



“The realm of Mothers” (1989)

Sergio Bernardi

Numerous examples of Titonel's painting are reminiscent of the lines and shapes of the ritual figures of ancient Egypt, in addition to which they also reveal a quest of the profound directives, at another level, whence the human figure derives. A quest of archetypal geometry, of the geometry of light in the plane of imagery: that imagery that precedes space-time.

These are indeterminate figures that stand forth in a dimension that is not their usual context. To approach Titonel's dimension, you have to imagine a vibrating whole in which the bodies and the images of space-time are surpassed, and what is left is the principles from which they descend. Titonel sets himself apart from conventional discourse, revealing the essential basis of his personality, which is meditative. His meditation is indirectly reminiscent of many of the directives of Chinese Taoist drawing, but in particular of the Japanese variant found in Zen. Titonel's art, especially in its most recent manifestations, reminds me of the Koan drawings of Zen. There is unquestionably the intention to direct the surprised observer of these figures towards other possible 'states of consciousness'. He drives us towards a realization that the everyday mentality cannot grasp, so that it calls for a quantum leap, towards not the irrational, but the super-rational. These paintings are intended primarily as a stimulus to penetrate into the impenetrable, to move into immobility, to see in the dark, to hear in silence.

These shadows, these colours, these figures, these holes black and white cannot be explained away exhaustively, but have to be experienced as stimuli: an experience that goes beyond explanation and comment, an intuitive, internal experience. And that is how it comes about that these tables, these figures, compose an authentic, unusual and unaccustomed symphony, far rather than a grouping of separate images. A symphony in the interior that cannot come to expression in the exterior except through stimuli and signs. The attempt being made by this artist – and his purpose – is to place himself at a level somewhere above the plain, somewhere above the common roads that cross that plain.

Looking at Titonel's various works and looking at them again and again, you have the distinct feeling that he is taking us up on high to see an internal panorama whose centre is everywhere. Geometric lines, splashes of colour, human promontories, symbolic black and white holes that remind us of doorways leading and opening into other levels and other universes, where the human body is nothing more than a symbol visible from the various different relative angles. Symbols that can be terrifying or uncertain, ambiguous animal shapes, signs of wild beasts that dazzle and fascinate – and generate insoluble problems, heavens that are mutually contradictory and antithetic. What are they supposed to be? Elements that ask questions that have no answers, Gordian knots that bring about shipwrecks of the imagination. An imagination that has the capability of transforming into an even more proteiform multiple. We are in those very dimensions that come before space-time, whose symbolism, albeit intense and creative, is manifest in its multiple, contradictory aspects.

The only reality in this multiple spectacle is and will always be a firm, unsuppressible point; that point is conscience. A conscience that remains alert, refuses to be tied down and keeps on searching. Searching for what? Searching for the essence: it is the will to escape from a manyfaceted tempter that takes the strangest, most evanescent and contradictory of forms. A fantastic whole that tries to stop and fix the artist's attention by tying it down.

Titonel searches for the sources in what Goethe called “the realm of Mothers”, beyond formlessness. Which explains why we find geometric and harmonious aspects appearing in his works, aspects of totality rotating in silence, beyond contradictions, that reminds us of the best moments of the loftiest experiences of meditation. But all this, expressed in a way I would describe as new and particular, also reflects the language of a transcendence from the phenomenon. A labyrinth of images inside which Titonel moves and searches for the way out and the meaning. It is in this maze that Titonel walks and will continue walking. He has noticed that the secret lies in delving ever deeper into the experience of that sudden light that appears in his works, like a star that points and leads us to the authenticity lying beyond the exit from the labyrinth, telling us to reach it by following this substantial light and intensifying it.