

Nests

by Melina Mulas, 2014

These photos illustrate an entire day with Antonella Zazzera.

Her studio/home and its carefully selected objects. The deep relationship and tacit agreement with her grandfather, who prepares the frames and watches her work, with the same rigor and peace that I have seen in some Tibetan monasteries.

They show the porch while she weaves her modern-day Penelope canvases, while her father works in the fields and her mother looks after the whole family. Everything is in order and the food is exquisite. The nests intertwined with copper threads that mother birds found on the ground, discovered in the forest and conserved like artwork.

And then the afternoon, when, step by step, Antonella acquainted me with her countryside world. "Look at the drive of these branches", or "You have to touch a sunflower to know one..." and so on. Walking and observing all that surrounds us, she would point out, as if following a track, a bit like Tom Thumb, the shapes, the colors, or the simple net of a warehouse, as well as the cracks along a sunburnt path or the tracks left by a tractor, explaining to me how she would find traces of her surroundings in her art only after each piece was completed. I tried to follow her, taking photos and improvising with all she showed me. As if I needed to create some kind of inventory. As if the camera was a notebook to scribble quickly in when you have to remember something important that won't be repeated. I wasn't expecting this kind of task.

I only went that day to look around and start to get to know Antonella and her world.

I thought I would return to do things right, but as often happens, that didn't happen... This is only a small portion of the photos I took that day and each one has its own invisible caption. Maybe only I can see them. Imagining Antonella could be a sort of game, walking by my side and pointing out what pictures to take, admiration intact, looking through eyes still charmed by the landscape in which she was born, grew up and lives.