

Pippa Bacca, performance artist, is murdered during "Brides on Tour"

Joey Skee (April 18, 2008)



Italian performance artist Pippa Bacca, hitchhiking from Milan to Tel Aviv in a wedding dress as part of a performance piece promoting peace, was raped and killed in Turkey.

I picked up today's New York Times to read about the death of Giuseppina Pasqualino di Marineo, an Italian performance artist who went by the name Pippa Bacca. I was unfamiliar with her work but found her final piece particularly daring and her rape and murder tragic.

Bacca, 33, along with sister artist Silvia Moro, left Milan on March 8th, International Women's Day,



for their "Brides on Tour" piece, an international tour through the Balkans, Turkey, and Middle East. The performance piece involved the two women who were wearing specially designed and crafted "wedding dresses" hitchhiking the entire length of the journey on behalf of peace. Web reports stated that, "She had said she wanted to show that she could put her trust in the kindness of local people." The English text on the "Brides in Tour" web site reads:

The Project: Our dream is to hitch-hike across the war-torn areas of the Balkans and the Mediterranean – dressed as brides. That's the only dress we'll carry along - with all stains accumulated during the journey. We'll visit artists and craftsmen along the way and stop at museums, foundations, cultural centres and youth clubs for the daily pacifist ritual/performance of personal hygiene and then interaction with the place, people, and their crafts.

Objectives: The goal is to explore and collect photographic and video evidences on the common Mediterranean culture. The expected route is through North-Eastern Italy, Serbia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Syria. At the end of the journey the dresses shall be exposed together with other evidences of the journey.

The two women separated in Istanbul on March 19th, planning to meet up in Beirut. She was last seen on March 31st in Gebze, a town 70 miles southeast of Istanbul. Her naked body was found this past Saturday. A truck driver, who confessed to raping and strangling di Marineo, was caught after using his SIM card in di Marineo's cell phone.



Turkish government officials and the media condemned the murder. The headline "OUR GRIEF IS GREAT" in Italian ran across the front page of the daily Milliyet. Turkey's leading newspaper Hurriyet ran the headline "WE ARE ASHAMED" on its Web edition. Di Marineo's sister Antonietta was reported to have said that such incidents could happen anywhere in the world. "I have nothing to say about Turkey and Turks. The Turkish nation and officials helped us greatly," she said.

Di Marineo's rape and murder has prompted self-criticism about the plight of women in Turkey and the need to combat violence against women at all levels of society. One Web proposal calls for Pippa Bacca's being picked up by Turkish women: "We should be ashamed that she is not the first woman raped and killed in this country. . . . I propose to continue the mission that Pippa started. . . . [W]hat if [we] were to transform the "peace walk" of Pippa into the "freedom walk" of Turkish women in our country?"

Pippa Bacca's and Silvia Moro's performance art/journey was a female remapping across a topography of war that dared to imagine peace with the proverbial hopefulness of a new bride. That vision remains the alternative to all cultures of violence.



Della guerra sono stanca ormai,
al lavoro di un tempo tornerei,
a un vestito da sposa o qualcosa di bianco,
per nascondere questa mia vocazione, al trionfo ed al pianto.

"Giovanna d'Arco" (1974)

Italian version by Fabrizio De André

From "Brides on Tour" Web site

She said, "I'm tired of the war,

I want the kind of work I had before,

A wedding dress or something white

To wear upon my swollen appetite."

"Joan of Arc" (1971)

Original by Leonard Cohen

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