

## **“In praise of slowness and the charm of breathing”**

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There is something magical, or rather esoteric about Partiturazero, the work presented last Friday by Elena Boillat at her debut at the FIT. But perhaps it would be better to speak of an ‘emotional spell’ still resonating long after the staging of the performance — definitely one of the most intense and original ones among those offered by the festival. Once again, Paola Tripoli’s curatorship has hit the mark and once again, it is feminine sensitivity that eventually wins over those forms of representation requiring courage, research and a lot of rigour. A path that closely follows the character of young performer Elena Boillat, who for about ten years now has been working on a personal ‘canvas’ of sorts, aimed at conceiving new contents through a constant challenge against her own limits, both physical and psychological. Our thoughts instinctively go back to the season of Body Art and to those who have been its main exponents from the 70s onwards — from Gina Pane to Marina Abramovic, just to name a few: as if in a kind of political activism that is constantly in search of a relationship between language and the artistic body, whereby artistic expression becomes the means to explore one’s inner dimension through constant investigation into the bond between body and nature, audience and society. To quote Ernst Jünger, a dimension ‘where the entire body is language, either by art or by deep instinct or mere will, and every fiber, every filament feels like strings resonating in harmony’.

Partiturazero is one of the most significant stages along the path that Elena has undertaken and through which she has been gradually won over by the charm of breathing and of the phonatory apparatus, in an approach that consequently leads to the birth of sound, of a voice merging with movement. These elements are skillfully combined as part of her performance and staged within a large space that is purposefully free from any scenic clue, with white lighting flooding the entire LAC TeatroStudio and ensuring that the spectator’s eye is treated to all its aseptic emptiness: as if in a vision, a place of the mind set to wait for an in-depth exploration. The artist is found lying on the ground, with her head turned towards the audience. The upper part of her body is partially covered by skin-colored tight straps chasing her shape, as with a perceived nudity that modestly accompanies the initial stillness. A meditation comes to life, now punctuated by deep, methodical and tantric breathing, acting as the backbone of an exercise in hypnotic slowness — a choreographic score in itself, generating the movement from which the sound of a voice is born, at first in its submerged dimension only. From the initial, long and liberating scream and the aspirated guttural expressions, all the way to sobs and eventual silence, the vocal sounds are merely conceived as the coordinates of an intimate, ascetic story; they represent a dramaturgy of words, devoid of narration — an open work, a fascinating nebula of signifiers and emotions to be found again in the eyes of those who attend and listen. Just as with a praise of slowness ending with a song, or a secular prayer within an archaic rite of passage slowly dying in the throat. This is how the narrative circle closes, leaving in its wake the echo of intimacy as revealed through the simplicity of a composition built upon the sonata form structure (theme, development, reprise and finale). Partiturazero will be repeated at the Teatro Sociale in Bellinzona on November 19 and 20.