

Sissi

(Bologna, Italy, 1977)

The true stylistic characteristic of Sissi's work, which ranges from performance to photography to drawing, is the connection to the body and to the artist's personal experience, which is always forcefully at the center of every piece she creates.

The first actions by this Bolognese artist developed around the concept of clothing, understood as an extension of the body or as disguise. In her performance *Nature*, 2006, for example, threads and stitches end up becoming simultaneously an umbilical cord, a connection to reality and a cage, capable of overwhelming the artist. Sissi's photography and drawing also come out of her personal experience, beginning with diaries and files she has compiled, with almost maniacal dedication, since adolescence. Although in her *Cene (Dinners)* series her body is not directly the object of representation, these works, too, are inspired by a personal experience, from a period when the artist was living in Bologna: "We were five friends with different and opposite interests. We often found ourselves sharing fantasies and adventures together and, not wanting to forget that happiness, I began to stop time, creating situations and evenings we would not be able to forget. The first was a thematic dinner, *Terra (Land)*. [...] At the end of the dinner I took some photos and only when I developed them did I realize that my photos documented something that was no longer there, the table was as disorderly as a battlefield and it wasn't very clear how beautiful the first taste had been."

From this experience Sissi developed a series of performances in which she prepared "thematic" tables in various settings, veritable food sculptures, each with a different connotation. They were first documented photographically and then consumed by the participants. While for *Aiuola delle delizie (Flowerbed of Delights)*, 2004 she created an open-air food installation that had certain similarities with food offerings in Eastern religious traditions, for *Cena rapace (Predatory Dinner)*, 2009, she prepared a table of raw meat, peeled fruit, and vegetables, to be eaten with the hands, insisting on the most primordial aspect of the food's presentation. In *Cena appesa (Hanging Dinner)*, 2010, the visual connotation became even more predominant; created at the end of her artist's residency in Palermo, Sissi hung food from a complicated scaffolding and set out a banquet of real fish, tents, and fishing nets. The dinner, a moment of sharing but also a formal situation, becomes a collective esthetic experience, capable of involving numerous senses. In *Cena lievitata (Leavened Dinner)*, 2012, in addition to the colors of the foods, principally starchy items, odor came into play; the fermented foods become a metaphor for the continuous movement of existence, of life, the driving force behind the artist's work. (EV)

Additional Works in the Collection

Cena Rapace (Rapacious Supper), 2009, photographic print, 45.7 × 55.1 inches

Cena Appesa, (Hanging Supper) 2010, photographic print, 45.7 × 55.1 inches

La cena lievitata , (The risen supper) 2012, photographic print, 45.7 × 55.1 cm