

WINEHOUSE UCCISA... IN UNA SCULTURA

*L'opera di Marco Perego sarà esposta da venerdì
alla Half Gallery di New York*

MILANO - Amy Winehouse colpita a morte da un proiettile. Accanto a lei il suo assassino, lo scrittore americano William Burroughs. I fan della regina del soul non temano: trattasi di arte. La scena descritta infatti è rappresentata in una scultura ed è frutto della fantasia di un artista italiano. L'opera di Marco Perego, giovane artista di Salò emigrato negli States, sarà esposta da venerdì prossimo a New York, e più precisamente alla Half Gallery, nella East Side di Manhattan. La cantante britannica, ritratta sopra una pozza di sangue, si riconferma una fonte d'ispirazione.



120 MILA DOLLARI - «Vogliamo che una situazione impossibile sia assolutamente credibile per lo spettatore», ha spiegato Bill Powers, uno dei proprietari della Half Gallery, che si trova nella Lower East Side di Manhattan, e dove la scultura, prezzo stimato 120mila dollari, rimarrà fino a fine gennaio.

L'«ASSASSINO» - L'«assassino» di Amy è William Burroughs. L'emblematico scrittore della beat generation, autore di «Naked Lunch», ucci-

se per sbaglio sua moglie con un colpo alla testa, mentre cercava di imitare Guglielmo Tell a una festa nel 1951. Il sito web della galleria mostra un dettaglio dell'opera e sotto scrive: «La verità sono tutte queste cose. La verità non è nessuna di queste cose. La verità è solo qualcuna di queste cose.» Secondo il proprietario della galleria, la scultura è uno «strano omaggio» alla cantante. L'artista, nato nel 1979, è un ex calciatore che ha interrotto la carriera per un infortunio e da qualche anno vive e lavora a New York.

AMY WINEHOUSE IS JOAN VOLLMER? IF YOU ASK ME THE BITCH HAD IT COMING TO HER.

William Burroughs shot his wife Joan Vollmer in the head in September, 1951. They were playing a dangerous game of William Tell. Vollmer placed a tumbler on her head and Burroughs aimed and fired his rifle. He missed the tumbler and struck Vollmer. If you ask me, the bitch had it coming to her. What business does a strong, independent, intelligent and artistic straight woman have living as the wife of a gay man, especially one pining for a gay poet, Allen Ginsberg, and living by the needle and any other drug available for experimentation? Didn't she realize that the only steady shot her man could administer was in the vein? Couldn't she see that the closed circuit of male desire would force her into a life of looking for love in all the wrong places? Didn't she know the beat story she was in was a tragedy, not a farce or comedy? If she didn't then that's just poor judgment... if you ask me. And if she did, she's the one to blame - standing in a Mexican fleabag house with a tumbler on her head facing a loaded gun daring Burroughs to shoot. It doesn't matter that Burroughs was usually a reliable shot, she should have known better. In light of this, it's no wonder he got off lightly. Accident or no accident, Joan Vollmer had it coming to her. If you ask me, her death was a form of cosmic correction, a way of restoring the earth's properly gendered literary and artistic rotation of the 1950's - a rotation of hermetically sealed circles of explicit and sublimated homoerotic desire. It was a time of Mad Men, Mad Magazine and just plain chauvinistic madness. The beats were no exception. Burroughs was a misogynist. Ginsberg's ten-

derness flowed towards the men in his life. The peripatetic desire of Cassady formed women into hollow shells, vehicles for a physical, libidinal release. On the road Kerouac pined for his mother and died convinced that only the virgin Mary possessed true female virtue.

Male writers of the fifties, like male painters, kept good women down and out of the charmed circle of artistic success, except for this one difference: male action painters heroically dripped their masculinity onto canvas with loaded brushes, the beat writers, Kerouac, Burroughs and Ginsberg, and those in their orbit like Neal Cassady, were exploring their carnal love for each other between solitary bouts of writing. The writers were tied together by their maleness, that is, except for Kerouac who was incestuously tied, to adapt one of Burroughs's more fertile metaphors, to his mother's apron strings. The male abstract expressionists suppressed both the female and the swish (and that is why Warhol's revenge in the following decade is so juicy, as the camp and swish turned from bottoms to tops), the beats merely suppressed the female. Matricide was bound to be the result. So, the exclusion, at once only symbolic, became literal: Burroughs shot his wife, Joan Vollmer, to death. In light of the role she was playing to the men she was hanging with, patron and muse, they had to kill her to keep the secret of their success secret. Vollmer should have suspected as much... so if you ask me, she had it coming to her.

And if you prod me to go a bit further, I'd say Amy Winehouse had better heed the lesson of Joan Vollmer and beg out of this artistic racket before she gets her own version of the William



Tell performance piece. The parallels between Winehouse and Vollmer are uncanny. Both did stints in rehab. They were married to notorious drug addicts. They had tempestuous marriages. And most importantly, they were artistically and intelligently gifted and operating in a man's world. You might say that we've made huge strides today in establishing gendered equality. I'm not going to argue that point here but something tells me that if Winehouse isn't careful she'll end up being the next Joan Vollmer. And I think Marco Perego, the artist who has sculpted Burroughs and Winehouse in their own grotesque version of William Tell homicide, is in on my conspiracy theory. There Burroughs sits, indifferent expression on his face, a rifle on his lap, and there Winehouse lays, pressed against a wall, the splatter of a missed shot mixed pungently with blood and the faint trace of gunpowder. Perego's work tells us much about sexual politics. To appropriate a title from another male philandering artist's work, it tells us culturally where we came from, where we are, and where we are going. Here's how Perego's artwork is visionary: One day a metaphorically blind Winehouse, incapable of seeing the men in her life as parasites - husbands, rumored lovers, record executives, personal managers, pr consultants and hangers-on - will come home from rehab in need of a stiff one. She'll pour herself a drink and turn around, oblivious to the firing squad. It'll be quick and painless. The next day her death will be all over the papers and within a week she'll be a female martyr to male aggression, a sacrifice demanded by an insatiable cultural maw. Don't say Winehouse wasn't warned. The sculpture speaks for itself: Perego's artwork will be state's evidence at the trial. Ezra Pound once wrote that every age demands an image of itself. I'd also add that it demands a sacrifice.

The usual suspects are artists, more specifically, rock stars. There's Brian Jones, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, and Kurt Cobain, to name a few. Winehouse has all the makings of the most recent version of the sensitive artistic soul, one tormented, rehabbed and remitted, exquisitely experiencing the excessive pitch of emotional terror most of us ordinary folk have tuned out. But every performance needs an audience and we're the ones fascinated by such criminal mischief, enjoying the journey up the roller-coaster of success and gleeful at the inevitable headlong pitch forward into destruction. We love being fans and require a class of artists to fill the myth of the tortured soul, the ones so sensitive to the horrible dog frequencies of our banal lives that they escape into drugs and madness. Winehouse appears to be the one artist who has beat out all the others for the lead role in this hackneyed story. And we are waiting to experience the distinct pleasure of the symbolic death of the artist alchemically changing into her literal one. It happened before. It'll happen again. It's required, we just aren't aware in advance which gifted sap is going to be the lucky victim of our terminal desire. Winehouse is on the verge of being rubbed out, just like Joan Vollmer. And there is one last frightening parallel to complete the myth's cycle. Morrison, Hendrix, Joplin and Cobain were all 27 when they suicided themselves into the cultural hearts and minds of a fandom that required their death. Joan Vollmer was shot dead at the age of 27. Amy Winehouse just turned 25. She's got two years to heed my warning and write herself out of this particular story's gruesome ending. The evidence is all around her, there's even a sculpture by Marco Perego dedicated to her ignominious end. As far as I'm concerned, with all this warning, if she ends up going the way of Joan Vollmer, the bitch had it coming to her.