

ARRIACA

Alberto Dambruoso

Probably the feeling of the person who first found himself having to decrypt the hieroglyphs written on Egyptian papyri was not so different from the feeling of the person who sees a work by Simone Pellegrini for the first time. It is not so different for at least two reasons: the first is that his art seems to belong not only to our time, but to any idea of time, as if it had fallen from another civilization into ours or belonged to a newly discovered civilization of which Pellegrini is the first representative. The second reason is the enigmatic character of the phytomorphic and anthropomorphic elements populating his works, which, like the Egyptian hieroglyphs, need to be codified and decrypted.

Pellegrini's painting is made up of a universe of signs and archaic forms that define and circumscribe his research, which has been centered on this vocabulary from the very beginning, evolving in time through continuous metamorphoses within the compositional scheme. Unique in the international art scene, his works, rigorously "stamped" with paper moulds by means of a steel gavel specially

constructed by a blacksmith and transferred onto paper supports, are basically talking about his personal vision of man and of the world.

Pellegrini's images are essentially images that are born from his imaginative mind and that, once transferred to paper, let the spectator use his/her imagination. At first glance they can be traced back to the realm of the surreal, but in reality they are deeply anchored in the earth, as evidenced by the limited range of natural colors in his palette (ocher, red, black).

His modus operandi has always reflected his profound humanistic background: a cultured artist and assiduous reader of essays (often drawing on the first or last page of the books read, making them into artworks), literature, philosophy and psychoanalysis (especially Lacan), Pellegrini faces every pictorial cycle through the result of the knowledge acquired, improvising but also reformulating thoughts and reflections through discussion of the texts already studied.

In the latest series of works, presented in this exhibition entitled "Arriaca," Pellegrini deals with a topic of great relevance: the encounter on common ground among peoples with different religious beliefs.

*Arriaca*, in Spanish "River of Stones," is the original name of the city of Guadalajara, the northernmost outpost of the Iberian peninsula, which was one of the first meeting places in the West between Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions. It was in Guadalajara that Moshe da Leon was born around 1250 AD. Historians suggest him to be the writer of the Zohar, also known as the *Book of Glory*, one of the most famous Jewish prophetic texts, the most important of the tradition of the Kabbalah. The convergence between the Western iconic culture and the Ancient Islamic and Jewish aniconic cultures is what Pellegrini intended to

represent in this new cycle, which he describes as an "aesthetic frontier." Pellegrini also writes about the works on display: "today my work is a knot that clings to this encounter." In these works, therefore, there is an encounter between different cultures which, like in the rituals of archaic initiation, entail cruel struggles between the various forces in the field. Twisted primordial human forms make their appearance on the ground where the battle between aniconic elements of Islamic and Jewish culture and iconographies of Christian-Western derivation is played out. "The field" - the artist writes - "is torn from these two tensions: the one of representation and that of the indescribable placed at the same time on the same level."

Cassirer wrote in "*Three Studies on the Forma Formans. Technique - Space - Language*": "[philosophy] must go far back; it must attempt to return to the early beginnings where man for the first time reveals the secret of form; where this secret begins to become clearer to man when he thinks and gets afflicted, though at first, more to hide it than to reveal it to himself, in order to present itself to him only as a mysterious semi darkness, in the twilight of the magical and mythical image of the world."

That is, in my opinion Pellegrini, rather than projecting himself into the chaotic flow of contemporary forms like Hirst, Cattelan, Koons, and other contemporary artstars, he takes a step back in history, searching for the primordial from which everything has developed. It is again Cassirer, in the same essay as cited above, who argues that "[...] both in magical and technical behavior man does not already have an established form of the world, but rather he must first create this form and must find it along different roads."

I think these are exactly the different paths that Pellegrini has taken so far and that today brought him as far as Arriaca. Tomorrow he will resume his journey in search of new territories in which he will create new vital, arcane and primordial forms.

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*"Ambos somos extranjeros en esta tierra"*

Abd al-Raham III

Simone Pellegrini

ARRIACA

Text by Alberto Dambruoso

(translated by Ursula Hawlitschka)

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Simone Pellegrini ARRIACA



Bart



www.Baskerville.it





ARRIACA  
2017, 98x197



VARIO DIAFANO  
2017, 95x165



CONDIZIONI DI FONDO  
2017, 127x230



GOLFO DEI FLUTTI  
2016, 80x160



ALCOBA  
2015, 79x133



TRAME  
2013 - 70x132