

## In the absence of the Word

Lucia Nazzaro shows expressive forms of rare intensity: the emotional dynamism of her works rises from the depths of her consciousness reaching paroxysm. The elements of her powerful vitality are visible god-like heroes led by a train of mysteries to loosen ghosts and untie knots. We are inevitably drawn to face her humanity: she experiments both with calm peace and with internal war. She lives over and over again a sort of ontological rapture. Feeling is shown in its transcendental value. She absorbs forms, methods, dogmas, and such pliability contributes to make of them a unifying strength, a moral support, an antidote against the preaching of acceptance and resignation. Approaching her work again, I can see all the influences of the conscious and the unconscious, the fight of instinctual and spiritual forces striving to reach harmony; a principle of immortality, an escape, a shelter from the tortures of a reality too often bitter and mean.

The elements heaped in the unconscious come to the surface, at times lay their burden, taking the shape of a crisis of possession, and the artist, far from escape, is tainted and soaked by it.

So the work in its whole and the general idea are presented as if they were the origin of a personal attitude to aesthetics related to a certain view of life.

Whether God is perceived in the obscure trance of a divided consciousness, that of the possessed, or in the sublime ecstasy of a person enriched by faith, it is nonetheless true that the process lies on the same nervous system, bound to the transience of matter and to the infinite possibilities of human nature to embody the visible.

Her doing is a mirror of her being a woman and an artist. She distances herself from a traditional idea of art in favour of a greater freedom of expression. In so doing she celebrates the creative imagination which is typical of a woman, but this is done through an instinctive reaction.

She has recently put up a stage set containing psychological states: in the first place feelings of pain. The result is a clash inside a grouping of symbolic objects. Pieces of gauze and crumpled cloth are sculptural forms. But the spectator is compelled to watch passively, stuck in the inability to act.

To describe the materials exploited, the technical treatment of such elements, the way of combining them, of enhancing them within the work, creates a universe of metamorphoses where men meet beasts: the latter are sooner or later changed into men, as if a human shape may contain others of a different nature.

I'm referring to rats, impressive rats.

We know that the sight of this ravenous beast makes man shudder. Rats are repellent forms filling our imagination, but in Lucia's work they stand trial. They must pit themselves against their symbolic meanings, against the space of non-colour, against its echoes.

I feel bound to remind that the rat has a significant role in popular belief. It is considered a beast symbolizing the soul, as it runs away unseen like man's vital spirit when he dies. Ancient zoology reports its power to frighten elephants. Being shunning animals which haunt dark places, rats were given demonic and prophetic qualities.

What really matters is to show, to make visible their not belonging to reality, in order to allow no possible escape. The shapes of imagination are projected and then turned into objects reproducing the collective imagination. We are surrounded by rats, and if they embody our symbols they nearly become our own heroes, leading the artist in her existential journey. Rats everywhere, rats that grow foggy, fade and then suddenly reappear. Rats elevated to the dignity of a work of art.

In Lucia Nazzaro's Last Act a rat is crucified. The unorthodox treatment of the subject is astonishing, because in the artist's works such sturdy marks occupy an outstanding place, as when dreams lose their charm and the past is sought after, hollowed out to find the most fascinating pages later to become the true sources of solace.

Fetishes are transformed not to "act" them but to load them with meaning.

In short, the aim is not that of creating a blasphemous work but rather of unveiling the hypocrisy of those who mind the appearance more than the essence of things.

But to grasp the meaning of the work one must precisely go beyond appearance to reach the contents: a hopeless undertaking for a well defined share of Catholics that the artist well knows. For Lucia Nazzaro the cross is the crack point of a barrier, what allows the spirit to touch matter, overcoming stereotypes through a rare complexity.

Such a way of proceeding cannot be conceived but in a many-sided perspective rejecting a strict definition and idea of art.

Lucia ascribes all this - with clear awareness of her freedom to create – to her imagination, opening a huge gap with what we see everyday in the world of figurative arts.

The artist will follow a line of interpretation where all filters are absent, and then she will imagine another one.

Actually, the perception of a symbol is mainly subjective, not only because it changes from one subject to the other, but also because it comes from the individual self in its whole, and this also is the object of a marked syncretism.

These symbols in the end will mean, will explain the spontaneous act of drawing, each having a special quality of its own.

Lucia is the daughter of silence...

*"Words may be the only thing there is  
In the huge emptiness of centuries  
Scratching our souls with their remembrances" (Alejandra Pizarnik)*

After all, Lucia Nazzaro's stage transference expresses the difficulty to mark the borders between what is properly art and what art can inspire.

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