

Lisi Raskin

HIGH POSITIVE VOID COEFFICIENT

An underground bunker? A spaceship lost in outer space or pointing toward an unknown destination?

We find ourselves in a top-secret place: a sealed cockpit, a limited microcosmos, protected by the depth of a shadowy light, internally monitored by several control and recognition systems.

We could be experiencing an impending risk, or a disaster might have just occurred. We do not know what might have happened, or what could happen next, but we have the feeling that the reason we are confined here is the consequence of a negative event of great proportion. Everything leads us to understand that, out there, we can only expect the unmanageable disorder of a “day after” scenario.

With her intervention on the three levels of the Riccardo Crespi Gallery, the American artist Lisi Raskin transforms the whole exhibition space into a sort of microcosmos which appears to be independent from the outer world: an environment in which an alchemic laboratory and an hyper-technological reality are equally evoked, and become a residual but new habitat in which the past and the present become blurred.

The shaded lighting and the sound of a radio that can't find a signal create a secret atmosphere, a situation of unsteadiness and of limited energy resources, but it also gives an atmosphere of interiority to the whole ensemble, of psychical depth: we are inside a microcosmos that is mental before being physical, and the soft light is just a memory of past experience.

HIGH POSITIVE VOID COEFFICIENT represents a situation entirely built on auto-determined fantasies reaching a post-traumatic, precarious and unsteady threshold. Mounting anxieties and incumbent risk have finally reached a point of harm to human life and the environment. Alterations, modifications, transformations, nuclear experiments and Chernobyl, the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction and their possible consequences, disastrous environmental situations, unpredictable results of scientific research-- these are the issues that shape Lisi Raskin's evocations. Her work refers to the post-atomic visions, tensions, dangers and fears, concrete and imaginary risks that the inhabitants of this planet are facing now.

Wandering through our meandering anxieties and insecurities, meditating on the precariousness of our existence and the existence of the world we are living in, and considering all the things that make us feel fragile and ephemeral is an age-old preoccupation.

But the necessity of bringing out fears and fragilities in Lisi Raskin's artwork is about the possibility of exorcizing them. In her work the anxiety of the present melds with the constant recollection of childhood games and more innocent relations with things. By seeing and touching anxious forms, she re-activates them into a different shape. This is the sound of an alarm, the last call before a breakdown, maintaining a prolific, and sometimes ironic vitality. Incredibly, when the worst has seemed to happen, what remains of the future is the desire to start it all over again. It is about looking through the slits, opening glimmers, pushing buttons, and taking a jump forward in order to prefigure new perspectives, solutions for later on, for anything that might take place after the nightmare.

Lisi Raskin does this through a transformative activity that starts from the wreckages of a future that seems to be very close, leading us into a constant researching of possible alternatives for survival.

Her environments are escapes and plans, confinement and possibilities, places of creative freedom in which, starting out from what's left, it is possible to keep building on and playing the game of life. A serious game.

Gabi Scardi