

*I love you*, Letizia Ragaglia, *Eco e Narciso*, eco musei provincia di Torino, Electa, Milano, 2004

Lia Pantani and Giovanni Surace's works are mainly addressed to those who can grasp the magic of an instant, those who are ready to be guided through a simple sensorial experience till the sensation - aesthesis indeed - becomes an esthetic event. The two artists have worked together since 1995 and they act as kind of contemporary alchemists interested in the process of things and in the changeability of natural phenomena. Their works, most intensely connected to the physical and/or to the history of the exhibition environment, are always marked by a fluctuating pace, a change of status or a condition of transformation. Therefore time plays a key role in their production and the essence of many works is given by their unavoidable temporality. It is not by chance that the two artists often utilize two means in their artistic research: the video, which is a flow that can trace an event and photography which grasps a moment in a live action to confer it more strength and significance. However, what is probably the most familiar means to Pantani-Surace is the installation, the work created in situ. Not infrequently the essence of a project has already been there for some time, but it only finds its strength and completion in a given place. That was the case for the work presented to the Rorà Ecomuseum.

The key role played by stone quarries had an impact on the choice made by the artists for this specific work. The historical presence of Marshal Morel, once renter of 5 quarries and known for having engraved his motto "Labor&Virtus" on the glass sheets photographing his quarry, so as to generate the illusion that it was engraved in the stone. His presence was decisive to define the conceptual nature of the work. The engraving naturally develops in a new writing by way of the humidity infiltrations on a gypsum wall. On a white surface a slightly darker stain takes shape, and through a gradual, just perceptible process, it turns into a soft but lapidary TI AMO (I love you). One gets the feeling that those words were written there centuries ago and remained hidden in the layers of time until the artists exhumed them through an alchemical process. The visual impact is that of a wall when you tear off a fresco and you discover an admirable sinopite underneath. The artist's wish to convey a sense of discovery to the observer, of revelation is also shown by the display of the entire mechanism of rubber tubes, nozzles, timer and all what is needed to make the whole thing work: rain water infiltrates the wall and highlights the writing, a subtle perception which coexists without much conflict with the object displayed in the rooms of the Ecomuseum, at the same time bringing to it a daily moment of poetry.