

DBPIT & XXENA – WHITE STORIES OF BLACK WHALES

From Rome to Akureyri the distance is short if in the middle there's music, that very strong language able to erase distances and to evocate deep sensations, that of the Rome-based artist-musicians **DBPIT** ("Der Bekannte Post Industrielle Trompeter") and **Xxena**, respectively music maker and artist in the fields of graphic and videoart, to cite only few.

White stories of black whales is only the umpteenth work of the all-round creativity of the duo, that brings them to create works that aim to the creation of totalizing experiences that always engage different languages and media. The artists have always created works which goal wasn't simply the very good musical exposition as already happened in the **Lympha obscura** project, that recently has seen the light in physical format thanks to **Naked lunch records**, but that, obviously, expresses itself at its best translated into the experiential *hic et nunc* dimension.

This time the duo shows a merging of different languages that together shape an interesting whole and, it should be said, experimental, if being experimental artists means to create works that are the result of the compresence and the perfect dialogue between several expressive forms: graphics, drawing, music, environment, invitation to think. In this way, in a certain sense, an interesting emanation of the wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk is obtained. The particularity of this work here is the presence of several keys of interpreting a very wide project. One of these is that linked to the graphics and to the drawing, languages explored by Xxena, that invite to think consciously or not about the freedom of whales, animals often brutally killed, that the musicians have had the chance to observe in Iceland. Anyway, a long time before the making of this work, Xxena had always used, as her logo, a fish, maybe a spiritual guide that indicates artistic freedom, as it's assumed (sometimes erroneously) that it's a well-known example of free animal.

By means of this work, children and adults are invited to think about the topic of freedom (here exemplified by the freedom of editing the work or not doing it, to use an idea which belongs to certain interactive art, the freedom of imagining whales's world – just think about who lives in the heart of a metropolis – and, above all, by that of associating personal mental states to the music listened). The colors chosen are black, several shades of blue and white: black evokes the dark ambient soundscape as well as, more simply, the not perspectival spatial dimension, while white recalls ice, snow and, in general, the typical landscape that one expects to find in a country such as Iceland, but even the purity of the landscape in which whales live, while blue shades represent life. The relation between black and white may even be interpreted as that between freedom and slavery (several theme parks where whales are apprenticed exist, and even this fact limits their freedom). Who chooses to paint the drawings use its creativity, who doesn't do this chooses the dualism and the clear tension between these two opposite concepts-colours.

However, as music is what interest us the most, White stories of black whales is also music: four songs, two of which particularly long, that represent the next step in the research operated by the Rome-based duo, a research which concentrates upon repetition, upon the study on the sound and upon minimalism. The purity of sound is the key element that brings to a state of trance that allows the listener to reach a different dimension, and this concept has a leading role in all the obsessively recursive music, being it rhythmic or not: music conceived as a bridge that connects different worlds, experiential music (in a wider meaning). Their music is a tribute to the dark ambient's masters but even to the post-industrial masters too. These compositions are four sonic mantra that face the musical matter in different way: *Her majesty*, in its apparent calmness and in

its constant tension not only wants to be a hymn to the whale – and to freedom – but also to the sound itself, as the more the sound is pure, the more it's free and shows its majesty, and this is also why here there isn't a rhythmic (even if an inner rhythm is always present in every musical composition), but only a minimalist approach in which very few sounds reveal to be necessary to transmit emotions.

On the contrary, *Dance in the deep blue* is a particularly tense composition in which, as a march of death, the cyclic and claustrophobic rhythmic proceeds solemnly for more than ten minutes, with in addition dissonant industrial-influenced sounds along with those of the whales. Stylistically this is a composition that pays its tribute even to a rhythmic industrial deprived of its noisy characteristic but anxious and that, in the same way, shows a techno-industrial lesson destined to the newcomers of this mixture that now is once again experiencing a certain interest in certain subcultures.

With *Embrace* we go out of the gloomy industrial cages in a short composition (if we think about the duration of the others) in which we find the recursivity of the rhythm that recalls that of the seawaves and the circular movement of the whales so well shown in the book and well expressed in the recursive sound, but even a certain choice for the listeners to breathe fully.

The final *Fly away* is a declaration of intentions and of creative freedom, a sort of long happy end in which the whales communicate with each other, free of swimming in the ocean, while the recursive characteristic of the sonic rhythm, that even here evokes the seawaves, goes on until the end of the song, and communicates us the infinite dimension of the landscape in which these animals move. Even the occasional keyboard's motif contributes to highlight immensity and eternity.

A rather complex and rich of shades work, that of DBPIT and Xxena: White stories of black whales is the umpteenth demonstration of the innate creativity of the two Rome-based artists and of their will to move beyond the musical fruitive dimension in itself, their wish to renew an always different project in its manifestations, although all their works share two common elements: sonic purity (through the use of repetitive and minimalist patterns) and experimentation.

Score: 8

Label: Dischi Gatto Alieno

Author: Alessandro "Flux" Violante

Website: <http://fluxproject.altervista.org/dbpit-xxena-white-stories-of-black-whales>