

After a long creative experience in China, marked by his desire to unite different cultures, the sculptor of Marchigian origins lives and teaches in New York

Dionisio Cimarelli: inspiration between East and West

Dionisio Cimarelli, a sculptor and artist of international renown, originally from Jesi in the Marche region, has always lived art. He connects it to the philosophy and the experience of traveling. His definition of traveling, and his calling, is building a bridge between cultures. He trained at the Academy of Carrara and is a restorer at the Louvre, where he embraces classical art. Having first traveled to and fallen in love with China as a youth, he returned there in 2004, where he settled for nine years. There he developed his very particular style, a brilliant intuition that has him combine evocative and powerful techniques from the West with elements of Chinese aesthetics. His exciting path of inexhaustible curiosity led him to New York where he was asked to teach at the New York Academy of Art and at The Art Students League of New York. Jesi is where he was born, Carrara where he got his academic training. Then he worked as a restorer at the Louvre and then nine years in China. Today Dionisio Cimarelli lives in New York and teaches at the New York Academy of Arts and the Art Students League.

What has been the constant in your so varied life's path? What are the overtones?

The constant is undoubtedly the art, combined with my innate curiosity to discover other cultures. My research is totally oriented to art and culture in all

its facets, because what interests me is trying to understand man. Cultures change, but man, in his essence, always remains the same. I find him and rediscover him wherever I go. Every experience in my life holds a lot of precious memories, filtered through me and sent back to the world through my work. The journey is the lifeblood that stimulates and motivates me, as a man and as an artist. When I travel, I look for inspiration in everything I see with stimuli and ideas collected from all the countries I have visited. Movement and encounters create the spark for my work, the soul of all my creations. This aspect is less noticeable in my initial works, because they are the immediate result of my first Italian creations, but the energy becomes stronger and more evident with my Chinese experience, in which my creations can no longer be called Italian or Chinese, because they are born of a deep synchronicity.

You are often deemed to be the heir to Matteo Ricci, with whom you share the same roots in the Marche region. Is the homeland influence an important element in the development of your artistic sensibility?

Matteo Ricci has been an extraordinary model for me since my first trip to China. He wanted to be fully Chinese, while I followed a different, more personal path. I must admit that the call of China was almost

instinctive for me, also because at the time it was an unusual choice. I had not finished my academic studies yet, but I had a great curiosity about Asian culture, without any thoughts tied to business there, which is what motivates so many people today. I first landed in China at the age of twenty-two, traveling on the Trans-Siberian railroad, stopping there for four months and visiting other Eastern countries over the course of a year. I returned to China in 2004 and stayed nine years. All this changed me. My intention was to immerse myself totally in the culture, to distill from it and then combine it creatively with Italian culture. In any case, I must say, that despite leaving the Marche region when very young, at just eighteen, the Marche never ceased to be a part of me; having predictably influenced my creative growth and my training. The local culture will always be profoundly mine, as well as Matteo Ricci. Ricci and I certainly share characteristics typical of the people of the Marche. And of course, our relationship with China is a very particular symmetry, perhaps it's a sign to follow into destiny.

And your destiny led you to New York?

It is a city not easy to understand or live in. In short, it is a challenge. New York provides and offers so much, but in order to reach certain goals the city asks of you just as much, if not more. Creating your own thoughts and inspirations can be much more difficult than it was in my previous experiences. Of course, being in a city to teach a master's course at the New York Academy of Art, founded by Andy Warhol in 1980, and at the Art Students League, where the likes of Jackson Pollock and almost half of the artists of contemporary American art have passed through, is for me an honor and a privilege. Right now, I feel I must give back all the many and intense experiences I gained around the world to my students. I am creating less but it is necessary so as to be able to communicate more to young artists. This is an important moment in my path, a phase that I prepared for for years, even though I do miss working on my art full time.

Italy, China, America: a synthesis of three places of the heart.

It is difficult to summarize my life. For sure, Italy is my training, it's the foundation that I always carry with me, my pillar. China is an essential experience for me, after Italy is the second place in my heart. I did not go to China for business, I went there because I was genuinely interested in local culture, I was looking for an intense, very strong relationship, and in the end, I did, both with the country and its people. It was almost like falling in love. As for America, I'm still learning about her. Living the American experience from within brings to light unexpected issues. In America it is necessary to take your time. I cannot deny the enormous opportunities that the USA has given me, but I am still experimenting; this journey is not over.

Elisabetta Pasca

