

#onlineart #meettheartist

**MATTIA BOSCO
MEETS
ANNAMARIA MAGGI**



Mattia Bosco, 2020. Courtesy the artist

Invited by gallery owner and curator Annamaria Maggi, Mattia Bosco tells about his experience of art and life at the time of the pandemic.

Annamaria Maggi: «How and where did you spend this long lockdown period, which seems to be ended. What did you do and what thoughts crossed your mind?»

Mattia Bosco: «I have been in the mountains of Val d'Ossola for two months now, with my family, in an ancient village made of dry stone houses, a place even not present on Google Maps, where I have always come to make my sculptures. Here, human beings seem blessed in this harsh nature: they are embraced by the landscape, part of the environment, yet they stand out. The world is the protagonist and human beings with it, not against it. Cities have always seemed to me as an architectural barrier that prevents us from seeing the world, or rather, which holds the world off.

Here, social distancing and isolation are not the effects of government impositions, but belong to the very

nature of this place and will remain beyond the lockdown.

There are restrictions, here as everywhere: the company that I have been working with for years, where I usually collect stones and where I keep tools for work, is closed. Despite being close to my house, I cannot access it, so the stones and I will have to wait. However, I do not live it as a deprivation, it is only a postponement. My sculptures can wait, as they were waiting in the previous months when I was dealing with the reopening of Casa degli Artisti in Milan. Ironically, the lockdown has given things back to me, taking others away.

Since I cannot reach the quarry, and the marbles, I increasingly go fishing in the woods, following other suggestions. Just a few days ago I finished a small sculpture made of a centuries-old, dead, hollow log of a chestnut. In the end, looking at it, I had the sensation of witnessing a little resurrection, and of seeing an exhausted piece of wood rise again.

Such a perspective is definitely a luxury. I speak in these terms, which are solely personal and individual, just because the virus has not taken anything irreparable from me. It makes me think, not despair, not hope. Hope and despair are both probes that claim to understand the lip movement of a voiceless future.»

A.M.: «From an artist's point of view: what are/have been your emotions? And how did they evolve?»

M.B.: «Nobody can be ready to face the unpredictable. However, there are people who are kind of capable of coping with the unexpected, of emotionally supporting the pressure of waiting as well as the anxiety of an uncertain outcome. They are not better people, or more capable, they are only more accustomed and tempered by the continuous exposure to something uncontrollable. They are used to working with the chance, not being in control. Among these, I think there are artists, understood in a broad sense. Having said this, I often found myself considering that there are two perpendicular orders of uncertainty in art. One temporary and one existential. The economic uncertainty is evident, I would say it is typical, it concerns the discontinuity of sales, which do not have the reassuring frequency of a monthly salary. On the other hand, existential uncertainty is constitutive and concerns the very nature of the artist's work. A completed work does not guarantee that there will be others. For a long time now, nobody has felt the primitive bewilderment looking at the sun setting and bringing a night of doubt about its return, followed by the fear of its absence. On the contrary, I believe that the artists experience something very similar to such a nocturnal doubt, not caused by the day ending, but by the work that is not sure to return. The moment of satisfaction creates a darkness that circumscribes the work. Style is the courage to face this darkness. To clarify, artists have always dealt with uncertainty, and, in a way, each artist makes nothing but translate their individual relationship with uncertainty into a method. A method to give a rhythm to the void.»

A.M.: «What did the isolation teach you? I mean, how did you make it not absolute?»

M.B.: «Difficult to answer... I would say that this situation required us to define a different balance between sociality and isolation; it suggested that we reduce the automatic push to "be there", inviting us to become more selective. Who did we really miss? Who haven't we seen with pleasure? What do we regret not having done? What made us glad we couldn't do? Because the virus took everything away, and in the recovery of sociality, when it happens, will we have learnt to choose? Will we keep something of the intimacy that we reconstituted?

These days we all have experienced a new form of sociality remotely, staying at home, which is not only a surrogate for presence, although not able to replace it. It made us experiment with a new type of dialogue in which we can only speak one at a time, and in which it is more difficult to bully. Technology reminded us some education.»

A.M.: «There is no quarantine for thought, do you agree?»

M.B.: «The Athenians would have gladly set to quarantine Socrates. After all, they wanted to avoid that the contagion of his ideas spread within their small community, and above all among the young minds, more open and curious. The charge against him was to bribe young people; in a way, he was considered to be carrying an infection that should not spread. The contagion kicked off all Western philosophy!»



Mattia Bosco in his studio in Milan, 2019. Courtesy the artist

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