

THE ENCOUNTER WITH ASSAGIOLI'S THOUGHT

Francesco Voltolina, interview by the editorial team

A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE IN THE WORLD OF ART

We met with Francesco Voltolina (from now on : FV) to explore, through a few questions, the relationship between his artistic research, Psychosynthesis, and Roberto Assagioli's thought.

What was the relationship between your works and Psychosynthesis?

FV - The origin of the experiences that most reflect a relationship with Psychosynthesis dates back to about seven years ago. At that time, I had undertaken psychotherapy with Dr. Maria Luisa Merati, and during the sessions, which alternated between dialogue and hypnosis, an unusual event occurred. During a hypnosis session, I found myself in an exhibition space featuring one of my sculptures, a previously unseen work whose image was clearly defined, down to the smallest details. The sculpture's form and the way it manifested, thus became the central focus of subsequent sessions.

I should point out that my artistic activity in the 1980s and 1990s had then been interrupted for about twenty years. This initial event was followed by several unexpected synchronistic events. The opportunity to exhibit this work was not long in coming. That same summer, we were on vacation in Albisola, and I happened to visit a small gallery. Unintentionally, the conversation with the gallery owner expanded from the works on display to my past works, concluding with the recounting of my experience with hypnosis.

I remember that we were just leaving the gallery after the greetings when I was stopped on the threshold and asked if the following year I was interested in exhibiting the work I had received under hypnosis.

I said yes to this unexpected invitation, and upon returning to Milan, I designed the shape and created a first version. To achieve a precise form, as close as possible to the original image, I relied on 3D printing and PLA, a very neutral white material. (Editor's note: Polylactic acid (PLA) is a biodegradable thermoplastic

made from renewable resources such as corn starch or sugar cane. It has become popular in 3D printing due to its low melting point (150-180°C) and glass transition temperature (60-65°C), which make it easy and efficient to print.)

In the following period, the presence of this sculpture, which I had titled *Fontana I*, began to develop in me the increasingly strong conviction that its form was somehow linked to sound. The thought had become so obsessive over time that it pushed me to create a second version, *Fontana II*, a bronze cast. What surprised me, as well as everyone involved, was that not only did the sculpture play a sound, but the sound corresponded to a note.

In a text entitled *Supercoscienze e creazione artistica* (The Superconscious and Artistic Creation) (1) Assagioli writes:» *We have seen that there are various manifestations of the unconscious that have a qualitative value superior to that of normal consciousness, and which the latter is incapable of producing even if it wanted to. They come from a psychic level superior to the ordinary one, and which is therefore called superconscious or supraconscious*”.

Therefore, I believe that this experience has a lot to do with the superconscious and with what Assagioli defines as transpersonal experiences, since it is clear that what I achieved with *Fontana* goes far beyond my personal skills and capabilities, and I would not be able to replicate.

How did you come into contact with Roberto Assagioli's thinking?

FV - In this case too, I believe that encountering a book can be considered a synchronistic event and not a coincidence.

After the Albisola exhibition, I happened to read a collection of Assagioli's writings entitled *Lo sviluppo transpersonale* (Transpersonal Development).

At the time, I didn't know who Assagioli was or what Psychosynthesis was. I remember that my experience



Fontana I, 2018.



Fontana II, 2018.

with *Fontana* and reading this book led me to reconsider the experience of art no longer as a means of expressing one's personality but as an experience with a different purpose. A shift in perspective regarding the function of art in relation to the community.

Art can be an experience that allows the manifestation of contents belonging to a higher sphere. It's about becoming a vehicle, putting yourself at service, allowing the intuited images to emerge. Allowing our innate visionary capacity to awaken.

Creating moments of silence suitable for listening. Paying attention to subtle elements as well.

Inspiration is understood by Assagioli as the descent of

transpersonal content into the field of consciousness, and in my own personal experience as well, these images are sometimes finished visions, for which it is difficult to claim authorship. Sometimes, however, these images are at a more embryonic stage, or so absolute that they require elaboration to allow their manifestation.

You have to listen to the image, listen to the form.

To better understand what you're saying, can you give us an example?

FV - The desire to preserve this pure and absolute form was for me the inspiration for a subsequent work entitled *The Formless Form*. In this case, the external ovoid shape is the visible part of the work, but it conceals an

empty space within, suggested only by the small hole at its top. The true sculpture, therefore, is what we can only recreate in our minds by completing the visible part with the imagined one.

The Formless Form is a sculpture that explores the state preceding the realization of an intuition. When the imagined form has not yet chosen the material with which to manifest itself, it exists only in a latent or embryonic state. What materializes in the work is merely the matrix that allowed the sculpting of the void, but which simultaneously conceals its vision.



La forma senza forma, 2022.

I often tell about the closeness of this work with Assagioli's ovoid. I find it interesting that the hole at the apex, which in the ovoid corresponds to the transpersonal higher Self, in the sculpture is an access channel.

Assagioli describes intuition as the process of passage or descent of more or less elaborate contents from transpersonal levels into the field of consciousness, and describes creation as a process analogous to the gestation of a new organism in the mother's womb. According to Assagioli, imagination is closely connected to intuition because intuitions do not present themselves to consciousness in an abstract manner but rather in the form of images.

In my experience, I believe that the phenomenon of intuition is a form of channelling and that the images that manifest within us have to do with profound transformative processes, capable of shaping us even on an internal level.

Certain ideas, once conceived, take on a life of their own, becoming driving forces, almost as if the individual were merely the vehicle and not the ultimate creator. As artists, we must be aware that, once realized, the work takes on an autonomous life of its own, and that if a work performs well, this happens in the dialogue and resonance that it will autonomously generate with the observer.

I was recently invited to speak about my research to students at the Accademia di Belle Arti in both Bologna and Naples. I gladly accepted these invitations, believing it important to develop a greater awareness of the potential inherent in the phenomenon of intuition and to offer a vision of art closer to its original function. This shift in perspective would not have been possible for me without my encounter with Roberto Assagioli's thought.

Notes

1. *Supercosciente e creazione artistica* (The Superconscious and Artistic Creation) in "Lo Sviluppo Transpersonale" (Transpersonal Development) by Roberto Assagioli, Ed. Astrolabio, 1988.