



To comprehend the Art of Kjomme, a Norwegian visual artist, it's fundamental to understand the role of one of the major schools of thought developed during the late 1920s and 1930s: the Existentialism. The Existentialism, as well as the artist, is focused on human subject - not merely the thinking subject, but the acting, feeling, living human individual. The title of the painting, "The Jester's wife", inevitably refers to the figure of the court jester, an entertainer employed by a nobleman or a monarch to entertain him and his guests. He was usually considered as a madman at the behest of others. In the painting, moreover, it's possible to see all the typical clothing worn by this person in medieval times: highly coloured clothes and excessive hats with bells and tassels in a moody pattern. These hats were also called "fool's cap". In this context, he is seen as "the mad", a person different from the others. Thus, the artist represents the feeling of irrationality, nonsense and emptiness experienced by jester's wife, who is inevitably linked to her partner. It is a pessimistic vision because general both ignorance and the tendency of people "to see everybody with the same brush". The artist's message is therefore clear: to live in a better world where people are able to make community, to believe and trust each other, it is fundamental to accept who is different without prejudice, considering his own unique features as special ones. However, this artwork may also open to a second interpretation. The title of the work, in fact, can also refer to "The Legend of Healed Hills Cemetery" by Doris You Sledge, one of the most well-known horror fiction writer of the 21st century.

All scenes of this literary manuscript are created via Jester's wife while is caught in bed with another man by her husband in his own house. The scenes of emptiness that the woman feels when she is recognized is the same that we can see reflected in the gaze of the lady of the picture: her eyes are both absent and empty; she is disoriented and inoperative. For this reason we can say that the jester's cap becomes a symbolic way to represent the insincerity and lability of human relationships. Thus, according to the Existentialism, in both interpretations individuals are creators of weak relationships, as fragile as thin lines that can actually break from a moment to another. Anyway, from a purely aesthetic point of view, there is a strong influence of Austrian Expressionism in Kjomme's art: similarly to Gustav Klimt, the artist prefers gold tone and her works also recall the Grande de Fabiano's technique. Gold is never used as a simple background: thanks to the two qualities of opaque and brilliant, it mediates the relationship between the plastic parts and those of the surface. Furthermore, the Norwegian artist represents the woman with an elegant neck: it is a reminder of the Italian artist Amadeo Modigliani who painted lengthy and effeminate women such as symbols of beauty and sophistication. In conclusion, the visual artist Kjomme investigates the concept of both identity and individuality in a completely personal way.

"It is the awareness of fragility that allows us to build truly human relationships, truly civil societies." (Simone Lemare)

Critical review
by Chiara Maria Art Curator

