

When Art Gets Personal at LIC Arts Open

Natasha Lardera (June 01, 2015)



Among the hundreds of artists participating at the fifth edition of LIC Arts Open there is an Italian artist, Annalisa A.I. Iadicicco, with two unique installations, both located in the Factory building (47th Ave). 'Seek side by side silently' documents a walk through breast cancer, depicting the emotional turmoil and synesthesia symptoms of a caregiver. Studio 54, an installation that "celebrates the era



of personal freedom and lost senses on the dance floor where texting and twitting didn't affect the soul".

"It is my great pleasure, once again, to welcome you to the [LIC Arts Open](#) [2]. It's hard to believe that 5 years have passed since a seemingly innocuous conversation led to the funding of an arts festival that is growing in size and significance every year.

We are back with a fantastic program of exhibits, events and our annual Open Studios weekend, with hundreds of artists and performers taking part, and scores of venues participating." This is how [Richard Mazda](#) [3], Executive Director of LIC Arts Open, welcomes visitors to the fifth edition of the grandiose show. Among the hundreds of artists participating there is an Italian, [Annalisa A.J. Iadicicco](#) [4], with two unique installations, both located in the Factory building (47th Ave).

On the ground floor Annalisa has placed *Seek side by side silently*, a piece that brings together photography and sculpture with her typical use of reclaimed materials. "Seek side by side silently documents a walk through breast cancer, depicting the emotional turmoil and synesthesia symptoms of a caregiver. It honors the human body and what connects us all, blood." In another gallery on the 4th floor, we find *Studio 54*, an installation that "celebrates the era of personal freedom and lost senses on the dance floor where texting and twitting didn't affect the soul and people lived in the moment. On a nostalgic note, it reminds us of the lost experience of the Record Store Days."

Hailing from Campania, with a stop in Lazio before arriving in NYC, Annalisa calls herself a Long Island City artist as she is true to the neighborhood's artistic spirit and tradition. In the past her installations (like *Second Amendment* and *John Doe*) have always had a powerful political message, this time the artist turned more personal.

Seek side by side silently was inspired by Annalisa's own experience as a caregiver to her mother who was diagnosed with breast cancer. The installation can be seen as divided into three parts: at first there are two window screens.

They are covered with black and white images (printed on the glass itself) of Rosa going through diagnosis, treatment, moments of touching despair and others of strong faith, to the last image captured after her double mastectomy. Rosa is looking at herself in the mirror for the first time as her doctor stands by.

Between the two window screens, that seen from afar resemble two wings, there is a feminine figure: the slender bust of a woman where blood flows in the shape of red wool balls. Her head and part of her body are made of broken mirror pieces put together. She has come undone but she has had the strength to put herself back together, to heal, not alone but with the help of her caregivers, her faith, and her doctor.

Behind her there are three powerful images of Annalisa herself, when back at home, once she put her camera down and stopped documenting her mother's path, she was left with dealing with her own feelings and fears.

"I used to take my mother to the doctor and then I would come home and have this emotional reaction," Annalisa told us while explaining her work, "So I decided to take the camera and document both her struggle and mine. My mom was OK with me documenting it all. For me the camera was a sort of shield, to help me detached from what was happening. It was a really helpful tool: when I was at home and worked with the camera and its images I was able to turn all my feelings into an artistic project."

"All my previous installations are pretty personal, as they are about topics that have touched me somehow," Annalisa continued, "When I read about something happening in the world that made me think I wanted to express something with my art. This time it's all more personal and emotional because it is something that has touched me directly. It's me and my mom, not something happening in the world... although almost everybody can relate to this because in a sense, the rest of the world is afflicted by cancer too."



In fact, at the opening of the show, which ends on June 14th, many people connected with the piece. "There is nothing more rewarding for an artist, when he/she creates something and people relate to it." Annalisa proudly said, "At first people didn't really get it... they saw the blood, the color red...they thought of love...but then they saw the broken glass, so they realized she was somehow hurt... then when they look at the pictures too they understand and get the deeper message. A lot of people have family or friends who when through this same process when dealing with the disease so we all could sympathize with each other. Overall they appreciated the way I translated my feelings, and my mom's, into art."

How did Rosa react when she saw the installation? "I asked her in advance to not be overly dramatic," Annalisa joked, "I told her she is a survivor and she had to be happy about that. As she has to be happy to have a daughter who is an artists and communicates through her art. Of course she was a bit emotional, but everybody was even people who did not know us personally."

By chance Annalisa's Seek side by side silently has been placed by a piece by [Eung Ho Park](#) [5], called Mother Natural. Another piece dedicated to breast cancer, where plastic bottles painted in all different skin tones become a filed of amputated breasts. "Participating in the show is essential for artists because they can meet and feed off each other. Not only do they get the chance to show their work but also to see what others do and get inspired."

Just to lighten things up a bit, Annalisa decided to showcase Studio 54 as well. A bunch of pants are having the time of their life on the dance floor as the disco ball reflects light on the wall and old vinyls cascade from the ceiling. "I wanted to celebrate the music industry and I used the era of Studio 54. I used old records I had, I recycled some old pants and sneakers, tape from cassettes ... people were free and let themselves go on the dance floor... I believe now that is lost. And that makes me nostalgic... this too is personal."

The show ends on June 14. For more info [<<<](#) [4]

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[2] <http://licartsopen.org/>

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Mazda

[4] <http://www.annalisaaidicco.com/>

[5] http://www.dmcontemporary.com/artists/eung_ho_park/work.html