

Light Weaving

by Frédéric Jaeger, 2014

Umbria is, first, a land.
A land of men and a land of saints.
Which feeds the belly,
Which nourishes the spirit.
A land of history. A motherland, also.
Protective hills opening on infinity.
A land of contrasts,
a land of shadows and of light.
Between telluric forces and celestial energy.
At the crossroads of worlds.

Antonella Zazzera was born here, facing Todi, her child's eyes resting on this life-sized tableau. She has always watched this landscape, tirelessly sculpted by variations in the weather and light, always observed the furrow left by man and his machines. It's her land. The daughter of farmers, her feet were well rooted in the soil, but her head was already among the stars. All of nature was her playground. She lived in her own world, played with the sun's reflections in a bowl of water. It would soon appear to her as evidence of the profound nature of her being. And the budding artist set off to discover the fields of the possible...

The pencil and the paintbrush became her first travelling companions. Natural extensions of her arm, of her hand. She left her mark on the first medium she found, like cavemen on rock faces. Her early Rilievi (Reliefs) recall Brassai's graffiti and Dubuffet's Murs. They pre-empt the Madri Matrici series, the most accomplished work of this period. Alongside this she increased her experiments. The sensitivity of photographic film revealed to her a language of signs, invisible to the naked eye, but frozen in a given space-time. She wanted to transcribe this discovery in a more dynamic language, one that stretches towards three dimensions. She looked for a way, and found her own red tread: Copper.

She builds a studded frame setting the form around which the precious red metal winds, in a ritual and bloody back-and-forth rhythm between the different points of the study, giving birth to life. Layer after layer, the sculpture grows heavier, time does its work, sedimentation acts. The weave thus produced becomes a receptacle for the forces below and the forces above. The body of the artist becomes a thoroughfare, her belly a crossroads of energies. Thus Antonella Zazzera is at the hearth of creation. The finished work is controlled, mastered by thought and animated by an instinctive and mysterious inner strength which obeys its own rules. Funambulist on her own wire, like Vieira da Silva, she stitches her mesh with patience and obstinacy, how a spider spins its web. With a watchful eye she tracks the smallest glimmer. Light nourishes her. The sculpture becomes the sieve, the artist the panner for gold.

The technique is refined, the raw material diversifies: the artist plays on variations in colour, thickness of wire and the vibration effects produced by the multiplication of lines, producing, each time, highly-charged, highly-tense sculptures.

She calls these works Armonici (Harmonics) referring to the world of music, and one can read her work as one deciphers a partition, with its keys, its rhythms and its range. From the opening scales to the state of trance. With this long elaborative work finished, the studded frame is removed, the tension built up in the wire over weeks is liberated at once, the work shaped one last time by the hand of the artist reaches its fullness in perfect accord with the surrounding world. In music a harmonious note – a kind of secondary condition of the note – is obtained through reducing the tension of the finger on the string...

Antonella Zazzera is linked to her native soil. The rootedness is total and the couple they form functions as one. The Naturalia series evokes birds nests. One day, in her garden, the artist found a nest made of scraps of wire from her own sculptures. The circle was complete...

Antonella Zazzera's sculpture takes on a universal dimension. It causes man to find his place again, to renew his dialogue with Nature and so with himself, in the real world. Our vision no longer stops with knowledge but goes beyond it and pushes forward in the quest for understanding and the Absolute.

