

Why Fish?

"Fish have no  
voice. I want  
to speak for  
them"

# THE FISHY EXHIBITION

The iconography of the fish is full of symbolisms that differ from culture to culture, from religion to religion, from country to country. Symbol of regeneration and freedom in pagan religions, symbol of recognition in the Christian religion, representation of the overcoming of every obstacle for the Tibetan religion. In ancient art it was depicted on vases, for example "Fish Vendor Crater", a Mycenaean pottery, or it is represented in "Roman Mosaic in the House of the Faun". In classical art the iconography of the fish was very present, from Michelangelo who portrayed it in the vaults of the Sistine Chapel to the emblematic "L'acqua" by Giuseppe Arcimboldo. The concept of freedom and essence returns, from resilience to the freedom to live like fish, free, in the immense sea. The representation of the fish is multifaceted: in still lifes, it enclosed in blown glass vases, savior in pictorial representations narrating Greek mythology. The ultimate intention of Anne Felicie Nickels is to express the intimate essence of fish, so intimate as not to allow us to recognize it, not at first glance, so the artist goes into detail, of every creature she represents and creates, elevates its hidden nature, that of the soul. Anne Felicie Nickels investigates and rediscovers that sense of empathy towards sea creatures, emphasizing every detail and every color, making each creation unique thanks to the use of glass that gives that sense of rarity typical of fish whose uniqueness is not considered relevant. Totem tool for Anne Felicie Nickels is the glass represents the greatest challenge of her artistic production, the combination of the stimulus of inspiration and the training of technique. In her artistic statement she writes:

**"I gain most of my inspiration from the glass itself. I love the technical challenges which add yet another dimension to the creative process. In your mind you need not only to know what to do, but also how to do it. I find this ongoing dialog between the idea and 'how to', most rewarding and it is the key to my practice. I believe that every artist that choose to work with glass have this urge for exploring and to get skilled you need to understand the rule of glass and learn how to take advantage of its characteristics."**



The central concept related to the project of "The Fishy Exhibition" is to express what fish cannot say, due to the lack of that communicative element to which the human being is accustomed. According to the artist, anything has a soul and if you observe carefully, not only with your eyes, but with your heart, then, at that moment it will be visible to the eyes. The artist shapes the glass by manipulating it and taking advantage of the characteristics with which it presents itself, but the realization of the fish is not limited to the creation of glass sculptures,

Anne Felicie Nickels starting from her own creation develops others, photographing and manipulating digitally her creations of glass works, to the point of creating something completely different and new, prints in which the details are forever imprinted in their uniqueness. Of every color, size and shape, the artist's glass fish express that feeling of freedom that belongs only to fish. By observing them with patience, it is possible to really see expressions, characteristics that almost define their character traits. And this is what Anne Felice Nickels wants to tell, the singularity of each of them, they are not lowered into still lifes, nor enclosed the glass vases, but on the contrary they are placed outside any traditional representative scheme, placed in the world, as if they were swimming in the air, emphasizing the freedom that characterizes them, combining flight with swimming. From design to concept, "The Fishy Exhibition" creates a perfect combination of aesthetic taste and expression of a way of thinking, of experiencing the world, of feeling like a spokesperson for a species that is almost always represented in the art world as an ornament, just think of the nineteenth-century paintings in which fish were represented inside glass vases, an element that embodied their essence quite differently, precisely because it eliminated their freedom. They were considered a symbol of wealth, a gift that was given to wives on the occasion of the first wedding anniversary, therefore, an object. In Anne Felicie Nickels we rediscover the soul of the fish, its reality as a living being, the quintessence of life, embodied by the eyes that the artist represents for each work in a different way.



And if the eyes are the mirror of the soul, it is impossible not to be captured by these glass fish that tell about themselves, in a unique and rare way.

**In her artist statement, Anne Felicie Nickels writes "Whether it is figurative or abstract, it comes from my fascination with the existence of life and our planet in the universe. My art has no attention of addressing any issue, but more to open our mind."**

There is no denouncing rhetoric, but the sole intention of allowing people to identify with living beings that are generally not given importance. In this way, the artist wants to stimulate a different vision of the world, in which understanding and empathy are key elements, by doing so she creates unique works with an evocative and emotional power that induce those who observe them to ask themselves questions. She has created something totally new, a breath of fresh air in the current artistic scenario, a mix of design, analysis, communication skills and style. An atmosphere is created that leads to visions that are sometimes metaphorical, sometimes concrete, sometimes these visions are analytical. The stimulus and the empathic drive allow the artist herself to feel involved to the point of wanting to push and involve even those who observe her works of art. In conclusion, "The Fishy Exhibition" is an emblem of expression for those who cannot express themselves, an almost metaphorical project, rich in pathos, ethereal atmosphere and emotional impact.

- Martina Viesti, Art Curator

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