

Arte e Critica

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At the root of vision. Alessandro Roma

curated by Francesca Pagliuca

ALESSANDRO ROMA TELLS THE INTRODUCTION OF SCULPTURAL LANGUAGE INTO HIS RESEARCH AND REASONS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCULPTURE AND PAINTING. A ROOTING AND BLOSSOMING OF NEW FORMS, TO CREATE SPACES IN WHICH YOU CAN LOSE YOURSELF.

Francesca Pagliuca: For most of the artists who express themselves through the medium of painting, the surface is a hard material to move, it's a bit like building a magnificent garden and deciding to stay there. You have chosen to go further, to explore unspoiled nature; the transition to sculpture was very natural: the making, the concreteness of the artistic act, fluidly moved the pictorial surface that took on new forms ...

Alessandro Roma: I presented the first sculptures in 2011 at the Mart in Rovereto: three large forms approached the pictorial works on paper. The painting of that period was characterized by clipping, in the sense that I painted landscapes on multiple papers, then I cut them out and reassembled them, trying to give life to a single and new image. These passages allowed me to completely detach myself from the initial subjects and enter the new forms that were created by cutting and combining the fragments. This process influenced my willingness to measure myself with sculpture. After all, the collage itself is an act that goes beyond two-dimensionality. The first sculptural results were fragments of the pictorial images. My paintings had a very strong tactile characteristic. The eye was forced to cross surfaces of different materials and techniques, so this skin of the painting, at a certain point, began to emerge, to push towards a three-dimensional form.

And today I can say that my ceramic works are an extension of painting, indeed a complement. When I model sculpture with clay, I am not that far from when I paint. Some movements are close as well as the formal questions of balance, openness, points of view. For this reason it has become a single work and their proximity is as if it made the exhibition space a single pictorial place.

Using your garden metaphor, I would try to say that at first I conceived the landscape as a garden. Openings, shapes, colors were within a well-calibrated fence, now I have tried to tear down that fence to be able to immerse myself even more in the landscape and experience it as a crossing. Sculpture has certainly helped me to give life to this journey within the work.



Alessandro Roma

My head inside the Nature,  
2019  
glazed ceramic,  
50cmx35cmx35cm

Photo Alexander Christie  
Courtesy the artist and Yamamoto Keiko Rochaix, London

FP: «Expressive freedoms belong to those who take them. When there is no space, another can be invented. The method for inventing it is already almost the new space ". 1 (Giulio Turcato)  
Your way of conceiving painting, more than an "image", has always been a "vision" or a set of perceptions. We live through vision, it is primarily the gaze that guides us in the world, that allows us to cross it. In your works you can observe fragments of landscapes, elements from the world of nature, they are timeless spaces, familiar but not identifiable; Is there a component of partial loss in the visions you reconstruct?

AR: If we mean loss we mean that state in which at a certain point that sense of direction given by knowledge is lost, maybe yes. That fragmentation that I have been carrying out for some time and then trying to recompose, as if to make it disappear, is the process that leads me to approach a state of bewilderment, of total abandonment to vision. My only way to get close to something unknown. Painting is approaching this loss, both for those who implement it and for those who see it. I would like anyone who is faced with my work to be stimulated to exercise the power of vision by entering into the image or sculpture form.

FP: Moving on the border between what appears recognizable to us and what escapes instead activates in the observer perception, memory, experience, memory, imagination; should art lead us to unknown places?

AR: Life, if moved on the border you mentioned, leads us to unknown places. Art is one of these places. A space where you can learn to get lost in order to find yourself in new clothes.

FP: An authentic art must push to some extent to get lost in order to find oneself, in new guises, in new forms. A note that unites your production is that of capturing steps in the making and this is perhaps perceived more clearly in the sculptures, where the concreteness of ceramics restores an indeterminacy. Can the imaginative power of the observer you find be enhanced by this oxymoron?

AR: I don't know. Gazing at the landscape gives us the feeling of being able to grasp a static fragment of Nature. But this is not the case, because everything continues to proceed along its own course, within the landscape, as well as within us. The ceramic sculptures try to freeze a moment of this experience of time, but never locking themselves up in a pre-established form: in these works there is no anxiety to understand, to define, they are only the reflection of a feeling

that urgently needs to exist. . In fact, these are forms open to possibility, animated by movement, which give, in the observer, the feeling of being able to make another protuberance blossom, modify their balance on the base or change chromatism. Here, perhaps, lies their imaginative power.



Alessandro Roma

*En même temps, elle sentit la matière du ciel,*

2019, veduta della mostra, 2019, Fondation Thalie, Bruxelles

Courtesy the artist and Fondation Thalie, Bruxelles

FP: Your works are born by sedimentation, according to a development process that has a similarity with the organic world.

AR: I could try to describe how a work begins, develops and when I think it ends, whether it is a painting, a sculpture, a book or a drawing, but this is just a small detail of the whole process. For some time now, what I have been trying to do is to have always fertile ground on which to plant thoughts, visions and ideas, while cultivating doubts and attempts to give them shape. I have never been able to work on a sculpture or a painting with a subject in mind. The material I use has its own fundamental space for action, which inexorably tries to adapt to a vision made up of thoughts and moods that flow in an incessant flow with an irregular rhythm. Through doing, the hands mediate between the force of matter and the movement of thought.

What you call settling is the time the work takes to become familiar to me. At that point I begin to glimpse what form the work has taken and how I can accentuate its identity.

FP: «Each painting has an abstract light. Light is never realistic. True painting is always abstract and has its own light, its own dream atmosphere. Otherwise it is a false atmosphere, it is not art », in an interview in 1954 Felice Casorati described the unreal light that characterizes his paintings in this way .2

The atmosphere that you seem to convey in your works is that of a floating world, could this connotation be an element of the familiarity you mention above?

AR: The familiarity I mentioned is a punctual passage in my work. At a certain point it is as if I struggle to recognize its shape because I often tend to lose it. I get lost in the process of work, risking having to abandon or destroy it. It is inevitable for me to take this risk, because only in this way can I discover what I had in mind in a blurred way. The atmosphere Casorati talks about is most likely linked to the concept of metaphysical painting that was born in those years. I don't feel close to that atmosphere, although there has always been an intention on my part to go beyond realism. Instead, I try to create spaces in which to get lost, abandoning oneself. It makes no sense for me to amaze those who look at my work, I would like to gently wrap it.

FP: Radice is a ceramic sculpture created in 2020. For a plant, for a tree, the roots are generally an underground apparatus, hidden but at the same time central to life. In your sculpture the roots appear as a unique magma with the earth, as a triumph of matter, a matter that is normally hidden. Could sculptures in general be a bit of the manifestation of the roots of pictorial production?

AR: Sculpture has an inseparable relationship with painting, one is the root of the other, they could not exist separately. Both allow the birth of new forms, take root and make new buds appear that give life to new works.



Alessandro Roma

*Vertigo. Walking on the edge of the tone*, 2018,  
exhibition view

MIC Museo della Ceramica, Faenza.

Courtesy l'artista / MIC Museo della Ceramica

#### Note

1. Flaminio Gualdoni (edited by), Giulio Turcato, Silvana Editoriale, Library of Contemporary Art, Cinisello Balsamo 2002, page 10.

2. The quote is taken from an interview with Felice Casorati edited by Giovanni Cavicchioli, in Casorati alla Saletta, exhibition catalog (Modena, Saletta degli Amici dell'Arte, 9 - 19 January 1954), Ed. Bass and Nipoti, Modena 1954. See also Felice Casorati, Writings, interviews, letters, E. Pontiggia (edited by), Abscondita, Carte d'artisti n.52, Milan 2004, page 99.

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The original text in Italian.

The English translation of the text is entirely executed using Google Translate.

