

# maria cristina carlini

## **Beyond and within tradition. Cristina Carlini's latest sculpture**

“Sculpture is part of the place where it is, and is made of the work and the space that contains it, so as not to be a foreign body, but part of life that surrounds it.” These are recent words of Cristina Carlini, accurate and essential, that express effective synthesis the motivations, the meaning, the objectives of her sculptural activity, which is topical in the sense that it adheres to the current cultural climate, not only in its aesthetic and artistic implications, with a clean deviation from the traditional connotations of sculpture, from its monumental and classic attributes, that confined it to an objectuality made up of defined spatial encumbrance, weight and matter in keeping with the memorial and celebrative purposes that especially motivated it giving it a functional legitimacy.

But meanwhile it is neither iconoclast from an avant-gardist point of view nor self-referential, nor does it prejudicially deny its training, manual and statutorily technical – which have been peculiar to it for centuries and millennia – as well as the sculptural activity, which were frequented by the artist since her initial trials in ceramics, which is moreover still practiced – and implied – in the planning of her latest works.

The friction with the contemporaneity, including with regard to sensitivity, does not occur in Carlini on a stylistic and formal level, but follows a non-absolute conception of space, in the etymological sense of abstraction from the context, and is instead relational, implying interaction - including psychologically - with the environment, precisely with “the life” sculpture “surrounds”.

Where the emphasis is not on the sculpture, as – on the contrary - in the great and prophetic precedent of Boccioni's “interpenetration of planes” and in the subsequent, and equally open, considerations made by Martini on the overcoming of the limit of “three dimensions, where death hides” to draw the “fourth dimension”, its natural condition, as for the earth, a solid like sculpture, “which finds its motion, that is his life, in atmosphere [that] turns around it.”

It is with such a choice of an extension which is not only physical, pre-date, measured and, ultimately, objectual that Carlini includes her works of these last months in the historic centres of Paris and Madrid, in the core of today's most advanced discussion on sculpture, half century now after the spreading and assertion of the crisis of the traditional linguistic statutes, historical realities, not absolute and eternal values, already damaged between 19th and the 20th centuries by Medardo Rosso and Rodin, and then, between the 40s and

the 50s of the last century, undermined in the roots by the autre positions of non-representational art.

From which, even in Western Europe and the Far East, in connection with what happened across the Atlantic, originated the radical reconsideration of the conventional - precisely as historical - autonomy and "specificity" of sculpture, as well as of painting.

This crisis nourishes, it does not weaken Carlini's activity, which recognizes the indefinability and elusiveness, on a conceptual plane, of sculpture, plunging its structures into a space-time that is not unnaturally isolated and immobile, but "part of life", just like sculpture itself. Until succeeding in reviving that "monumentality" that has become, with the statue, synonymous with the impossibilities of sculpture, which Carlini destroys without throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

***Luciano Caramel***