

Alessandro Quaranta *10 stories of the vigil (from the Killing Floor)*

This year, from 29th April to 26th June, all through Killing Floor II, a webcam set up inside blank took snapshots every day of everything that took place between 6 pm and 9.30 pm at certain intervals (the frequency varied, depending on the period, and went from a minimum of one every three minutes to a maximum of one a minute): it functioned independently, and was subject to no one's will, and was generally overlooked or ignored, with the exception of yours truly and Alessandro Quaranta. For some time now, surveillance cameras have been a part of our everyday life, they can be seen basically anywhere, and nobody gives them a second glance. Only occasionally do they come to the forefront, in connection with an extraordinary event, usually of a criminal nature. In these cases, the footage is carefully studied and analysed, in search of proof or new evidence, of something that might give a fresh perspective, and often leads to the solution of difficult cases that would have otherwise remained unsolved.

During those two months, Alessandro, from a distance, kept an eye on the webcam's objective and impartial activity, by means of the Internet and software for image acquisition. Every now and then he noticed something out of the ordinary and promptly took it down in his notebook: often it might be just a peculiar effect of the light, or a micro event capable of breaking the routine, almost imperceptibly modifying an image which looked exactly the same in most frames, immutable. Alessandro wasn't out to find any particular validation, nor was he looking for evidence or proof: he simply observed, sometimes singling out a particular image which he spontaneously found a connection to – be it depicting a person, an object or an event 'immortalized' by the camera – albeit univocal and virtual, an affective (in the literal sense of the term*) bond of varying intensity.

He also often found a connection between different images, which were sometimes temporally distant from each other: in this second instance, a new set of stories would take form, and reality – so coldly depicted by the mechanical medium – would change, through Alessandro's also emotional experience, turning into a peculiar narrative acted out by rays of light, various objects, or by the artists working on Killing Floor (Ludovica Carbotta, Alis/Filliol, Giovanni Morbin) and the 'interested strangers', i.e. the people present both during the three presentations, both, occasionally, before or after. By means of this process, the webcam's activity was 'warmed up' at a distance through Alessandro's eyes, as he was watching and monitoring it, and the result of this long and complex procedure is an anthology of stories of varying length. The anthology will be presented by the author on Thursday 16th October at blank itself, about three and a half months after the shooting, collected in 9 booklets, each one distinctly categorized by the author himself.

Quaranta's work isn't a mere account of Killing Floor II, and least of all a dry and didactic record of the artistic events that took place therein; I think it should rather be regarded as a sort of almost mythical transfiguration - from his personal viewpoint - of those two months and of all the main characters in his stories. In these narratives, people, objects, rays of light and shadows seem to act freely in an imaginary dimension, as if released from the categories they are usually placed into as a result of our mediocre conventions. Their newfound independence and otherness makes them appear to us as mysterious and exciting, in a similar manner to when we sometimes dream about unknown people or places, which almost always dissolve upon waking up, and which often leave a vague but lingering trace throughout our day. That's why even though many people may recognize their features among the images in Alessandro Quaranta's booklets, they may feel as if they were seeing themselves for the first time, and be as surprised as if witnessing the appearance of a stranger. A familiar or ordinary object may likewise seem new and obscure, just as the very place they worked in for hours or days, or which they visited during the last couple of months or years.

Carlo Fossati, September 2014

*: *Affective* [in Psychology]: *affective faculties*, those concerning the emotional sphere, as opposed to intellectual faculties; [in Linguistic terminology]: *affective language*, where non-logical impulses prevail.