

## Couples' by Antonella Bussanich: Mutual Recognition

Antonella Bussanich's powerful work "Couples", first presented in 2011, springs from her acutely perceptive gaze. Her wide-angle camera slowly takes in the homes of the couples she has chosen for her study – from France and Italy, two countries she knows well - gently yet confidently picking up the spontaneous normality of everyday life. A computer, a bookshelf, plants being watered, bathrooms, kitchens, getting dressed... the result is a series of stills from real life, silent but redolent with the sounds of daily living - even the noise of the traffic in the street below. She shows the couples' slippers, photos and details of paintings - all the things people surround themselves with. The artifice of an image reflected in a mirror signals her silent presence. Her video camera captures everything, a keen yet kindly eye, unobtrusively scrutinizing the everyday gestures that give meaning to relationships. When the couples caress one another with their gaze - their 'inner eye' - smiles broaden, serious faces harden. Sentiment and physicality are the realms of Antonella Bussanich. Her work gives them symbiotic form, revealing the poetic behind her subjects' gestures. The images speak of the impalpable weight borne by the person 'sustaining' the partner's knowing gaze or catch pensive moments, face resting on a hand. They are hands we all 'recognize'. They are the hands drawn by Dürer in his detailed studies or the graceful lines of Botticelli. Bussanich's hands speak of a willingness to reach out to the other in an act of giving. Revealing mirrors, they are like glass balls reflecting a concentrate of emotions and sentiments, a distillate of the ties that bind. An ingenious concept, masterfully delivered as if by a benevolent demiurge, 'Couples' celebrates unspoken depths of feelings whose representation reassures not only those photographed but also their viewers.

***Giovanna Giusti***