

Francesca Mangold
Bubble Dancers
2.10.2021 – 14.11.2021
Opening 2.10.2021, 3-6pm

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The reviews have been catastrophic on TripAdvisor. This was already a sign of irreversible decay. From the experience of the local Health Inspector, when reviews sank below average, there was no turning back. As he stepped into the restaurant, sickly looking boys in stained white tops turned and gazed at him, they did not bother to cover their laughs. Their teeth were crooked, yet they smirked, full glasses were held with greasy hands that culminated in green, broken nails. He felt annoyed but could not stop wondering about their hairstyles, why do they all wear the same sloppy tail?

The Health Inspector needed no introduction. The waitress ushered in towards the kitchen without exchanging stares. He looked around, the hallways were stacked with grimy red cloths, filthy cloches mixed with unopened, dusty bottles of fine wines and consumed candles. He could hear the boys giggling from inside the dining hall, something spilled and broke on the floor. The waitress did not turn to check on the clients yet. Her silhouette passed in front of the gold framed mirrors in the corridor, a greenish substance that could have been mold growing on their discoloured surface. It has been some time since they reflect the glitz and glamour of the clientele the restaurant longed for but never brought in. The waitress suddenly gasped and froze in front of the grey kitchen door. Her gaze aimed at the floor, in the darkest and crumminest corner, something swiftly moved. Almost undetectable, as an ephemeral shadow, it was there for a second and then no more.

In the kitchen, fuming pots bubbled on the cooking counter, the steam disguised some of the faces of the staff. The Health Inspector had to move around to reach a larger area, he noticed the kitchen porter was busy washing cooking equipment in a distant corner, he also wore the same hairstyle as the boys in the dining hall and the same white top. From the walls, dirt dripped on the tiles to the floor where full trash cans also spilled onto the ground. As he looked around for the chef, he suddenly grew weary of the football match being displayed on the TV where the majority of the staff directed their attention.

The Health Inspector proceeded towards the end of the room, where the fridges and storages were. Again, rapid shadows crossed his way. This time he was almost sure. He slammed one of the heavy grey doors wide open, a putrid whiff hit his senses, he tried to keep steady but had to step back. As he got his breath back, small and gray hair balls ran freely on the metallic floor. There they were, tens or maybe hundreds of rats, spread on the floor amidst the waste and food supplies. They escaped and rushed behind his feet, the rats aimed for the kitchen and raced as the Health Inspector turned around and incredibly saw how no one, but him, seemed to bother.

Text by Gabriele Sartoris