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Mudam Luxembourg
Musée d'Art Moderne
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PRESS KIT

SKETCHES OF SPACE

19/06/2010 - 19/09/2010

RAFFAELLA SPAGNA & ANDREA CARETTO

Born 1967 in Rivoli (Italy) & born 1970 in Turin (Italy), live and work in Turin

Landscape artist Raffaella Spagna has been working since 2003 with Andrea Caretto, a museologist with a degree in natural sciences. Their projects are most often linked to ecological concerns and particularly to the interaction between organisms and their environment. They are also interested in the contact points between nature and culture. Each of their exhibitions constitutes a new stage in a continuing process of renewed experience, and gives a glimpse – always partial – of scientific work that, taking an intuitive approach to art, examines phenomena that do not necessarily find a place in the conventional natural sciences. From the concept of the original plant defined by Goethe to the morphic fields of Rupert Sheldrake, from the circulation in water of nutrients essential to animals and plants to the growth of geological formations or microscopic crystals, the fundamental interest of these two artists focuses on the creative forces of nature, on morphogenesis not only of matter but also of living beings. And all while alluding, often metaphorically, to forms that determine art and culture. Taking quite specific plants, such as ancient cereals, or wild plants with certain exploitable characteristics, and arranging them in an original and vivid manner in the museum space, Raffaella Spagna and Andrea Caretto refer to the point of intersection of these two worlds of nature and culture that are too radically separated from each other in the Cartesian tradition.

For *Sketches of Space*, Spagna and Caretto create a link between the protected space of the museum and the exterior environment exposed to the elements, by bringing rainwater from the roof to the level of the “islands”, little installations that provide shelter for living organisms. Here are duckweeds, which are equally well able to prevent the growth of other organisms while covering the entire pond surface, and are also useful as fodder. Further on, a revitalised cabbage evidences the astonishing ability of some leguminous plants to “re-establish themselves” entirely after being cut back to the “heart”. However, the new growth more closely resembles the original plant than a standardised product of the food industry. Elsewhere, freshwater molluscs demonstrate their ecological function of filtering water, while taking from it their own food and the materials that construct their bivalve cabin. The growth of salt crystals is one example of inorganic morphogenesis, and their regular forms seem to have been produced by an artisan’s dexterity, while the transformation of a rock of gypsum into a more voluminous block witnesses the direct intervention of the two artists.

Work in the exhibition

Low Energy Transformations – Practices of experimentation on the origin of forms, 2010

Basins, hydroponic lamps, fans, minerals, plants

Variable dimensions

Production Mudam Luxembourg



Raffaella Spagna & Andrea Caretto

Esculenta Lazzaro, 2004

© Photo: Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna