

An Interview with Antonio Natale...

How long have you been an artist?

Since I began to think for myself, when I understood that with my drawings I was able to communicate better than with words. So, since I was very young.

Is being an artist a full-time career for you?

Yes, creativity occupies all my time, 24/7, 12 months per year. To be a creative artist, one needs to have total mental freedom.

Tell me about your work? What are you currently working on? How is this different from past projects?

Since 1997, I chose original banknotes from around the world as the pictorial support for my artworks. So, every single work of mine is made with original notes, and on top, my pictorial intervention. But it was not the first time that I was painting on already existent supports. Before 1997, I painted on maps and plans of the cities I visited. On them, I made my sensations visible, as if they were pages of a diary.



What was your inspiration?

My inspiration for painting on a banknote happened in a day in 1997, when, a bit by chance and a bit for fun, I stopped to read a message written by an anonymous "writer" on a thousand Lira banknote (back then, our Italian

currency was the Lira). And thought: "If words and money are compatible, could Art and Money be as well? And furthermore, Art permits that the recreational and forbidden dreams reverse the sense of money." I was there, left with the banknote in my hand to reflect throughout the entire night. The next day, exciting new creative horizons were opened to me to explore. That is how my first painted banknote was born; "No.1".



MAY 13th, 1997
PASTEL AND INK ON ONE AMERICAN BANKNOTE OF ONE DOLLAR 66mm X 155mm

"What is Art?" is certainly too big of a question to ask here, but what do you hope your audience takes away from your art? What statement do you hope to make?

What is Art... Certainly a question that may seem trivial and that it can still get discounted with predictable answers. However, everytime I ask myself this question, my answers vary depending on the period I'm going through and on my mood of the moment. At this time Art for me is a way to get to know the human being in a deeper manner, his weaknesses, his strength. And, as an artist, I feel called to eternalize these moments in order to make the whole world see the various human conditions. Painting these conditions on banknotes makes the "ALL" much more prevailing.

Banknotes are always the only real evidence of our history. Since they made their first appearance, they have always lived alongside humans, sharing their joys and sorrows.

What was the best advice given to you as an artist?

The advice my Mother gave me: "Feed yourself with only a piece of dry bread, but paint what you see and imagine, without ever listening to advices from others...". It was my first advice, I have always listened to it; I listen to it now, and will listen to it forever. It is Indelible.

Tell me about your workspace and your creative process.

When I paint, it is in my studio in Italy in Foggia, a studio/museum. More than a studio, it looks like a grand Bazaar. I am surrounded by items I have collected over many years, objects that remind me of my life until now. I need them to start creating. When in Switzerland, I paint in Leysin, where I share the space with a local artist. But what I feel more mine is my studio in Foggia. As for my creative process, it is very simple. Usually, I look for banknotes that interest me, where I can already see the story I will paint. I either buy them from around the world, people give them to me as presents, or I find them on the Internet from private collectors.

My creative process consists of two steps: the first and most important is the study of the banknote its self, which sometimes can take a long time. I observe the banknote until it begins to talk with my creative inspiration. I study the country it belongs to, its history. Therefore, it is a crucial moment.

The second step is the concretization. It is when I paint, when I turn my creative inspiration into an artwork. And this happens when my ideas are very clear, when I have everything ready in my head. I do make preparatory drawings, sketches, and drafts. But I paint the notes directly, without schemes, or I might lose my initial idea. This "Concretization" time period, does not last long, much less

than the first step process.



What has been the biggest challenge in the works you create?

That of telling the world that money can have another meaning.

Where do you go online for good art resources, whether to find a new artist, or to see what is going on in the arts world locally and otherwise?

I usually go to many Art sites, and I stop only on those that really interest me. Lately, Asian art sites intrigue me. But I always prefer to inform myself from specialized magazines.

Source : Votreatart.blogspot.ch
Brazil 2012