

Containers and other events

Artists have many ways to work: in an atelier, in the kitchen, while taking a walk. Sometimes they're even hard at work when they don't seem to be doing anything in particular at all. For an entire afternoon, a month, years on end.

At a recent conference, the philosopher Stefano Velotti cited a letter written by John Keats in 1817 in which the English poet described *negative ability*, in other words, the art of knowing how to «live with uncertainty, puzzlement, and doubt without being impatient to get to the facts and draw conclusions».

This means that an attitude of suspended judgment is not only a neutral state but can also be interpreted, on the contrary, as an active state, a special way of acting manifested in the ability to wait, to accept, and to allow events to take their course, to allow oneself to be carried along with no destination in mind.

Roma. An afternoon at the Etruscan Museum in Villa Giulia.
I lose myself in an unending succession of rooms. One is dedicated to "Gifts" and attracts my attention because that was just what I was thinking of.

The earliest epigraphic testimony dates back to the 7th century BCE and describes the rituals underlying gift-giving that consolidated relations of kinship, politics, and economics apparently codified even then.

At a certain point, the gift object speaks for itself.

"I come from ... by..."

"I am from Avile, the small pitcher."

"I am the urn of Scuria, a beauty of a beauty."

And so on.

The container is not silent.

The container is not even empty. it is full, but of emptiness.