

Antonella Zazzera. Art and Research

by Mauro Salvi, 2001

If the visual arts have the aim of materializing the idea that the artist possesses (especially if the artist is very young), this, the period that bridges two centuries, is among the darkest after the Renaissance astronomer Nicolò Copernico's renowned work "De revolutionibus orbium coelestium."

What is happening to us, indigenous no longer, but citizens of a Europe that for some will remain a Hyperborea land? The black bag is finished, the sirens of the bombings are extinguished, and the flags of the glorious regiments are folded. With the end of these memories, so too the malaise is finished which once stimulated the necessity to act and arrive at well-being.

However, like the myth of the Phoenix that is reborn from the ashes, here we are again transformed, with a substantial particular. It is not the spirit (or creative idea) that will be reborn but the material. It goes thus from Self, the technological well-being. Since technology and product sales are consequential, the advertising is indifferent arrivism, an impassable ocean that arises between the creation and growth of society.

We artists could recite this fairytale "once upon a time... the idea united to a very high technological development, that is, the technique that materialized it, in a unique, unrepeatable, lyrical, poetic way. Then, only the idea remained with an almost non-existent technique. The idea, so bare and fragile, did not know how to be realized."

Here is the premise: the reader must learn and I must reiterate. This is especially true given the fashion to put everything in doubt. Yes, it is a necessary premise that the artist researches, researches within himself - not between the corridors of television studios, not in fashion salons, not between complacent skirts and trousers.

To place Antonella Zazzera in historical context, we would say that she was not born in Sodom or Gomorrah but in a sylvan place. Her work is not due to the rites of urban initiation, but her guides are silence, nature, the stars, the domestic embers, the voice of the farms, free will. Thus she was formed, ahistorical in content, historical in expressive form. She is ahistorical because she deals with the being in its becoming, of the awareness of being outside of every faith. The awareness of being in itself has always created problems for every true artist. It has spurred themes that have marked the great human and harmonic canons of history, vividly traced by Policleto, Giotto, Masaccio, Leonardo, Caravaggio, Medardo Rosso and Vedova. Zazzera is historical for the inevitable belonging to time. Her "sense of expression" is combined with the contemporary, with an Expressionist rationalism that overlaps with visions beyond the Alps. In Zazzera, dynamic rhythms are nourished and are indeed echoes of a tangent order in her world: Orcagna, Paolo Uccello, Balla and Gherardo Dottori.

There is no confusion in her in the labyrinthine tangle of international artistic ideals, tendencies or unsatisfied fashions destined to an inevitable conceptual crisis. In this tangle, all lack "salt" and are therefore ponds that have remained immobile for decades.

Zazzera is as strong as those who have prepared the plowed ground. The artist expresses the thought that the pursuit

between he who generates and who is generated, and the unity and duality between matrix and fragment generated by the Matrice, "come from being." It is the being that centrally exists in the material and philosophical manifestation of her research. This is expressed by continuing the Italian artistic tradition where the expressive duality of line and color has alternated in various styles to enclose shapes, spaces and surfaces. It is the line that encloses the form, or it is the color that defines the shape. Thus from Botticelli and Giovanni Bellini one arrives at Divisionism and then Futurism.

This is the true Italian school. This is the way that Zazzera seeks to materialize her intuitions. Her forms that incarnate the ancient Greek goddess Gaia are called "Matrici" by the artist in honor of "the great mother who generates." Matrici is a tarry surface laid on a "Sudario" canvas plastered with a light layer of chalky stucco. This area is covered by many traces similar to those found on the surfaces of meteorites, on old cetaceans and on the earth's crust: furrows that contain the seed of those who generated them. They are objects obscure to our imagination, lost in the abysses of space and the oceans, dissolved in their incisive action. The Matrici have received grace. When one looks at them one is gifted a vision that is an instantaneous collection concerning the mysteries of the absolute, the sense of apparent, overflowing with fullness and the satisfaction for having briefly glimpsed a vision of the incomprehensible. It is not a negligible pleasure.

Looking at the Matrici and the Frammenti does not mean to feeling authorized to stiffen the structure of the work in linear theories which tend to draw traces that have delineating forms as a limit. One should instead look at the Matrici and the Frammenti as means to merge lines, surfaces and existential spaces. After Futurist experiences, these renewed concepts form a new vision of "the individual being" that manifests itself with the pictorial material.

Antonella Zazzera, the artist, retrieves those fragments of tarry stucco that are randomly and naturally separated from the Matrici. Frammenti, or surfaces, are mostly fractioned by the cracks practiced on the area of the Matrici itself. These are irregular forms containing the essence of those who generated them. They are fragments that live on their own life, appear in their absolute fragility as a single appearance of something that is and will be no longer. They are enclosed in their tragedy and life's secular essence without sending any minimal oracle. Their technical consistency, made with a very crumbly chalklike material, is an element constituted by the sedimentation of infinite multitudes of shells. It leaves ample space for self-reflections.

The trace and the curve are the fertilized viral elements that move and energize Zazzera's works. In fact, through these actions, her works acquire an artistic sense and her modern being consists in pursuing what is most tangible. An evident existential conceptional question is posed: is it the form as such (that is, its perimeter) to form itself or is it its plastic mass to make it exist through color?

Zazzera obtains this expression with traces, lights and shadows with strong contrasts. She anticipates the fusion of the two entities in a new canonical, where being is unique in itself and unique in all. The motive is not in the aesthetic research of space as a legacy of Futurist experiences, but it is a new historical research that reconnects to Balla. This motive is still inclined to enhance aesthetic spaces nourished by technical scientific knowledge, which are nonetheless still full of social and experimental intolerances.

Zazzera merges the trace with the plastic mass not for aesthetic/social purposes, but for existential ones. In doing so, she gives the work a fresh emanation, takes being into the future, thereby making it new, essentially unique, and no longer corrupted by either beliefs or trends. And it is in this concept that we must read the choice that the artist makes

of the use of color. A synthetic choice that drastically underlines the principle of duality. The color participates, cyclically carrying in itself the whole weight of the material. Zazzera goes beyond color as the draftsman draws over the trace. Here the artist, with the color, fixes everything, just as the night fixes the cosmos in the starry vault. It is fundamental to reiterate that Zazzera uses an "interior" color, not an international stereotype of Expressionist myths. The artist calls this: "the harmonic man."

By observing Zazzera's works, one should not dwell unnecessarily on this or the artist, but rather look at the boundary between light and shadow, between glimmer and darkness. One should identify that flexibility that is present but does not define itself. It is the presence that Zazzera seeks, trying to blend line, color and surface in an individual reality that is "the being."