

The existential art of Paola Ricci

Paola Ricci's latest works (*intra-vedere l'ombra*) are prevalently three-dimensional and are the natural consequence to her paintings and graphics carried out in the 1990s (*formazione*). More specifically - in order to fulfil our requirement to produce classifications - the delicate but intricate compositions in wire can be classified as plastic art. But speaking simply in terms of sculpture is inaccurate and lacking therefore a reflection on the production of this young artist from The Veneto is necessary as introduction to the implications and meaning that this term covers today.

Classical sculpture is characterised by a previously planned shape or model and defined according to logical principles; it is a self-referential sculpture in which the meaning is already given and expects a steady constant spectator for itself. As Rosalind Krauss underlines in "Passages in Modern Sculpture" contemporary sculpture puts traditional conventions in difficulty, becoming an open object that is given a meaning composed by the spectator.

The American art critic also points out the importance of "happening" and "performance" the new "theatricality" characteristic of the 1960s. Apart from over detailed analysis, it is sufficient in this ambient to pay increasing attention to the importance of a plastic art that is the result of the sculptor's experience which at the same time stimulates an experience of a non-rational and pre-logical character in the spectator.

An art coming from experience and returning through it is what makes up Paola Ricci's work. Her plastic art, born from the entangled sketches on paper, projects beyond the self-referential object and spreads its roots in an involving and total existential being in which the objectivity of the work only recomposes by individually travelling through the emotion of an experience or sensation. The open form of the work also strikes on the techniques born from interior rhythms. Similarly the materials used like for example, soft wires in silver and zinc, have no deceptive fancy (for example: marble to the human skin) but are dictated by determined situations becoming reflections of experience. The artist herself speaks of "percorsi interiori" (interior journeys), of individual codes that according to different fruition are able to find matching materials physically present in our surrounding ambient in different code sketches. The exhibition at the Brolo museum of Mogliano Veneto was prepared in view of this, different perceptible works follow each other like a metaphor of the human condition belonging to the artist's working cycle that prolongs time and continues its development. The works face the "existential knots of daily life" purposely leaving an open - and ambiguous - merely emotional interpretation or rather actual sketches of rhythms that twist amongst themselves in continuing

flows. The reading of Paola Ricci's work in this case is neither univocal nor deceptive but waves between subjective emotion and meaning open to further associative reactions. The specific fluctuates in general, the statute of the work not at all self-referential, weighed by emotive starting points becomes the stimulus for a new metaphor. Twists and waves even seem to send back a difficult maze-like human strut, but the moment it becomes a common walk it shows the spectator not a closing but a way out instead. Notwithstanding the extreme simplicity that characterises Paola Ricci's works, her production is not without a thread of subtle opening poetry opening the knots of daily life to unpublished interpretations.

Letizia Ragaglia© October 2003