

Antonella Zazzera. Rhythm | Sign | Light

by Federico Sardella, 2015

In September of last year, invited by Arnaldo Pomodoro, Antonella Zazzera exhibited *Armonico CLXVII* at the collective exhibition *Highly Recommended: Emerging Sculptors* at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan (USA). The Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is one of the most important botanical gardens in the world, with a collection of sculptures that, in a space of about 139 acres, houses a permanent outdoor collection with works by the most important contemporary artists: Pablo Picasso, Auguste Rodin, Henry Moore, Richard Serra, Claes Oldenbourg, Louise Bourgeois, Giuseppe Penone and Anish Kapoor.

The exhibition, dedicated to the many possible declinations of making sculpture today, included the works of sixteen artists of the latest generations, each one identified by the signal of the sculptors with works present in the vast collection of the park. On the occasion of the exhibition opening, presenting this large sculpture - the hundred and sixty-seventh of the series *Harmonics*, which began in 2004, the artist herself described it: "the result of research based on the study and relationship between three fundamental artistic values: Sign, Light and Space. Over the years, I have analyzed these values through Painting, Photography, and, in the last ten years, Sculpture. The sign values, which I call *Segnotraccia*, always presented in my artistic language, have materialized in copper wires... *Threads/Signs* with which I draw in Space. Lines of force that extend into Space...

Thus *Armonico* originates from a thread that, through a long constructive process, I leave to sediment until forming the three-dimensional body of my sculptures from the primary form. It is natural and spontaneous, which settles in the space and forms and transforms according to the place that will go to receive it... so that the place becomes maternal womb... *Armonico* is a body of energy that receives life from light and transforms its own Form into Light... Light nourishes and shapes the surface, enhances its lines of force and weaves its form. Imminent bright vibrations move and make *Armonico* dynamic... A light that the copper wire absorbs, retains and releases generating chromatic rhythms in continuous mutation... rhythms that beat to time and enhance the pictorial value of sculpture".

Each of Antonella Zazzera's works, even if part of a series or a group of works, is unique and independent; "unique, lyrical and unrepeatable" would specify the artist, putting the accent on that aspect that makes her elaborate autonomous creatures animated by vibrations of light and the infinite modifications that the refraction causes on their surfaces. These are variable surfaces, difficult to photograph given the different angles from which they can be grasped. This is especially true due to the countless luminescences in progress that make the ductile works time machines in the complex weave, always ready to chase the last ray of sunshine.

A progressive number is assigned to every single work, suggesting an idea of natural cataloging that concerns the *Armonici* as well as the *Segniche*, the *Ri-Trattiche*, the *Naturalia* and the *Carte/Scultura*.

A Roman number follows the title, emphasizing the careful process through which the works are born, take body and thickness, to be then dismissed and sent into the world to come to life. The number ultimately indicates the control of one's work, the measure of one's own gestures and the awareness of one's own progress, which needs to be marked, tracked and monitored continuously. In this way, to document every single work innumerable photographic shoots could take place, without ever giving a shot that is the same as the previous one.

The works "change with the passing of the hours of the day: clear tones thanks to the morning light, dazzling and almost blinding at midday, and more muffled/off in the evening..." They always appear different, despite their presumed immobility, and, in doing so, they make the viewer an active subject, prompted by constant shocks, by presences and illuminations. These are bodies of light that the light vivifies. The sculptures feed and expand in space thanks as well to the opposite of their genesis: the shadow.

"Shadow is a prolongation of the work, which determines a temporal change in it. The shadow determines the work; it modifies and characterizes it. I am interested in the sign, the trace and the light. And concentrating on the light, I cannot fail to be interested in the shadow. I manage and govern the shadow, and by logically illuminating the works, this becomes part of the structure. I calculate everything. At the beginning it is difficult, but once I have gained confidence and mastery of the technique, once I have entered the system, I determine the flow of the current and dictate the rules... at the beginning there is randomness, but I try to get ahold of the artistic subject. I want to have full awareness of the effects that I give..."

The full awareness that distinguishes the artist's movement is dictated, in particular, by the profound knowledge, identification and recognition of the structures on which her creating is based. As in the title of the exhibition organized by Giuliano Papalini and Nunzia Palma for their space in Milan and the accompanying publication, these elements are Rhythm | Sign | Light. Simple elements, always at the base of the great art of the past, return to be the undisputed protagonists of Antonella Zazzera's harmonic progress and method. These elements provide an evident centrality of light which is aimed at defining space and form. Rhythm and sign determine soft and supple movements, traceable to natural forms, on a human scale, made of points, lines and surfaces, enriched by obstinate rhythms, infinite signs and invincible glows.