

The electric non-being

Costis Triandaphyllou continues his adventure with simulacrum, today it leads to the atmospheric electric universe and the referential, allusive and poetical consequences which such an intrusion implies.



It is obviously an intrusion to enter the domain of lightning and thunder. Costis identifies with Prometheus, he appropriates fire and shapes it according to his wishes. The results are fascinating. Lightning defines itself as an electrical output in the atmosphere. It can be distinguished by the quality of its brightness. It can be sinuous, arborescent or even form a system of halos as heat waves do. Lightning, according to Costis, is in every way synthetic. It is mental because it belongs to probabilities of the elaboration of an electronic programme, its random emergence is akin to the same probability in perception that we are able to acknowledge as on this copper sheet on which the light of the electronic output is engraved.

The probability of the image is conceived by us as a demonstration of non-being - as opposed to being. According to Hegel's definition, non-being is the intermediate position between being and nothingness which relieves the hypertrophy of the "self" and creates a random openness to fanciful poetry, to rational speech.



L. Costis' fantasy is always recuperated under the sign of $3=1$. It is no longer simulacrum of faces that are challenged, but electric alternances. Costis' recent work called $3=1$ stages linear elements forming with tremors a visual and illuminating trinity. Fantasy, is also an explosive

game, a game with thunder, a game with all the spectacular elements in an ethereal fire. I think that Costis' behaviour is a profession of great modesty regarding the problem he is confronting. And in some way, this modesty identifies with a certain exorcism. The sky's anger doesn't start in vain and one doesn't risk playing with lightning for no reason. And I don't think that Costis - primary technology helped him tame lightning - draws a vain glory of it. I have never felt so strongly such respect toward manipulated energy containing such a fundamental discourse. Costis knows very well that he can overtake this energy from the sky and the cosmos to assimilate and integrate it in a poetical discourse. He also knows that he isn't the owner, he is only the inspired «renter» who acknowledges this invisible cosmic and nevertheless omnipresent energy that surrounds us. Being aware that energy is the basis of every expression of language and most of all the basis of all the criteria of definition, of sensitivity- acts autonomously.

This sensitivity which is ours, and the demonstration of our identity is only a minute part in cosmic energy. Once again it is lent to us, we don't own it. So we are responsible for that loan and it is the quality of responsibility in our awareness that Costis wants to underline permanently with the expression of his electrical language. I think there is in this attitude a great love of humanity, and a great hope regarding the great alchemy of the world with its redemption and salvation. According to traditional alchemy lightning occurs at the term of the igneous way, the determining element in the planetary salvation and the philosophers' stone, the demonstration announcing the

catalysis by fire changing lead into gold and producing the world's final salvation. We are no doubt too rational as we only notice in this electric approach the search of a poetical and probably illusory Grail. But this kind of illusion is particularly necessary for us, it helps us live, without giving us false illusions of being better. All of Costis' exhibition appears as a great metaphor of energy. A metaphor with enough symbolical references for it to open on to a moral universe. A moral metaphor is a parable.



Costis' imagination is a double parable in the physical sense of the term : the brightness of lightning itself. And in a moral sense all these works resemble fables, and like all fabulous parables, they point to the morality of the being. This concept of being is not imposed on us in the name of good and bad manicheism, on the contrary it is left loose, as the process of a thought. This is so true that this recall to essential consciousness is a second degree recall which actually appears only with the photos of Costis' sculptures : these sculptures - which are concave mirrors on stems - are responsible for the electrical output, and what they reveal to a bare eye is lightning with linear winding accompanied by

the sound of thunder but nothing more. The photo of the lightning-event releases a dialectic component of this essential phenomenon : the reverberation of the electric light, a sky-blue reverberation which is the homothetic projection of the fleeting trace of the created lightning. Dualism, dear to the nature of the Greek sculptor, is recognised at the same time as the confession of a truth which belongs more to existence than to essence itself. Being can only be conceived in relation to non-being.

Pierre Restany, 1992