

MARISA MERZ



The Journal #2 presents *Around Marisa. The works, friends and works of Marisa Merz*, a film directed by **Simona Confalonieri**, written by **Azalea Seratoni**.

In the documentary the Turinese artist's story is told by the voices of the many who met her, composing an intense choral portrait thanks to the contribution of Germano Celant, Tucci Russo, Paolo Mussat Sartor, Nunzio, Ester Coen, Sally and Remo Salvadori and Chiara Bertola.

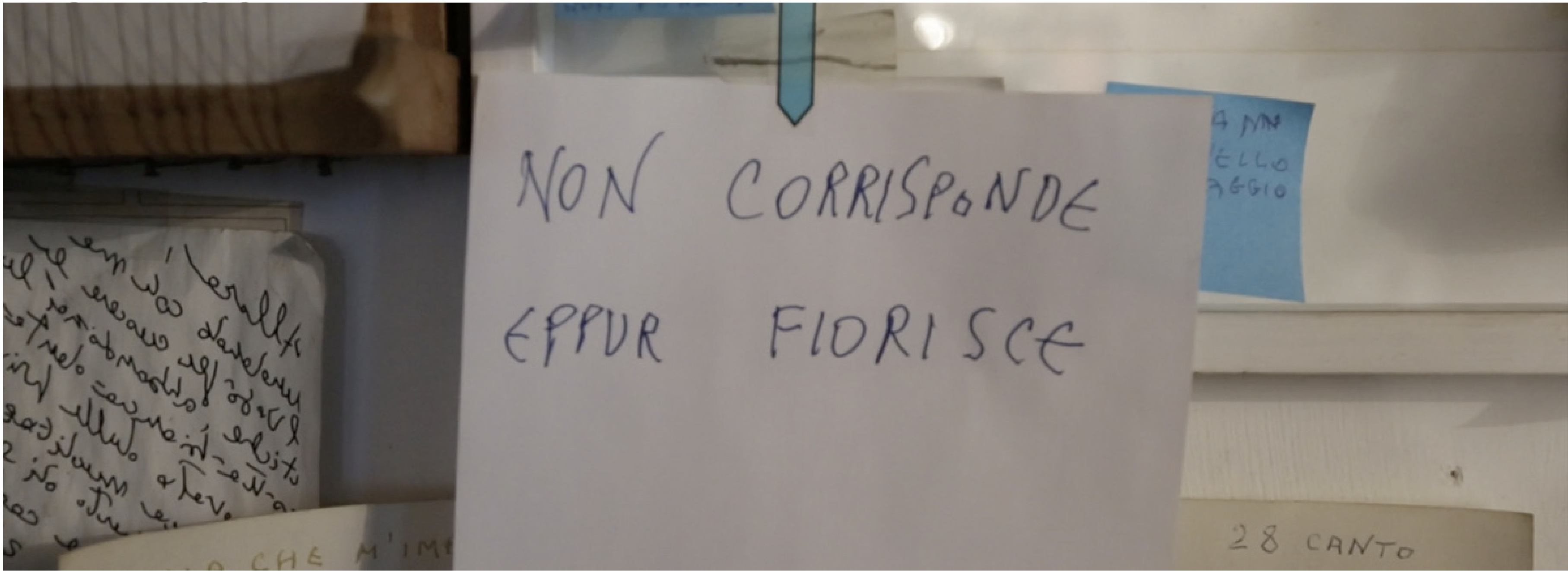
In my fantasies all that I discover, is not what I call knowledge; for me it's joy. As soon as it becomes knowledge, I lose the joy.
Marisa Merz

from Anne Marie Boetti Sauzeau, "Lo specchio ardente", in DATA n. 18, september-october 1975, pp.50-55.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Azalea Seratoni, writer of *Around Marisa. The works, friends and words of Marisa Merz*.

The second time we went to Marisa Merz's house in Turin to shoot scenes, I took some little biscuits with me. I didn't think a lot about it, it seemed to me to be a gesture of kindness. We're talking about a certain kind of biscuit that they still make in Omegna, on Lake Orta. They are a kind of 'cat's tongue' shape, or better, two cone circles with a layer of chocolate in the middle. They are wrapped individually, wrapped four times in a thin, crunchy piece of transparent plastic with the name "imperialine" written in vermilion red. Marisa Merz said that they were exquisite, and she used exactly this word. Instead I don't know if Simona has ever forgiven me for the "unwrapping the imperialine" background noise. Some time passed before we returned for another day's shooting. Marisa Merz moved around the table at the entrance to pick up the biscuit box, it was a golden, rectangular box, (the gold of her little heads?), she had kept it. She opened it and inside she had put the transparent wrappers down one by one and collected them. "You'll tell me" she said to me "that I've got nothing else to do". And, she added, taking one of the wrappers in her hand, its transparency shining in the light "it's for this rosy iridescence". In Tommaso l'impostore, Cocteau describes the Princess Bormes so: "She had understood [...] that pleasure is not found in certain things, but in the way of taking them all". Many years before, speaking with Anne-Marie Sauzeau-Boetti, Marisa Merz said: *'It's not that the rose is an element of nature for me. It's an invention of the mind. I call them fantasies. All my life my head is full of these fantasies, always, always and I don't know, I still have to see many things, I've still got a lot to see [...] Even the banal things, I've always tried to keep them on this level. Even at home. It's not that I like roses because they're beautiful: I can also wash a glass with the same feeling. [...] they are all our possible gestures, done by us [...] My fantasies, all that I discover, are not what I call knowledge; for me it's joy, as soon as it becomes knowledge, I lose the joy.'*



AROUND MARISA
Simona Confalonieri
Italy, 2013, 26'

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR

Why did you decide to do documentaries?

Simona Confalonieri*: Simona Confalonieri: I didn't decide to do documentaries, but over time, thanks to works done always with the creativity of others, I understood that I had a documentarist aptitude, which means: collecting, listening, bringing together and giving back the same emotions received on the ground, maybe with something more because the freedom documentary editing gives is sensational. You harvest the flow and recompose a portrait, the pulp of an identity.

How did the idea of working with Marisa Merz come about?

SC: I didn't choose to work with Marisa Merz. She was the one who came to me. In that period I was working in a special group in Rai Educational - Maria Paola Orlandini was head of the group - with whom we had for many years told the stories of art, artists and exhibitions, roaming up and down across Italy and Europe. We were dealing with Art News and Magazzini Einstein and at a certain point Maria Paola asked me if I could do a documentary on Marisa Merz, telling me that we were dealing with a peculiar case because Marisa didn't much love the media, and there were neither photos nor videos of her. So I said, well, a nice challenge. Beatrice Merz and the Fondazione Merz made the film possible.

A moment that impressed you during the work?

SC: The silences and the love around Marisa. Silence is difficult to transmit in a documentary, but the silent pauses in Marisa's audio are there to hear, while the love for her is the film's fabric. Germano Celant entering her home in via Mario Pagano, a house that he hadn't seen since Mario Merz's death, that really silenced us.

The documentary that you would have liked to have done?

SC: All of Werner Herzog's ones, I've always wanted to be his assistant. Unsettling, rigorous, questioning, radical. As all works should be, necessary.

Your dream documentary?

SC: A documentary about breathing, about the interval which we so much need.

***SIMONA CONFALONIERI**
Screenwriter and director.

She specializes in art, design and architecture and delves into the technique of portraiture with the development of original subjects. You have worked for the major Italian broadcasters (Rai Educational, Rai 3 and Sky Arte), for independent production companies and for museums (National Cinema Museum of Turin, Archaeological Museum of Naples). She founded Videografia Italiana, an independent production house, which deals with the conception and production of films. She collaborates with the University of Pavia and the Polytechnic of Turin. The documentary on Marisa Merz was presented as part of the Meetings on Art at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013.