

ADRIAN PACI



Interviewed by [Isaac Pérez Solano](#) · Portrait courtesy of [Jetmir Idrizi](#)

From industry leaders and up-and-coming innovators to simple amateurs, Albanian artist Adrian Paci is strong and exceptional reference. Jeu de Paume, the emblematic Parisian centre d'art where his work has been put on display describes Paci this way: "With a certain romanticism, he is conscious of the stakes at play between contemporary artistic creation and possible forms of resistance." Paci is not a one-man show, but he includes and engages with his world in a way that makes it impossible to escape from the vertigo it creates. Here he pulls ODDA into his creative vortex.

You have probably been asked this before but, why did you choose art as a career?

I did not choose art. Somehow, it came by itself, in a gradual way. Since my childhood, I have always been drawing and painting. My father was an artist and I grew up surrounded with art: paintings, drawings and art-books. He passed away when I was very young and therefore, somehow, I felt I had to continue something he had left. And I kept painting and drawing. I never stopped dealing with art. Maybe, the only moment my focus changed to another direction was when I moved to Italy with my wife and my two little daughters. During that period, I had to think about our survival rather than my career in the arts. However, I do consider that period of my life as fundamental for my growth as an artist too. Somehow, sometimes, getting out of art is important for the art itself.

Is art a type of salvation or is it a bad metaphor?

Salvation? I do not think so. But, of course, I do think art affects your life and life in general. At the same time, life also affects art. I don't think that the goal of art is to solve any life problem but, as an artist, you must deal with the problems, you must problematize things, you must offer different points of view. There is no happy ending in the horizon that art aims. At the same time, to deal with art means to create new harmonies or new rhythms, fresh visions of different perspectives. This also means that you have to solve problems all the time, even if they are just art-related problems: this color or that color, this gesture or that gesture, this cut or that cut, this expression or

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that expression, this framing or that framing, etc. Most of the time, these are very subtle things: they have no relevance for the world. For example, when editing a film you spend a lot of time deciding how to put together two frames. Somehow, you give things another possibility. What is important for me is to keep the artifact in a state of potentiality, to keep it alive. There is no formula on how to do it. You need to pay attention, to be sensitive, to wonder rather than being stuck on what you know. It's not about any final salvation but about keeping things alive with all their tensions and contradictions.

Alberto Moravia said once that one ought only to write in the first person, because the third projects a bourgeois point of view. How is the process when it comes to art? I mean, is there any possibility of applying this statement in the development of an idea within the framework of contemporary art?

Well, to use yourself as a starting point can be useful, but it isn't and it can't be just about yourself. Art needs intimacy, needs this kind of depth that can only come from a strong personal experience.

However, I don't think it has to do with the affirmation of the author. Instead, it has to do with the intensity of the dialogue that you activate with what surrounds you. Contemporary art, for me, does not mean anything. There is no such a thing like "contemporary art." There are artists that continuously do things, activate situations, produce new forms and tell new stories.

So, what does the public mean to you?

The public is inside myself when I do the work and it becomes the activator of the work after I abandon it.

Regarding your two most current pieces [*Di queste luci si servirà la notte* and *Interregnum*], what would you say is the connection and breaking point between the two of them?

These two works are very different from each other.

There is a connection between them and other works that I have done, but I cannot see a direct connection between these two works. *Di queste luci si servirà la notte* can be connected with other works of mine like *Turn On*, *The Noise of Light*, or *Per Speculum* and *The Column*. While *Interregnum* can be linked with other works of mine such as *The Encounter*, *Vajtojca*, *Last Gestures* or *The Visitors*. *Di queste luci si servirà la notte* came out when I was asked to make a work in relation with the Arno river.

Interregnum is a work that I had inside myself for 12 years... Every work has its own story but, somehow, they relate in with other works of mine, and together they all create a body with both their differences and similarities.

How did you eventually find your way out of exhibiting two different pieces at the same time?

It simply happened to be that I had two different occasions at the same period in the same city: my solo show in Florence at Museo Novecento and Le Murate (where I showed *Di queste luci si servirà la notte*), and Lo Schermo dell'Arte, a film festival in Florence where I was invited to show *Interregnum*.

Do you remain very closed to one or another?

In different ways I remain closed to both of them.

What is the most familiar (and coherent) word for you: conception or gestation? Why?

Actually, I never thought about this, but if I have to mention one I would say "Potentiality". I consider it as a starting point but also as a final goal. One starts from the encounter with something that has a potentiality and that stimulates him/herself. All the effort is placed on how to keep this potentiality alive and on how to bring it to the language. Language does not become a codified formula where the potentiality is gone, but a living body that keeps this potentiality alive.

In *Albanian Stories* (1997), we could see your daughter making up fairy stories for her dolls. Is there any symbolism behind this idea?

No, there is no symbolism. But I think there is strength in the process of bringing the memories of a traumatic experience in the territory of the storytelling, of the fiction, of the invention and playfulness.

Albanian stories is about this process and I think it's a very important work of mine that somehow affected all I have done after.

This, among other pieces, was included in your first retrospective in Paris (at the Jeu de Paume, 2013). As an immigrant, what does this achievement mean to you?

I believe that to show at Jeu de Paume, like in many other art museums where I've shown throughout these past years, can be considered an achievement for any artist beside being an immigrant or not. It means a lot of work, a lot of involvement and dedication.