

Tamara Ferioli.
New emotional geographies
by Fabio Carnaghi

For some time now, in effect for years, I have tinkered with the idea of articulating the space of life - bios - in a map.¹

Walter Benjamin

Omniscient nature regenerates and survives itself. Biological processes are elaborated in architecturally ineffable structures. The form of life is silent and inscrutable. Nothing remains of the human except the gaze that preserves impressions of the imaginary.

The most recent research by Tamara Ferioli emerges from a long immersion in nature which becomes a totalising and exclusive subject.

The title of the exhibition, *Vita*, comes from the homophony and the homography of the Icelandic verb - which means *to know* - and of the Italian term *Vita*. Linguistic overlap catches the dialogue between two closely related areas in the poetry of Ferioli that is expressed in this recent *corpus* of works, in the panic conception of natural palimpsests, built for matching syntaxes, inherent in zoomorphic and phytomorphic structures.

This epistemic meaning, in identifying the natural world as a repository of arcane and innate laws of conservation and transmission, assumes a central value in referring to a *nature sapiens* which reproduces and reiterates atavistic orographies generated by substrates or crystallisations of magmatic impulses. Cyclic and cosmic time is construction and abandonment, it is blowing and burst, it is stasis and flow, it is composition and decomposition. From the recent imaginary of Ferioli lies this variable that can lead to the analogy as well as to the anomaly, that is respectively to trace heaps of marine animals or plant eruptions. The semantic repertoire is thus linked to a temporal perspective manifested in a persistent iconographic dualism that ranges from conformations of ethereal constellations to chorus tumuli in clear reference to nebulas of aerial vitality and evocations of death. In this sense, it is emblematic *Self Sufficiency*, a pool besieged by germinating ramifications and inflorescences, in which this semantic dichotomy is expressed. The Icelandic spring water pool is a healthy remedy to dream of a mythical fountain of youth, but at the same time it is the most insidious perimeter of the void, a character reiterated by the Icelandic toponym *Grafarlaug*² (pool-tomb), from which the design is inspired.

Everything happens in the solitude and silence of the human, in an almost pre-Socratic physiological dimension, so that every principle resides in nature. Human traces are secondarisms, results, identified by infrastructure wrecks reconquered by natural proliferation. A habitat of mimicry, survival and regeneration comes into play, in which each taxonomic hierarchy is annulled: animal, vegetable, mineral are superfluous classifications and rediscussed in subversive relations and interactions of every plausible scientific comfort. White suspends basalt columns, plant germination, flowers, fish and crustaceans in the constant reminiscence of Icelandic, Atlantic and volcanic visions.

¹ Walter Benjamin, *Berlinese chronicle* in *Walter Benjamin. Opere Complete. V. Scritti 1932-1933*, Einaudi, Torino 2003

² *Grafarlaug*: also called Reykjadalslaug, is a source of thermal water. It is located in western Iceland near Budardalur. The swimming pool was built in 1956.

In this telluric universe, change and transfiguration show the irregular contours of a restless dynamism from both a content and a formal point of view.

Tamara Ferioli experiments with new approaches to her peculiar artistic praxis. The works, which use the drawing with the use of pencils, hair and applied paper, discover, almost in a practice of automatism, a further, ephemeral but vibrant route. The path is associated with the overlapping of levels that create passages of perception in recalling a new metaphysical perspective. The sign becomes a constructive medium of palimpsests and uses figurative forms which, from thickening and thinning, acquire iridescent and deliberately ambiguous readability. *The guardians of the precious things* it is an exemplary work on the theme of such space-visual assemblages that conceal their nature: apparently the universal recognises it as an indistinct heap of mineral origin, almost a stony ground, but the detail reveals it as a *roccaille* of crabs.

In this regard, the miniaturistic character of the juxtaposition technique of paper levels is interesting, which in the stroke and in the support seems almost to refer to the scientific design of nature that enriched the *Collection des Vélins*³ of the kings of France at the time of the journeys of exploration.

Metaphorically, Ferioli's work is attested on the same intent of recognition, of curiosity for a dreamlike *site-seeing* which suggests the strong link with the Icelandic places that have long been declared. The series of drawings presented for *Life* are veiled in a geographical atmosphere which translates into emotional topography. It is as though Ferioli had marked symbolic trajectories on a visionary *Carte de Tendre*⁴, to the point of making a real cognitive exploration that investigates a sensitive territory. It is at this point that an itinerary *in folio* gives rise to a mapping practice that draws on the imaginary, true *unknown land*. The result is a cartography imbued with an archive of emotional images to create an atlas whose figure is represented by *emotion* (from Latin *emovere*), an attractive push towards movement and therefore a pretext for the journey. And here is a topofiline booklet that transposes the titles of the works into imaginary toponyms: from *Shelter Island* you get to *Hollow* where the cavity of a shell becomes the dwelling place of shoots, passing through the mephitic *Hot Blood* and sighting *Anything Peak* then converging in the presence of *Volcano's Lullaby*.

Cosmic surgery plays a significant role in this path, as it materializes geopsychic lines between the apexes of a cathedral of basaltic columns. It is possible to identify a migratory concept between one job and another that compiles a mnemonic and emotional map, to which the presence of the artist's hair establishes a physical, sensuous and therefore emotional participation.

Finally, a summary of the whole project, *The wide sea comes each morning* is an environmental piece composed of sculptures using bones of wild fish caught in the North Atlantic. Ferioli works with materials of animal origin and remnants from seafood processing, giving it a plant-like appearance. The flowers, predominantly of a spontaneously-generated nature, respect the exact interlocking structure in the sculptural process provided by the organic material, taking advantage of anatomical cavities and protrusions. The result of the sculptures reaffirms the deep and metaphysical wisdom inherent in nature, which the artist explores as part of her patient and meticulous undertaking. Each flower is thus a fossil which crystallises in plastic form the serial geometries and mathematical principles underlying the biological systems.

³ *Collection des Vélins*: The Collection of Velini is a collection of 7000 gouache and botanical and zoological watercolours, the work of naturalist artists on behalf of the Kings of France. Started in 1630 by Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII, From 1793, it has been conserved at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. It takes its name from the velino, a fine veal parchment.

⁴ *Carte de Tendre*: It is about *Carte du Pays de Tendre* (Map of the country of the Tenderness), published in 1654 as a summary of the novel *Clélie* by Madeleine de Scudéry, creator of this imaginary map.