

Fiat lux

by Massimo Mattioli, 2008

Battles. Lines of escape traced by flags, or lances. Static revolutions geared upward, or broken on the ground, in a rhythmic sequence. If we mentally leaf through the photographic album that marks Antonella Zazzera's creative path, this rhetorical exercise inevitably - and perhaps viciously - positions Zazzera in the line of art history's path. And the first thoughts go to battle scenes, to Paolo Uccello's Battle of San Romano, with the furious crowd of horses, armor and lances. Or the grand lyrical scene, Albrecht Altdorfer's Battle of Issus, with the tangled lines, halberds, and banners. Battles. You stop to reflect, and you realize the exercise is not so vicious. You realize that all that path is a continuous battle, a struggle to penetrate the mysteries of matter and nature. It is fight to be able to give evidence to a rich and incessant internal elaboration. A battle that from the beginning expresses itself with a sign that is never narrative, but immediately synthetic, dynamic, and, if anything, evocative, sometimes almost violent. From the Academy's benches: "I remember the first lessons in painting and the work with the model, observing that body in movement I started to portray the dynamics, the vibrations...". A battle that wants to liberate the pure and absolute values of art, handed down by all the great masters of ancient, modern and contemporary art, from the contaminations and conceptualisms that continue to flank them and set them aside. Zazzera wants the line to be a continuation and ideally travel through the whole history, marked by great personalities and movements that have left their mark without abandoning it. From Caravaggio, with the discovery of light as creative energy, to Divisionism, where color implodes in light, to Futurism, where light mutates into energy, up to the Informal, with the entrance of man and his organic presence in these advanced dynamics.

Sign. From the very beginning, Zazzera's research is punctuated by a careful theoretical patrimony. Notebooks and thick sheets of notes complete with unrestrained and arduous handwriting indeed later become one of Zazzera works. The notes are repeatedly reviewed and corrected, annotated and remedied. The cited creative path - in its general lines - emerges in a clear outline. This expository piece of evidence indicates that the artist's approach was clear from the beginning. Today it is easily traceable in the light of Zazzera's first artistic developments (which were pregnant from the beginning) to note the conception of the term the "Segnotraccia". Zazzera entrusts and gives much meaning to this term, which is extremely significant to her work. It is the "Maximum expression of the individual artist, where the fusion of the being with the artistic material takes place", Zazzera explained. Marker + track: the early prophecy of an already announced path, with the "mark" to summarize the initial graphic exercises, then transported in the pictorial tests, and the "track" to anticipate plastic developments, or in any case, the involvement with the material. Two means, two distinct but complementary modalities. Neologism emphasizes that these two modalities must interact in a more advanced and complex attitude. Which finds a first timid application already in the "Rilievi", blocks of wood at first impact of minimal root, on which however overlap several layers of plaster. Zazzera then pierced these Reliefs with her marked and almost frantic signs, in some areas laying bare the underlying layers, marking the "discovery" with chromatic notations, always on black and white. A paradigm of a constant tension in knowing the hidden, in investigating the possible, pushing - to quote Wilhelm Worringer - beyond «the visible surface of things».

Trace. But it is in the "Madri Matrici" that the artist's panorama is outlined in its complex articulations. If the outcomes of the mark had been predominantly graphic, the centrality that now assumes the track introduces new temperaments, in a plastic dimension. But, above all, the role of man, of the artist, becomes central. In Antonella Zazzera's ethical vision, which is virtuously idealistic, she identifies totally with the work of art. She pauses to consider the eminently "artistic artifact", the ultimate goal of the artist, the object of her attentions and also the reason for her doubts, immune from

social or conceptual influences. Man becomes the object and subject of these fascinating works, true keys of the artist's creative experience. The means are gauze, on which are spread several layers of tar and plaster, which are linked variously between them and with the base, substantiating another process often recurrent in the words of Zazzera, that of sedimentation. That assumes, in addition to a "physical" reading, or welding of the different components, a metaphorical reading. The metaphorical reading is a projection of human experience, a sedimentation of experiences and profound sensibilities. This composite surface the artist scars with determined grooves, according to a grid of intersected signs, traces complex patterns related to the body, to the projection of herself in her action, recalling Futurist lines of force. Man becomes the subject of the work, whose construction takes on almost theatrical contours of a liberating ritual or a happening. The man now dictates the waiting time between one layer and another, with the matter varying in the interpenetration between the different layers and therefore also in the subsequent chromatisms. The surface is then literally hit and beaten. The hardest layers fracture, decreeing some areas which will retain their mysterious integrity. In others, however, the demiurge will have penetrated the most profound sedimented experiences, which now will propose their silent narration.

Light. The research line is traced, but the artist's cognitive anxiety does not subside. Man is earthly and by definition imperfect. The path to superior knowledge passes through his total identification with nature, on the path to the definition of the "harmonic man". Zazzera defines the "harmonic man" as the perfect inhabitant of the universe. The instrument of an extreme analysis is a primigenial form in nature. It is a paradigm of an inner search of the essence of the human being, that now becomes the photographic objective. Nature functions and man belongs, as well the intrinsic qualities of matter. In the ever deeper investigation that exposes the substance, the free personality, the experience, reaching the absolute, the light breaks in. It is the combined color-line-light that one relies on in the search for a Higher Order. The medium now becomes Vetronite (fiberglass), a material composed of copper and glass powder. On this medium, the artist's creative gesture is freed. She makes grooves, scratches, and incisions that are imperceptible to the naked eye. These are the new track markers, which, are struck by light and captured by photographic film, making mysterious and inorganic forms that are nonetheless highly symbolic and full of cosmic energies. Light is the guardian of the mystery that will animate the copper wire sculptures. Light is the natural evolution of photographic work, almost a formal compendium of previous results. "To better understand Zazzera's sculpture - wrote Mauro Salvi - we go backward in art history and ask why Fidia reproduced a luminous vibration in the drapery of the sculptures of Parthenon at the end of the fifth century B.C.? Why have Fidia, Cavallini, Giovanni Bellini, Bernini, Medardo Rosso, Segantini, Boccioni, Dorazio and Zazzera given value to the luminous vibration, marking it with a trace that exalts it? The line, which is the universal expression of a ray of light, infinitely multiplies in Zazzera's sculptures. It loses its geometrical identity and becomes light itself, leading us to observe its chromatic variations, in the tonal range of light and dark maximums. It unfolds and thickens, a constantly changing orientation that generates space. The space is filled with its essence and could continue in its infinity if there was not the limit of human possibility". The lines of force that run through the macro-photographs are presented in the sculptures in their plastic and formal evidence; they are documents of cosmic harmony that precede sociality. The light infuses life.