

maria cristina carlini

An organically plastic vitality in Maria Cristina Carlini's works

Maria Cristina Carlini favours two materials: clay and iron, which are both so varied in their characteristics. Clay – elastic, pliable and wieldy – is a material that served for centuries in the sculptural process as a transitional substance in the intermediate stage, like a bridge on the path to the great works of sculpture, created from the durable materials. Iron is also a substance that served for a long time – a servant, used only for the ancillary purposes – for the invisible yet so desperately needed reinforcements of the sculptural armatures. Clay and iron differ, but also have a lot in common (e.g. their so warm earthy ochre colour). Those qualities are perfectly felt and appreciated by the artist, who entitled one of their several solo exhibitions “The colour of the earths” (“Il colore delle terre”, 1990, Municipal Museum of Cerro, Laveno Mombello, Varese). The variety of earth colours is expressed by Maria Cristina Carlini in the use of heterogeneous shapes, as in her solo exhibition “Earths” (“Terre”, 2006, Rome). Both clay and iron, as extremely contemporary substances, are used in sculpture, inspiring a feeling of plastic, colourful life superimposed to contemporary sterile architecture which – through the achieved contrast – focuses the attention on itself, in the cities rich with bygone styles.

The capital of Lombardy has always been - and still is - famous for its creators. Especially nowadays, this contemporary megalopolis is concerned by works of art and monumental sculptures, when the busy thoughts are directed towards the near future - EXPO 2015. The hands of sculptress Maria Cristina Carlini bustle and in so doing succeed in taming even huge geometrical shapes, which, while maintaining their monumentality, yet acquire something similar to organically plastic vitality. Her open and sometimes especially concealed and barely sketched biomorphism of the shape is conditioned by volitional and at the same time feminine fostering, through which Maria Cristina Carlini's hands nourish the monumental form.

Cristina Carlini replaces the ivory tower of a hundred years ago iron towers, staircases (“La città che sale”, Nuova Fiera di Milano / Rho, 2008) and abstracted shapes, from a distance reminiscent of the building fragments or similarities of natural forms. For a while, the uncovered, undisguised colour of clay or iron – with its rusty patina – seemed shameful, indecent and as open as a naked body to the spectator's eye. Today, the colour of iron rust is especially cosy in a multitude of settings: in the dripping along the outside surface of smooth architecture, in city's surroundings, in the greenery of parks. This kind of sculpture does not seem so rough thanks to the warm and especially expressive colouring and dishevelled, painterly surface textures. For the international admirer, it's a material that reminds Earth Art, arte povera, also associating with the sculptors Pablo Gargallo, Julio González, Russian constructivists and other pioneers of modern art. The artist has

experienced a long creative period – after starting with strictly disciplined ceramic shapes, until attaining – quite a long time ago – her artistic freedom. Both clay and iron are her favoured plastic materials. Her solo exhibitions of these last years and monumental sculptures remind us that in the palette of the earth colours, Maria Cristina Carlini's colour is both recognized and anticipated on the international level.

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