies and two of them were bi-colour. I hazarded this like and experiment but it ended up very well. I did one Black & Red and one Blue & Green. (Fig 15)



REFLECTION

This has been one of the most intriguing artworks I've done. Experimenting old techniques has always its charming side along with the difficulties in the process due to the purchase of old tools or unusual materials. In this case the technique was not completely lost but it evolved and the new procedures are more affordable. What was so interesting for me was the fact that I could reproduce a mountain remaining glued to the model. I have tried several times to reproduce free hand a mountain but the result has always been poor or it resulted something different although nice.

Mapping the Dolomites

IDEATION

In June 2020 I visited Rome and it was just 2 days that the COVID restrictions have been lifted so I could also book a visit to the **Vatican Museums**. I waited this visit for so long since Rome and it's museums are usually very crowded and the waiting lists are extremely long.

However this has been an amazing visit since all the Museums and galleries were uncrowded and I had the chance to take my time observing the masterpieces. Our Vatican Guide (there is a special licence to be allowed to guide groups in the Vatican Museums) told us we were very lucky since normally the visit of the Sistine Chapel is conditioned to small groups and you can just stay in up to 5 minutes and than you are asked to leave. In this case we had all the time we wanted to stay and observe.

Heading to the Sistine Chapel I passed through the beautiful Gallery of the Geographical Maps which enchanted me (Fig.1). The light, the ceiling frescoes and the beautiful geographical maps running all along the walls (Fig. 2). The gallery was created in 1581 at the behest of Pope Gregory XIII, he wanted to enjoy the beauty of Italy without having to move from Vatican.

The gallery is 120mt. long and 6mt. wide and there are 40 panels mapping all Italian regions along with it's major ports. I was mesmerized by the beauty and I stopped in front of my Veneto region map trying to find my hometown or at least to recognize the mountains. I was enchanted by the way the mounts and the territory has been described (Fig 3). I soon realized that it would have been a great idea to create a personal map of my hometown territory. I therefore started planning how to realize it in my next artwork.

https://youtu.be/ZewZWdd_x6E

<https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/eventi-e-novita/iniziative/Eventi/2016/il-restauro-della-galleria-delle-carte-geografiche.html>



RESEARCH: LOCAL MAPS

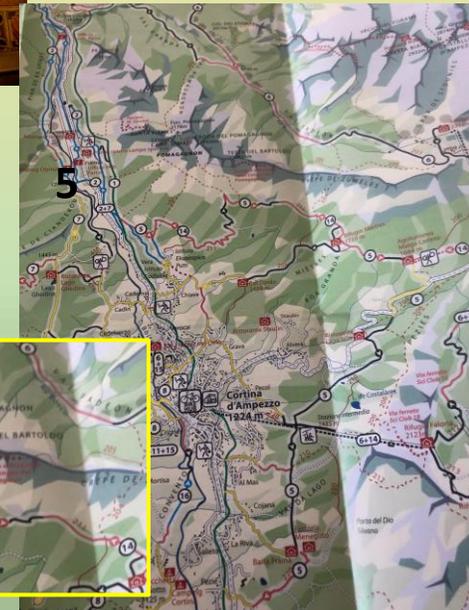
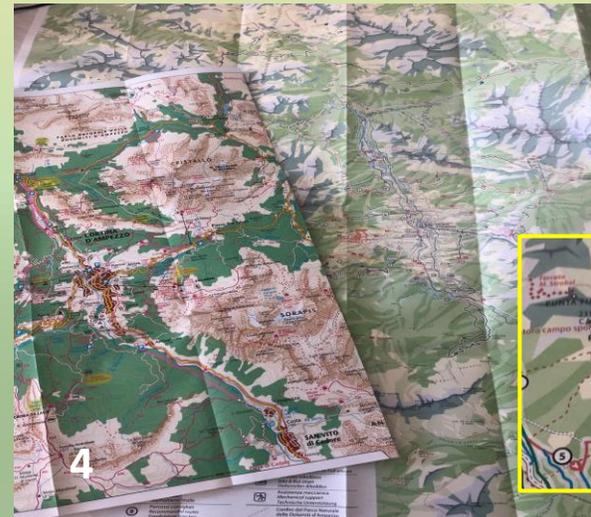
I needed to start my research and of course I ended up finding some maps of my area.

The most famous maps are the so called Tabacco maps <https://youtu.be/ArurEujgmvc> however they are pretty big and sometimes too complicated, however they are perfect for hikers and explorers. I was looking for something easily accessible where the contained information were simpler and clearer.

I ended up in our community official web site <https://www.dolomiti.org/en/cortina/downloads> where I could have access to all the maps. However I had a couple of these hiking maps and mountain bike maps at home which I could extensively study (Fig 4).

The hiking map was more realistic but the mountain bike map was more stylized and I decided I would have worked on this last one (Fig.5). In particular the profiles of the mountains and the colours used were significantly clearer and nicer to be reproduced or elaborated (Fig 6).

As soon as I ended up to the detail the works of Hermann Nitsch came to my mind.



HERMANN NITSCH

I saw Nitsch works studying the contemporary arts and specially the artists working in Vienna and performing the "AKTION" art. His art is absolutely transgressive, excessive and splatter.

Between 1984 and 1991 he worked on his bigger and afterwards considered unrealistic project of Die Architektur de Orgien Mysterien Theaters (The architecture of the O.M. Theater) consisting in 4 folders with draws, litographs, of over 3.300 individual prints. (Fig. 7)

The project consisted in creating a subterranean theatre where his performances could take place. The folder contains also some very big folding maps measuring 140.5 x 225.5 and 240x310cm.

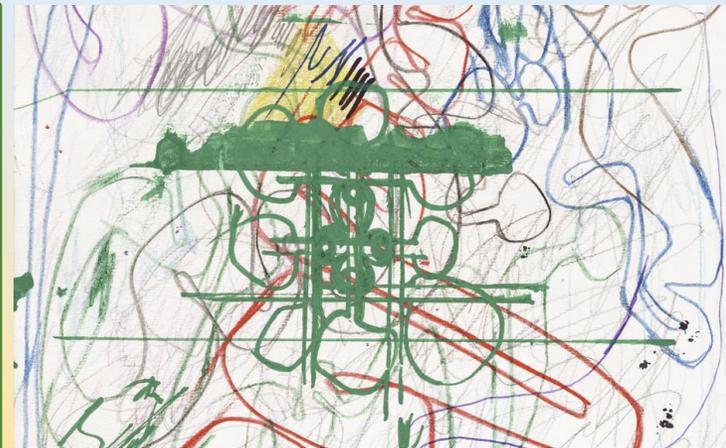
The project is composed by a vision of a subterranean urban architecture with a complicated system of tortuous passages and rooms constructed from geometrical lines and forma and even from an interpretation for the human body intestines (Fig. 8).

Their colours and form helped me to draw my personal map of the Dolomites in Cortina

<http://www.nitschmuseum.at/en/hermann-nitsch/work>

<https://www.nitsch.org/en/unikatsgrafik/>

<https://youtu.be/HlfsWWktFBs>



7 Hermann Nitsch : no title

<https://www.leopoldmuseum.org/en/exhibitions/19/hermann-nitsch-structures>



8

<https://www.leopoldmuseum.org/en/press/press-materials/875/Hermann-Nitsch-Structures>

PROCESS refinements and changes.

It was time to start working on my project.

I had my map and I worked on the PDF file I had in my computer since this would allow me to have more tools of analysis.

STEP 1

I therefore decide I would zoom-in the image and take the basic lines that came out. (Fig. 9)

Step 2

I had to decide where to draw them and I decided it would have been a white paper measuring 50x35cm. But eventually it looked really poor and I then decided I would have used a bigger coloured paper to put behind it and measuring little larger 69.5x50cm.

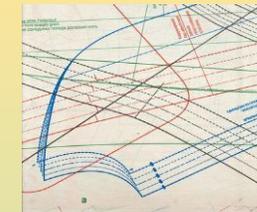
Step 3

COLOURS. As for the lines and traces I was unsure if I had to use coloured pencils or felt-tip pens. But looking at my work in process, the vintage Burda's review paper sewing patterns (Fig. 10-11), came to my mind helping me to go for coloured pencils since the lines would have been softer and the colours smoother. Only the black lines, which were to sign the anthropogenic elements were done with graphite.

I needed to chose the colours, firstly for my background paper but of course for all the lines of the map. I decided the colours for may background would have been watercolours and such as green, yellow and light brown tones all softly applied using more water than colour in order to have degrading tones. (Fig. 12-13-14)

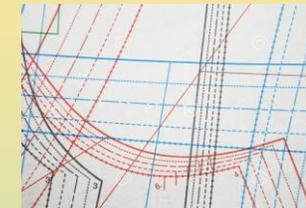


9



10

<https://www.sewinginsight.com/burda-sewing-patterns/>



11

<https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-photo-professional-clothing-patterns-sheet-image47116368>



12



13



14

REFLECTIONS

I wasn't sure what the result would have been and I was pretty anxious all the way through the process.

However the final result has been above all my expectations. The abstruse and sometimes illegible language of the Maps has been transformed in signs and their meaning has been extrapolated from their original intent of "guide". Here we can still read and recognize the maps conventional lines and structure but it becomes an artwork instead of being a useful tool for hikers and travellers.

Triangolo Aureo



IDEATION

In my art class there is a folder where all the discarded pieces get stored. All the artworks that have been aborted or excluded from the final selection, all the trials and attempts, all the colour or print testing, all the initial draws or sketches are hidden in this folder.

One day, when I was going to discard one of my drawing, I observed the strange collection and had a look to them all.

I just scattered them on the table and the effect was amazing (Fig. 1). Quite immediately a nice idea came to my mind: why shouldn't I use them or some of them for one of my artwork? Would I be able to give them a new artistic life?

Of course it would have been a sort of collage or assemblage work. I was ready to start my research.

INSPIRATION: DISCOVERING BAUHAUS

The inspiration for my work came from the amazing artistic world and concepts of the Bauhaus movement, home of the Avant-guards in arts. It was founded by the architect Walter Gropius in Weimar in 1919 as a school of Arts with the intention of rethinking the world and all branches of art were asked to contribute. It's aim was to bring back art to everyday life: art should be functional.

In fine arts **Paul Klee** was one of the most important exponent of the movement and in it's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (Fig. 2) he introduces us his theory about the relationship between line, shapes, colours in art. For Klee it was important to reduce the reality to simpler shapes and create abstract geometrical structures. (Fig. 3)

<file:///C:/Users/Ute/Pictures/Paul-klee-Pedagogical-Sketchbook.pdf>

https://youtu.be/HhMk3_SBFmg

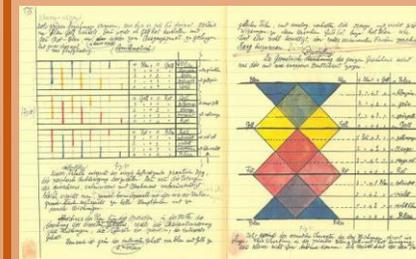
<https://www.paulklee.net/>

Another Bauhaus artist was of great inspiration for me has been studying the glass works of **Joseph Albers**.

At the beginning of his career, when he arrived at the Bauhaus, his early works of assemblage were made of discarded pieces of glass picked up at the Weimar town dump. All those garbage become jewels (Fig. 4) The main concept of my work would have been to use discarded pieces so I picked up Albers example. It was question of giving new life to something discarded, tossed away.

https://monoskop.org/images/4/4c/Albers_Josef_Glass_Color_and_Light.pdf

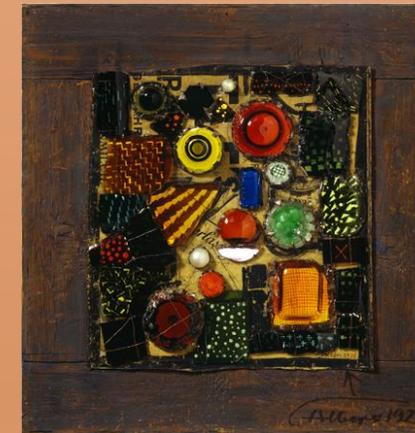
<https://youtu.be/2a45UBClbJc>



2 <https://www.paulklee.net/>



3 Paul Klee Wald Bau
<http://www.culturaitalia.it/opencms/index.jsp?language=it>



4
<https://albersfoundation.org/art/josef-albers/glass/#slide4>

CUT the TRIANGLE

I decided the shape was a going to be triangular. I wanted all the triangular to have the same size: base 16 cm. height 8cm. The golden triangle. The Triangolo Aureo or Golden triangle is an isosceles triangle created accordingly with the proportions of the golden ratio or divine proportion. This ratio has been used from the ancient times of Euclid and applied in several fields. In this artwork I have elected the isosceles triangle as base for my work. I have reduced the mountain reality to a triangular figure which is the extreme simplification of its real shape. I took a set square as pattern and I used the cutter to cut them (Fig. 5). I've carefully chosen the papers with colours which could be relied to the mountain environment.(Fig. 6)

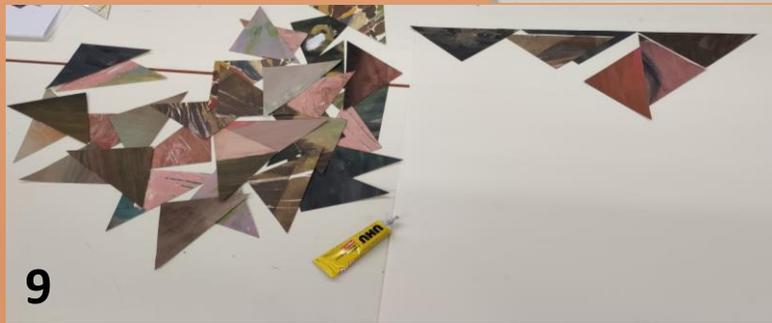


CHANGES

The most difficult part has been finding the good colour match and the good combination to built a mountain-like shape. I made several attempts before definitely sticking the pieces on the white paper. I sometimes felt like trying to find the good position of a piece of jigsaw, turning it all around and sometimes changing it with a similar one.

STICK

It was time to stick the cut triangles. I was going to use a crystal-clear synthetic resin adhesive (Fig. 7). I chose a white paper measuring 50x70cm so the shapes and colours would have been highlighted (Fig.8) I started with the base and then proceeded trying to create an abstract mountain (Fig.9). The result was very close to Klee *Wald Bau* (Fig 10)



Reflections

The most difficult part of this artwork has been finding the good arrangement and composition.

Cutting pieces from completely different artworks and combining them trying to have a good result in terms of shape and matching colours has been a long work of

experiment, attempts and **changes**.

However the original project was so simplistic and somehow a kind a childish game but I had to change my mind and re-evaluate the concept behind it.

At the end I was really happy, this artwork gave me also the opportunity to go deeper into the amazing world of the Bauhaus art concept and Avant-garde art world.

Personal skyline

INSPIRATION

For this artwork I wanted to render a tri-dimensional view of the Dolomites.

At the beginning I didn't know what kind of material to use and although I had several ideas none completely satisfied me.

However my personal interest in the so called **ARTE POVERA** or Poor Art or even Impoverished Art gave me inspiration. This Italian movement was born in late 1960s and 1970s, and it was characterized by the experimentation of uncommon or unconventional processes and by the use of "everyday" materials.

The Arte Povera was based on the principle of the conceptualization of art so the artwork wouldn't have been to be considered and judged by the aspect but by the concept, the idea it's willing to transmit.

So no more canvases or painting but the use of "poor" and commonplace materials. Often unprocessed materials is used to underline the reaction against the emerging consumer culture and trying to preserve the tradition and the memory.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/arte-povera>

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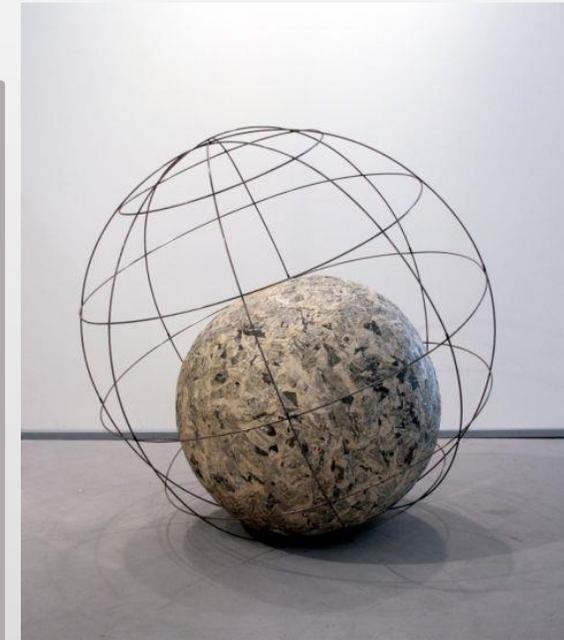
<https://youtu.be/eJmp6RYJ3Pk>

One of my favourite artists of the Arte Povera is Michelangelo Pistoletto and particularly *The Minus Objects*, exhibition. His works are created with discarded or common poor objects and debris as liberation from the conventional art. All the objects can become an artwork by the concept they want to transmit.

Particularly his *Mappamondo* (Fig.1) artwork had particularly inspired my artwork. Old newspapers and used metallic wire are the simple objects of which it is composed. I therefore thought I could use poor cardboard and canvas ropes to create my

personal Dolomite mountains. <http://www.pistoletto.it/eng/crono09.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeDjVTTAzyC>



1 Michelangelo

Pistoletto,
Mappamondo, 1968

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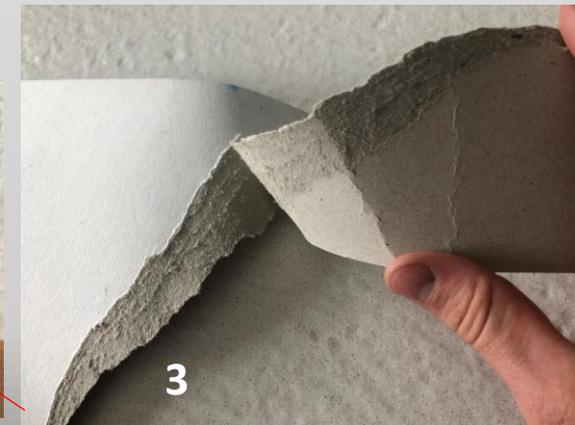
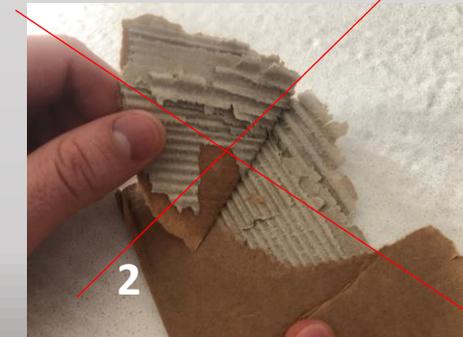
PROCESS PROJECT

Experiments and reflections CARDBOARD?

I was about to start my artwork but I needed to carefully project it since this was going to be a tri-dimensional work and the installation needed to be well conceived from the beginning.

I decided to use cardboard but I eventually discovered how many types of cardboards exist: single face board, single wall double face board, double wall board with AB flute.....

The most common was the corrugated cardboard and I had a couple of boxes in my art classroom but it wasn't the good one for my work since when I ripped it the corrugated layers were visible and unappalling (Fig. 2). What I was looking for, was a thick single face board and I ended up to the so called "chipcardboard" the one used at the back of notepads or in wrapping papers or even toilet paper rolls. This was perfect for my purpose because the cardboard will be ripped by hand so that the edges won't be clean-cut. The effect will be perfect and it will be very looking like the profile of the mountains with all its degrading ledges and cliffs (Fig. 3)



CADRBOARD

I decided the cardboard would have been ripped (Fig. 4) and not cut for the simple reason it would “naturally” become more mountain-like profile (Fig.5). The cardboard was a used and discarded one perfectly in Arte povera style (Fig 6). It was even stained with colours so the next step would have been to paint it.

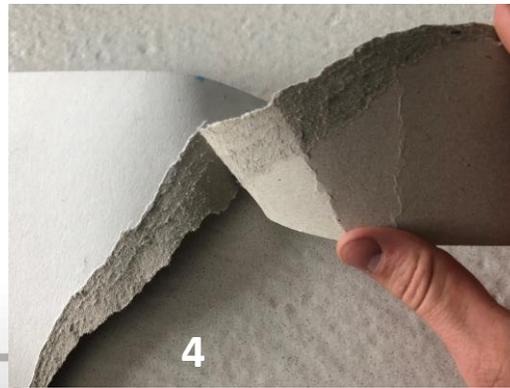
COLOURS

The cardboard was a light grey colour so it was perfectly matching the grey colour of the Dolomites rocks. All the tears were perfect and therefore there was no reason to paint them. However I needed to decide how to cover the old stains on the front face. I then decided I would have used a white tempera colour since it was more opaque and it would perfectly coat the surface like it was fresh snow (Fig. 7). By the way I still had to apply a second coat to have it bright white since after the first coat has dried the colour behind was still visible and I just wanted it to be snow-white (Fig. 8).

It was now time to paint the wood panel I would have used to hold the cardboard mountains.

The panel was a discarded chipboard wood panel measuring 87x73 cm. It had a sort of wood frame all around. I painted it white always using tempera colours.(Fig. 9-10)

However I realized something was missing and I needed a different colour to detach the mountains from the base. I therefore decided I would have glued another chipboard panel measuring 21x49cm. right in the centre after having coloured it with shades of green, yellow, blue all representing the mountain arboreal vegetation. (Fig. 11)



INSTALLING and REFINING

This has been the trickiest part of my work.

In Arte Povera, the artist is no more a mere painter but he becomes an artisan, a craftsman since the process to create the artwork is even more important than the final result and it involves physical engagement and a kind of artisanal work involving tools and objects.

<https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/arte-povera/>

So I had now my new tool: a drill (Fig. 12-13) and all the part of my artwork needed to be assembled.

My intention was that, in the final result, all the mountains should stand and create a landscape of mountains in perspective like in one of my landscape pictures. (Fig. 14-15-16)

Basically I had to make all the cardboard mountains to stand and hold by themselves on the wood panel.

I used the drill to make some holes on one of the wooden frames of the panel. I then made some holes in the cardboard mountains too and used a simple canvas rope to tie the mountains to the structure.

I soon realized that just one hole on the cardboard wouldn't have been enough to keep the mountain still so I had to pierce each cardboard once more in order to have two sets of ropes passing through and holding it still (Fig 17-18). In this way I could manage the mountains to stand and it looked great.

The special thing about this artwork is that I can easily interchange each mountain position just losing the ropes and switching the places.

I therefore had my **personal mountain skyline** and I could eventually always change or modify it. (Fig. 19)



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REFLECTIONS

This artwork has been pretty challenging and pretty physical too. I therefore understood how the artist becomes a real artisan and how the process of composing and assembling is particularly important.

I considered this work as a propaedeutic passage to my next artwork: a **READY MADE ART INSTALLATION** which is the compendium of my journey into art.

DANGEROUS MOUNTAINS

INSPIRATION

In Fall 2019 few days before, its closing date, I had the opportunity to visit the Venice Biennale.

May you live in interesting times was the name of this edition curated by Ralph Rugoff. This title is also an ancient Chinese curse that invokes periods of uncertainty and precarious existence which is so perfectly fitting the present world situation and in a certain way foreseeing the dramatic pandemic moments we are living now. The main exhibition was hosted at the Giardini's central Pavillon and at the Arsenale with its unbelievable architecture and history (Fig 1-2-3-). This was the first time I visited Biennale and I felt deeply involved in the artistic atmosphere which was tangible all the way through the installations. The aim of the Biennale, as his curator said, "has to be a physical experience which enters to your stomach, goes to your heart than it goes to your head" <https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/introduction-ralph-rugoff>

This has been exactly what I felt walking through all these installations and trying to discover the meaning of it, trying to make connections and make sense of what I was observing. I really felt engaged and involved in creative learning. This experience completely enthralled me and I have been profoundly inspired by it.

<https://youtu.be/TJI4WFqEPis>

<https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2019/introduction-ralph-rugoff>

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IDEATION

After my visit at the Biennale I wanted to learn more about art installation of **Readymade** art.

Of course I started exploring the works of the "father" of Readymade art **Marcel Duchamp** who invented this name to describe his own art (Fig.4). Although every readymade work apparently looks made out of improvisation, there is a theory in it based on three main steps:

1. Choosing an object from the reality
2. Cancelling its useful function
3. Giving it a new title and meaning

There is no beauty or aesthetics concepts in it and the art is defined by the artist. "I don't believe in art. I believe in artists" Marcel Duchamp said.

<https://manhattanarts.com/marcel-duchamp-stirred-controversy-and-influence/>

<https://youtu.be/VYqDpNmnu8I>

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Starting from Duchamp I landed on **Joseph Beuys** works and installations. "Everyone is an artist" this Beuys statement helped me to understand his works and his theory. Everybody should actively participate in art. His artworks and installations explore memory and places and become symbolic. For example the use of felt is in his works is a very personal memory (Fig.5-6).

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/mar/05/joseph-beuys-homogeneous-infiltration>

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Hannes Egger

Inspired by Beuys, another young artist living close to my hometown in South Tyrol, **Hannes Egger** has influenced my artwork and specially his concept of recomposing local people's memories. His *Walking in Beuys Woods* installation we have bare trees scattering on the floor representing the recent natural devastation called Vaia occurred to my region on 26th October 2018 (Fig.7).

Memories and symbolism is exactly what I picked up from him.

<https://hannesegger.com/>

<https://www.juliet-artmagazine.com/en/hannes-egger-tell-me-more-about-joseph-beuys/>



7 Hannes Egger *Walking in Beuys Woods*
<https://hannesegger.com/>

Initial ideas

My idea was to reproduce a mountain landscape collecting objects which significantly represent it such as wood, rocks, ropes, animal skulls, and traditional fabrics related to the mountain ancient works or poor agriculture. The mountain should also have to represent the challenge of climbing and conquest of the summits. The dangers and the perilous way to reach it. Mountain means also wild animals and their struggle to survive during winter times. Life in high mountain places is still nowadays challenging and avalanches, landslides, flooding, ice fire and winds are a constant threat.



Work in progress Changes

At the beginning my idea was to assemble all the material I had collected on a levigated pine wood panel which was also representing our tradition in artisan wood furniture. Another wood panel with a tinplate insert with wax on it to represent the time passing was attached to the first panel (Fig. 8-9).

I afterwards created a structure with a coiled cellophane which was meant to represent the mountain itself (Fig.10). However my artwork resulted too crowded and confused, I needed to minimize it and reduce it to few essential items representing the fundamental concepts.



New Ideas

I therefore put few chosen items on two tables dressed with poor cotton and a jute fabric (Fig.11).

I interchanged them several times to see which one to choose in order to have a stronger mountain connection. At the end 5 items were chosen: 1 Rope, 1Rock, 1piece of Wood, 1 Skull, 1 wax Candle (Fig. 12).

Installation

Anyway the layout was also very important. I wanted to give the right place to each chosen item according to its significance. I therefore used a stool and few boxes of different sizes (Fig.13) and covered them with jute, one of the poorest fabric used to store potatoes which is a typical mountain agricultural product and typical food of poor people (Fig.14).



The Rock

I started to place my items and the rock was placed on the highest place since it represent the mountain itself which is the symbol of its imposing power. The rock also represent the imminent danger of mountain life(Fig. 15). Villagers have always been haunted by the mountain dangers and they have always lived at the bottoms of the mountains with sacred respect of it. They know that if you defy the mountain your life could be under threat. The mountain teaches humility. You have to be humble and respectful like in front of and ancient God.

The Skull

The skull is the immediate symbol of death (Fig. 16). Death in mountain. In old times only the strongest survived in the harshness of mountain life. Cold and long winters in represented a threat and people had to survive with what they have stored during the good season. In modern times life is still threatened by avalanches, falls from climbing and people still get lost in the forests which are full of threats. In spring, after the snow has melted, lots of animal remains are scattered around. No food, high snow, freezing cold, falls from the ledges are the most common causes of death amongst wild animals. Surviving mountain is part of the natural selection.

The Wood

The wood in the mountains is symbol of life (Fig.17) Forests protect villages from avalanches and landslides. The timber products are fundamental for mountain life: it is still used to heat houses and to produce furniture. The wood pillars sustaining Venice come from our forests. It has been and it is still now a commercial product. Wood means roots, means tradition, means life. The traditional craftsmen tools are in part done with wood and the old artisans still uses them and are unable to work with new materials. And finally the scent! Fresh cut wood is an amazing sensorial experience it's like the fresh bread scent coming out of the bakeries in early mornings. Unforgettable!

The Candle

The candle is the symbol of time: present, past and future. Time passing and burning. The time Dolomites took to emerge from the ancient waters, the time the climber takes to reach the summit, the time it takes to the sun to rise and set behind the mountains. The long winter months, when time seems to stretch longer than it should and when everything seems slowed down, delayed. The blooming spring when time seems to go faster to catch up the lost time. And of course the time of life. (Fig. 18)

The Rope

The rope is the element connecting all the others (Fig. 19-20). The rope is linked to all of them. The rope save the life of the climber when he climbs. It is used to tie up the timber and to drag it. The rope is used to tethering animals and cattle. The candlewick is often made out of rope. All the elements together are symbols of the Mountain and they are tied up by the rope in my artwork. (Fig. 21)

Reflections

This my last artwork left me completely satisfied. It has been both a complex ideation and a complicated lay out arrangement. By the way all the installation is a meditation itself.

I had to deal with my emotions and feelings when it was time to choose the symbols. However this artwork left me very satisfied and I even went emotional when I performed the installation and put the lights on (Fig. 22).



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