

## **Antonella Zazzera**

*by Lisa Wade, 2005*

Antonella Zazzera is an artist in constant evolution, in constant flux – a direct reflection of the harmony of life cycles apparent in nature. She could be called equally an archaeologist as an artist, tapping back into the strata of her former pictorial style, extracting fragments, and transforming them into her current body of work.

Her work is based in and takes its form from the natural world, specifically its essential elements: water, air, fire, and earth. "From the earth comes light, and shape is born from that light", describes the artist; a comment well suited to Antonella, who has come from painting and photography, fundamentally the study of light, into sculpture, the study of form. I asked her if her entry to sculpture was a necessary and natural evolution from two to three dimensions. "I don't feel that there is a separation between the media" she responded "each means of creation is equally valid and served its purpose during the creative process". There is a common link between all the bodies of work, evident in retrospect: her early paintings, which function, in essence, as bas reliefs; fragments, fossil if you will, of those bas reliefs; photographs, made to capture the impression and light effect of these fragments on copper; sculpture, created in order to capture the shifting solar light. Archeologically, the artworks flow one into the other in their history of strata; however, the literal common thread joining all the pieces is just that, the draw, refracted energy line evident in paint, in plaster, in photo, and, most distinctly, in the copper wire of her latest compositions. "I have always searched for a space in which I can essentially fill," she continues "as a means of making concrete ideas become flesh; man in harmony taking on his body".

For Antonella, there is a direct relationship between energy, light, movement, and creation. Zazzera explains her artistic expression in a rather alchemical manner, "The artist, as a body, and therefore, condensed energy; takes light from the vibrations of the materials and by physically working them into being, they become the Artwork. The artwork is then the artist, who, emanating herself into the material, creates an indivisible weave between herself and the artwork; a magnetic bond of the density of energy". Because of this dynamic, Antonella strongly believes that each of her works is unique, lyrical, and irreplicable.

Antonella Zazzera, one of the many young artists working in Umbria whom LP Art will be featuring, began her exploration in art at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Perugia.

Her work first took the form of extreme introspection and observation of the movement of the human figure. During figure drawing classes, the professors encouraged her to capture the energy and movement of the bodies in motion; resulting in a two-dimension study of light, form, and the trajectories created by the figure. Influenced by, but not directly citing Futurism, she transformed energy into refractions with gesso and tar on gauze, which she calls, *Madri-Matrici*, or mother-matrixes, evidencing externally the inner harmony of a being's consciousness. The delicate manufacture of the support lent itself well to excavating from the painting itself during its conception; for example, creating light areas by chipping off a dark layer from the surface.

The remnants from the *Madri-Matrici*, the pieces chipped away to reveal different colors and textures, became another complete series called *Frammenti*, or fragments. They are testaments of physical memory, almost like plaster casts taken from the body, to the presence of the energy exchange between the artist and the material of its creation.

It is this energy, this force that gave birth to Zazzera's next exploration. Taking imprints from these fragments into *vetronite*, soft copper sheets with glass sandwiched in-between, with the intention of capturing the varied energy of solar light at varying times of day; Antonella noticed that photographs taken of these imprints in different kinds of light revealed prisms of color that the naked eye could not see and only film could capture. She then created sculptural forms

for the sole purpose of capturing light, and therefore, the energy it created in film with the camera. The resulting photographs reference a familiarity with the decisive chiaroscuro of Caravaggio, who, in fact, was a strong influence on Zazzera. But they also have the appearance of early 18<sup>th</sup> century exploratory images from a microscope; familiar matter, such as skin, hair and sinews rendered unfamiliar under harsh light in the quest to understand the inner workings of human life. It is a fitting, perhaps subconscious, coincidence that the artists' representations of the inner harmonies and inner energies reflect the physical inner make-up of man. These photographs then, for the artist, become the Segnotraccia, or the trace of a mark, specifically that which was incised and imprinted upon the vetronite, characterizing the physical evidence of the sculptor's hand to these pieces, which she calls Armonici, or harmonies.

The study of these harmonies of the energy transferred from light through metal led Antonella to her current body of work, that of the trama, or the weft. These works are created on a large homemade loom that takes up most of her living room; a wood-panel with nails supports on which Antonella winds and weaves together different colorations and thicknesses of copper wire. For Antonella, every act of weaving is magical, who works in certain blocks of hours, like Morandi, in order to take inference from and to achieve the correct effects from the optimal hours of sunlight. "Form is birthed from light," the artist noted earlier, "and weaving these materials into their life essence is the greatest expression of the artist". Nothing that her loom resembled a musical instrument, Zazzera informed me that the harmonies involved are also auditory. "Listen to the wire on the loom", as she strummed the sculpture, "listen to the vibrations". "Would you call these works compositions, or symphonies, as did Kandinsky, classifying visual art in musical terms?" "I do consider them symphonies", she replied, "each with their own unique harmonies set off by the play of light on their changing forms. I have been thinking about the next form my works may take, and I have been thinking specifically about vibrations and the creation of instruments".

"One thing comes from another, from the parents come the offspring", says Zazzera. When asked if she was fed or burdened by the vast history of Italian art, she denied either. "I am in the continuation of the tradition of Italian art: the study of light, line, color, space, and volume. I have historical and non-historical ties to art. What is fundamental is the interconnectedness between artwork and artist; the act of creation as the moment of direct contact between thought and action".

Antonella Zazzera lives and works in Todi. Works in permanent collections in the region are: the Albornoz Palace Hotel, Spoleto; the Arte Hotel, Perugia; and the Museo della Transtoria, Faleria, Viterbo.