

# REFLECTIONS

## An Exhibition by Daniele Basso

*Reflections* is an exhibition that spreads over a number of important venues in the town of Argenta, such as Centro Mercato (once the market hall), Teatro dei Fluttuanti (a theatre), Centro Culturale Cappuccini (once a Capuchin convent and now the seat of a cultural association and town library) and Duomo di San Nicolò (the Cathedral), and allows getting a glimpse of Daniele Basso's multi-faceted activity: different themes and profiles, all of them joined in his free spirit in the pursuit of perfection and beauty.

In the main location of the exhibition at Centro Mercato there is a selection of the works that are milestones in the artistic growth of Daniele Basso.

In the entrance hall, your first encounter is with the huge bottle *Coke It's me*, the artist's proof of the item ordered by The Coca Cola Company to celebrate 100 years of the iconic Contour bottle. Previously shown at Milan Expo, it is now permanently on display at The World of Coca-Cola in Atlanta. In this work steel, that is the artist's favorite material, goes hand in hand with aluminum of Coke cans. The typical Contour bottle is reinterpreted to the standing of a monument, and a thing of common use all over the world turns into an object of art transmitting feelings of youth, joy and enthusiasm. An icon of the consumer society is vested with aesthetic value.

In the room on the left of the entrance hall, we are impressed by *Les Plis de la Vie*, a female body that is over 2mt tall and that was shown at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale Exhibition at Palazzo Albrizzi. The soaring movement of the body of the woman and her glancing towards the sky and the future are filled with harmony and beauty: a message of vitality and positive thoughts.

Rather paradoxically, Basso manages to convey the same positive message through his installation *Il Muro Siamo Noi* (We Are the Wall) made for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. In this case a mirror steel plate splits up into many walls, to hint at the physical and mental barriers that everyone erects towards the others. Standing in front of it, you take a look at yourself and your conscience and, just like Alice through the looking glass, must go through the mirror to open your world to the world of other people. Every wall stands as a chance of a glance over and beyond, and a passage through it.

*Achill* is a sculpture with a great compelling appeal. It represents freedom in the bird's flight and the strength of its rapacity; its cunning eyes trained to catch the least movement in the valley and its sudden diving-flight. *Achill* is a noble representation of life and of the choices man must make to survive.

Other artworks on display are connected to the theme of *Maternità e Infanzia* (Motherhood and Childhood), a vital and positive element: an intense reflection on the route from being a child to being a father, where the countless mirror faces recall the presence of multiple points of view and express that complexity is both unavoidable and unforeseeable.

A journey into the responsibilities that life imposes upon us when we wonder how to transmit our knowledge and our experiences, so that they do not get lost in time, but form the basis for the new generations. An ancestral and universal icon of art that Basso makes modern using mirror steel, opening a cycle devoted to the wonders of real life when ordinary moments become representations of the beauty of life itself.

The last, but not least, room offers a production of mirroring wall pieces with a conceptual basis where the relation between significant and signifier opens up to personal interpretations. In these artworks, the selection of materials actualizes the artist's inner message: from soft and enveloping felt that is used to keep you warm, to wood not only a ductile material and a perfect mate for the clever *homo faber*, but also a means of support, a beam in life both for good and evil.

On the main wall you find the works belonging to the project *Vertical Reflections*. Here, through horizontal and vertical lines, which are both signs of space division and trajectories of the mind, Daniele Basso investigates the process of human growth as a person and in society. This is a three-phase process as described through the shapes, colors and materials that differ from one another, yet are intimately connected by a common meaning. At the beginning there were chaos, color and curiosity. Bricks made of felt, a warm and emotional material, are colored with the enthusiasm of the various personalities that make every person unique, as in *HK2\_Blue*. Then, comes the irresistible need of establishing yourself. Excessively stressed by thrusts, stimuli, sensations and experiences, you long for order and make the choices that will definitely mark your life and experience. These works are characterized by contrast and felt is placed side by side with wood, the material of experience and toil. Eventually and with much effort, the awareness arises that the world is not chaos or order, but rather complexity. No more felt, but only wood. Experiences become your friends and you come to terms with life. Now wood is the walking stick for the old age to cling to and hold existence. This phase includes all the works *Miami* and *Pietrasanta* where the dark saturated blue collects the spirit and reflections of the places: the color of inner reality shines as the guiding light of knowledge.

The work *SPB SkyLife* celebrates the central role that towns played in history, also thanks to their its beauty, as a poles of interaction of Europe and Asia, and expresses the strength and power of their magnificent architectural buildings. In the town skylines, the pride of the citizens reflected by the work's mirror surfaces together with the curiosity of the exhibition visitors, animate the monuments and the spaces created by Basso to a lively public life.

At Teatro dei Fluttuanti you find the artworks that Daniele Basso realized to be awards given in various sports events. They are mainly sculptures conceived for activities where winning, striving and commitment are celebrated by awarding a piece of art and not a trivial trophy. This fusion of sport and art is very interesting because it points at a rather unpredictable sensitivity. In particular, it is worth mentioning the trophies realized on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Ski World Cup Alta Badia Dolomites*. The artist writes: "For the first time, trophies are all of the same size and this to celebrate not only the performance, but also the universal value of Sport... Where determination, talent and passion urge Man and Humanity towards new targets!" In July 2016 Daniele Basso also delivered a special prize to the champion *Max Blardone* for positioning during his last race in Alta Badia: his sixth place is worth gold. Also, on display you can see the prizes awarded for the ten years of *Casa San Remo* on the occasion of *Festival di San Remo 2017*, the artworks in limited edition created for *Mila Schön* using mirror steel and Swarovski® crystals, and the prizes *Rossocorsa Ferrari* awarded in 2016. All of them forever charming objects of art.

At Centro Culturale Cappuccini, and not by chance in a library, you find the latest production of Basso with the sculpture *Aureo junior* made for the newly created "Museo del segno e della scrittura" (museum of the sign and writing) of the company Aurora in Turin. Indeed, written words and silent readings belong to these premises that host little *Aureo*, a sort of funny bird whose beak is shaped as the nib of the famous Italian fountain pen Aurora.

In Duomo di San Nicolò you will admire *Tempus angulare*, an exhibit of extreme spirituality. The steel version was presented in the Cathedral of Biella during the event "Rinascere" set up by Andrea Dall'Asta S.J. and Irene Finiguerra in 2013, and in Rome, before the Pontifical University, on the occasion of the prize "Urbis et Artis". This version is 33cm high and made of white bronze. The crucified Christ helps us pondering on the transcendent through the language of modern art where new technologies, far from restraining artistic expression, enhance the spirituality of this subject.

The Argenta exhibition is the perfect chance to know an artist of refined sensitivity who relies on cutting-edge technologies for his art: a new and unusual manner of letting out feelings and thoughts based, however, on research and design developed traditionally, i.e. by hand drawing. Daniele Basso leads art to new frontiers while always keeping alive his personal strong desire of communicating with Man, his dilemmas, his aspirations and that only art, when it is Beauty, can exalt.

Irene Finiguerra