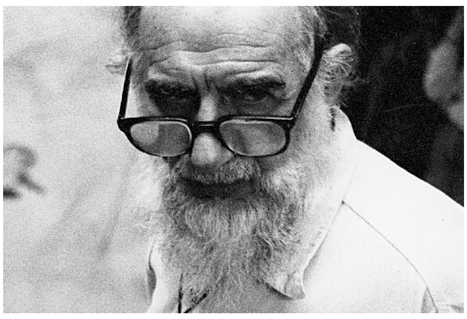
EMILIO VEDOVA



Journal #4 presents *Emilio Vedova. Non Dove*, a Twin Studio film directed by Tomaso Pessina.

The documentary *Non Dove* traces a path in the art of one of the protagonists of the twentieth century, Emilio Vedova, winner of the Grand prize for painting in 1960 and the Golden Lion in 1997 at the Venice Biennale.

The film is an anthological exhibition that existed only on the occasion of the shooting.
It is an unpublished cinematographic genre, a 'film exhibition'. It reveals the behind the scenes and sheds light on the artist's vision, on how he imagined that his works should dialogue with each other and the surrounding space. Vedova's voice, his gestures tell us about the genesis of the pieces and how they live in the space of the Venetian Foundation.
The Magazzino del Sale at Zattere, where Vedova had worked for a long time, is the film's protagonist, a uniquely organized exhibition space. Since 1984, during the staging of Luigi Nono's Prometeo, Renzo Piano had engaged with Vedova to design a space to house his works, and already the idea of a dynamic system for handling large canvases was in the air. In 2008, the visionary project born many years earlier materialized intoa real, sophisticated and futuristic machine, capable of picking up the works and transporting them, suspended at the visitor's height through a robotic and computerized system.
It is the story of the magnetic figure of Emilio Vedova who stands out with his evocative and suggestive words and it is highlighted through interviews with leading figures in Vedova's world and the history of art: from Philip Rylands and Alfredo Bianchini, to Fabrizio Gazzarri curator of this film exhibition, with a particular memory of Germano Celant.

What is a painting? Art.
A nucleus of active energy.
Emilio Vedova

EMILIO VEDOVA. NON DOVE
Tomaso Pessina
Italy, 2021, 35'

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR

Why did you decide to make documentaries?

Tomaso Pessina*: I chose to be a director. Documentaries have come looking for me. Not so much as a job opportunity, but as a narrative urgency and a linguistic opportunity.
In my approach to documentaries, I owe my partner Elena Pedrazzini who constantly stimulates and passionates me, transferring me this desire to tell. I also owe a lot to the formidable team of Twin Studio, the communication/production company with which I build these adventures and am a partner.

How did the idea of working on *Non Dove* come about?

TP: *Non Dove* is not just a documentary, and its originality lies in the fact that first of all it is a 'film exhibition', and at the same time, it is the film that shows it. It stems from the ability of the Emilio and Annabianca Vedova Foundation and of its President Alfredo Bianchini to always see a little further. The Foundation has a unique space in a unique city, Venice, a place steeped in history. It is a place made explosive by Emilio Vedova and brilliantly reinterpreted by Renzo Piano with his robotic machine.
In the film, we tried to return those stories and energy that were the equipment of an exhibition, the *Non Dove* exhibition, curated by Fabrizio Gazzarri, which existed only for the film and is distributed online. Hence the title *Non Dove*. We built the exhibition together. It was the first time that I had the opportunity to observe the process of choosing the works and participate in the curatorship with the director's eye. I closely understand how the paintings communicate with each other and with the space, participate in creating an exhibition, and witness the work behind its installation. Together with the Fondazione Vedova team we did extensive research on the place of the Magazzino del Sale at Zattere and followed the traces of the method used by Vedova to set up, both reckless and thoughtful. The stories intertwined, and this is how the film was born.

A moment that impressed you during the work?

TP: I come from a very in-depth documentary on Emilio Vedova with Toni Servillo, *Emilio Vedova. Dalla parte del naufragio* presented at Giornate degli Autori on the occasion of the 76th Venice International Film Festival, created in 2019 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of his birth. When Alfredo Bianchini commissioned me a 'virtual exhibition' dedicated to Vedova, I wondered how to tell Emilio Vedova again. Or at least what to do more or different from what I had already done.
So from a comparison between me, Elena Pedrazzini, the producer and our Art Director, Elisabetta Bianchi, the idea of the documentary *Non Dove* emerged.
It is always a magical moment when a hypothesis becomes an idea, a staging, takes on an identity, and everything becomes clear in my head. It is the instant in which something is shot, in which the film is born.
It is something mysterious and phenomenal.
At that moment, the film exists and is mine.
We shot during the first opening after the spring 2020 lockdown. Venice was ghostly. The Grand Canal and Rialto were beautiful and terrible at the same time, never so deserted. The scenes in which the works arrive on the boat give an idea of this suspended atmosphere.

The documentary you would have liked to have done?

TP: Many. Obviously. I have so many loves.
But perhaps the one that holds a special place in my heart is Werner Herzog's, *Grizzly Man*. It is a documentary that does what great cinema (and great literature) has to do, telling a strong, particular, and unique story that speaks of its author and at the same time of something fundamental and universal of the human soul. The character is crazy, and Herzog is wonderfully intrusive. The film is about us.

The documentary you are currently working on?

TP: Some projects are trying to get out of the drawer!
In natural continuity with my work on Emilio Vedova, I am working on Luigi Nono, a fundamental protagonist of Italian music of the twentieth century and a companion of Vedova. It is a project for a very ambitious film, which wants to tell Nono's story by making his music play and, above all, wants to deal with the idea of the avant-garde. Understanding what avant-garde is and how long it can be defined as such.
Furthermore, what attracts me most today is VR (virtual reality), for the charm and possibilities of the medium and the emotion and fun in exploring border territories:
I am fascinated by the new languages being codified right now.

***TOMASO PESSINA**
Director, writer and scriptwriter.

He grew up in Milan, and after completing his studies and taking his first steps in the cultural editorial department of Radio Popolare, he attended the cinema course at New York University. On his return to Milan, he became a collaborator of Pupi Avati and took part in the production of more than 15 feature films. Since 2012, he has been working for Twin Studio, a Milanese production company of which he is also a partner. In 2019, he wrote and directed the documentary 'Emilio Vedova. Dalla parte del Naufragio' with Toni Servillo. The film was presented in Venice at the Giornate degli Autori during the 76th international Film Exhibition. In 2021, the collaboration with the Emilio and Annabianca Vedova Foundation will continue with the film "Emilio Vedova. Non dove", he testimony of an anthology exhibition at the Magazzini del sale, built to be filmed and existing only as a film exhibition.