

Artsy, 18 de diciembre de 2015

Chiara Clemente Captures Her Father's Sprawling Installation at MASS MoCA

• Artsy Editors

dic 18, 2015 12:03am



For two more weeks, Francesco Clemente's sprawling six-tent installation, "Encampment," fills MASS MoCA's 30,000-square-foot gallery—the institution's largest. Conceived as a three-dimensional realization of the acclaimed painter's practice, each tent encompasses viewers with a mystical cast of symbols and characters that draw from Clemente's itinerant life.

As the exhibition readies to travel around the world, watch it come to life through the lens of Clemente's daughter, Chiara, a celebrated filmmaker. Set to a haunting original score by the Kronos Quartet, the film follows the artist as he assembles the ornate tents, then enters them. Below, in their first conversation in print, father and daughter discuss the making of the film and its role in the understanding and experiencing the work.



Museum Tent, 2013
MASS MoCA

Artsy, 18 de diciembre de 2015

Chiara Clemente: When and where did the idea of making the tents come from? And how has it evolved?

Francesco Clemente: Thirty years ago I drew on a tiny scrap of papers the “sculptures” I wanted to make: a lamp, a sword, a door, a tent. This to me was a description of the whole world as I know it. Four years ago I went to China and reconciled myself with the fact that many artists today work on an intimidatingly large scale. I returned to the image of the tent as an answer to the challenge posed by our new brave, bigger world. I wanted to make a painting you can walk in, something larger than you but comforting rather than intimidating.

CC: Why was it important to film the tents and the process of them going up?

FC: A dear friend came to see the exhibition and said, seeing the tents, “Oh from seeing photographs I was afraid we would have to crawl inside them!” Photographs did not seem to convey the experience and the scale of the tents. I thought a film could.

CC: And you approached me about making this ...

FC: You are quite the master of quick portraiture. You are also very busy. I wasn't so sure that you would want to help, so I must have tried to convince you to do it, and I succeeded.

CC: You asked if I knew of anyone who could come and film the tents and I immediately suggested I would do it. It was the best way to ask me without asking.



Artsy, 18 de diciembre de 2015

Can you talk about some of the themes in each tent and imagery that you use?

FC: The theme of my paintings is the search of a stable self beyond the fragmentation of experience. The first tent shows the body as a source of illumination; the second and third tents are about good and evil being two sides of the same coin; the fourth tent is about pepper, spices, and the stars which guided the sailors of old; the fifth tent is about what happens when the wolf and the sheep stop praying together and have to go the way of their nature; the sixth tent is a playful riff on my dubious role as an artist, and on the dubious role of art institutions.

CC: From early on, we discussed that we wanted the film not to feel like a straightforward documentation of the tents. While we had to capture the process of the tents going up and the orchestration behind it, it was even more important to give the viewers the experience of being in the tents. The music [a score by the Kronos Quartet] also became another narrative in the film.

FC: You made the film as if following a soundtrack in your head.

CC: Yes, most of my work is voice and music that drive the stories but here we needed something that could carry the story along and have arcs and a finale. We tried several pieces but not until we heard the Kronos Quartet piece did it feel like we actually had a film.

FC: I was once acquainted with the Kronos Quartet through the great Morton Feldman and admire them tremendously.

CC: What was it like to know that *I* was filming you? Did you feel that there was a different dynamic between us, as subject/director versus father/daughter?

FC: We were both so focused on our own work that we had no time to quarrel. Even if we are both soft-spoken neither of us can claim to be easy.

CC: While I'd like to defend myself, I have to agree. But I learned it from somewhere!

Artsy, 18 de diciembre de 2015

Once we were in the space, we both could do our work without questioning the other. It was the first time I was operating the camera in many years. This was a challenge at times but I can't imagine having captured the tents going up in another way because it was so instinctual, like a dance moving from side to side and around.



How does the film convey the experience of the tents?

FC: Your eye is precise without being cold. [The film] illustrated the vocabulary of the tents: the poles, the roof, the walls, the ropes, the weights, how the tents come up at first almost as the sails of a boat ...

CC: It's cut in sequence of the order of the tents in the room. I wanted it to feel like you were almost floating through and over the tents, getting the perspective from every angle—which you actually do in the space at MASS MoCA because you can see it from balconies and through the warehouse windows. I found that the tents are so inviting, yet we are programmed to stand back and look at art without touching, so I wanted the camera to be drawn in and out of the tents as though we are weaving through them. I also felt that when you were in inside there was this peacefulness that enticed you to lay down and look up and get lost in the images above, like gazing at the stars at night.

Artsy, 18 de diciembre de 2015

Where will “Encampment” go next, and do you imagine it will keep growing in number?

FC: Encampment is going to Carriageworks in Sydney, Australia [opening in July 2016]. I wonder if I will add one last tent. Is seven a better number than six? Once I saw an ancient cave in Italy; it was a mile long. There were seven chapels on the sloped floor of the cave. The Romans had built them without a roof, just four walls of frescoes and way above there was the ceiling of the cave, like a sky of salt. It is an image which has been haunting me and I have been chasing it while laying down the tents.

“Francesco Clemente: Encampment” is on view at MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, from Jun. 12, 2015–Jan. 3, 2016.