



ANTONIO PETICOV

SYMBOLS IN A PASSAGEM (THE PASSAGE)

EVER SINCE THE RISE IN POPULARITY OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE DIFFUSION OF JOURNALISM, ART LOOKS BACK AT ITSELF IN SEARCH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE, GENERALIZING AND REGENERATING LIFE. THE ARTISTS WORK WITH THE LANGUAGE AND, WHEN IT IS CREATED, THE WORLD ITSELF IS TRANSFORMED. IN THE 20TH CENTURY, ART BECOMES THE CONSTRUCTION AND REPRESENTATION OF THE REAL THROUGH THE WORK OF OBSERVING AND COMPOSING SHAPES AND SYMBOLS IN SPACE AND TIME.

WHEN ESCAPING FROM THE STEREOTYPES THAT RESIDE IN EACH AND EVERY SIGN, SEARCHES NEW EXPRESSIVE RESOURCES, MOTIVATING KANDINSKY TO SAY: "EVERY PROCEDURE IS SACRED AS LONG AS IT SATISFIES TO A INTERNAL NEED". THE ARTIST IS THE DEMIURGE THAT, STEPPING BACK FROM THE REALITY THAT IS APPARENT AND HAS ITS SIGNS SACRALIZED AND CRYSTALIZED, SEARCHES FOR ANOTHER REALITY, MORE ESSENTIAL, THAT SURFACES BETWEEN THE CRACKS OF THE RELATION MAN-WORLD.

THE BRAZILIAN PAINTER AND GRAPHICAL ARTIST ANTONIO PETICOV (Assis, SP, 1946) AFFILIATES HIMSELF EXACTLY TO THIS FAMILY OF CREATORS THAT SEARCH FOR A LATENT REALITY, BEYOND THAT OF EVERYDAY APPEARANCES. HIS ART IS A PLAYFUL AND RE-

FLEXIVE ACTIVITY, BECOMING "A LIE WHICH MAKES US SEE THE REALITY", WORDS OF PABLO PICASSO APPLICABLE TO THE 20TH CENTURY DEMIURGES.

PETICOV ATTENDED SEVERAL WORKSHOPS AND ATELIERS IN SÃO PAULO. DURING THE DECADE OF 1970, RESIDED IN MILAN AND LATER TRANSFERRED HIMSELF TO NEW YORK, CHARACTERIZING HIMSELF BY PAINTINGS FOCUSED ON THE PRODUCTION OF EXACERBATED IMAGES, ALMOST FANTASTIC, OF LANDSCAPES, OBJECTS AND KNOWN SCENERIES PUT IN NEW CONTEXTS OR WITH SURPRISING COMBINATIONS.

MADE IN 1975, A PASSAGEM (THE PASSAGE – 140 X 150 CM) WOULD BE THE PARADIGM TO GET TO KNOW BETTER THE MAIN SYMBOLS PRESENT IN THE VAST ARTISTIC PRODUCTIONS FROM PETICOV. WHEN POINTING TEN OF THEM, ONE HOPES TO CONTRIBUTE FOR A FUTURE REFLECTION ON THE CREATIONS OF THE ARTIST AS A WHOLE.

THE BLACK COLOR OF THE ABYSSAL DEPTHS, PREDOMINATES IN THE PAINTING. EVOKES THE NOTHING AND THE CHAOS, IN OTHER WORDS, CONFUSION AND DISORDER. IT IS ABOUT THE OWN OBSCURITY OF THE ORIGINS THAT PRECEDES THE CREATION IN ALL RELIGIONS. THE HINDU IGNORANCE, THE SHADOW OF JUNG AND THE SNAKE-DRAGON OF SEVERAL MYTHOLOGIES SYMBOLIZES EXACTLY THE DARK LIMITATIONS THAT EVERY PERSON NEEDS TO OVERCOME INTERNALLY TO ASSURE ITS OWN METAMORPHOSIS TOWARDS THE DIVINE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, JUST AS THE NIGHT CONTAINS THE PROMISE OF DAWN AND THE WINTER PRECEDES SPRING, THE BLACK IS LINKED TO THE PROMISE OF A RENEWED LIFE, HOPE THAT IS CONFIRMED IN RELATION TO THE OTHER SYMBOLS PRESENT IN A PASSAGEM.

ACCORDINGLY, IT HIGHLIGHTS THE STAIR. SYMBOL BY EXCELLENCY OF ASCENSION AND OF VALORIZATION, IT IS LINKED TO THE VERTICALITY, INDICATING A ROUTE OF COMBINATION IN DOUBLE MEANING BETWEEN DIFFERENT LEVELS. IN THIS CASE, THE STAIR IS THE ELEMENT THAT PROVIDES THE PASSAGE FROM THE CHAOTIC DARK TO THE HARMONIOUS BLUE AND VICE VERSA.

THE STAIR HAS FOUR STEPS. THIS NUMBER BINDS TO NATURE'S ELEMENTS (EARTH, AIR, WATER AND FIRE), TO THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR (WINTER, SPRING, SUMMER AND AUTUMN) AND TO THE FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUES OF MAN (COURAGE, TOLERANCE, GENEROSITY AND FIDELITY) AND WOMAN (ABILITY, HOSPITALITY, LOYALTY AND FERTILITY).

IN POSSESSION OF THESE VIRTUES, ONE COMPLEMENTING THE OTHER, THE HUMAN BEING REACHES THE LIGHT. THIS SUCCEEDS THE DARKNESS IN THE ORDER OF COSMIC MANIFESTATION AND INTERNAL ILLUMINATION. IT OPPOSES CHAOS EXACTLY FOR SYMBOLIZING VALUES FROM ONE'S INTERNAL EVOLUTION THAT ALLOWS THE LIGHT OF CONSCIOUSNESS FLOURISH IN THE DARK OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS.

SO THIS IS VISIBLE IN PETICOV'S WORK THAT THE CHAOTIC BLACK PREVALENT IS PUNCTUATED BY STARS, REPRESENTATIONS OF MAN REGENERATED, SHINY AS THE LIGHT IN THE MIDST OF THE DARKNESS OF THE PROFANE WORLD. THE STAIRS ARE DOTS OF HOPE IN THE NIGHT OF EXISTENCE.

THE OPENING THAT ALLOWS THE PASSAGE OF CHAOS TOWARDS LIGHT IS A SQUARE, GEOMETRIC SHAPE UNIVERSALLY APPLIED IN THE LANGUAGE OF SYMBOLS ALONG WITH THE CENTER, THE CIRCLE AND THE CROSS. ALTARS, TEMPLES AND CITIES ADOPT THE QUADRANGULAR SHAPE, CONCRETE MANIFESTATION OF A STABILIZED WORLD.

THE PYTHAGOREANS, ACCORDING TO PICASSO, SAW THE SQUARE AS THE REUNION OF DIVINE POTENCIES. RHEA, MOTHER OF GODS, WOULD MANIFEST ITSELF THROUGH WATER (THE PLACE WHERE APHRODITE WAS BORN), THROUGH FIRE (THE ETERNAL FLAME OF HESTIA), THROUGH EARTH (THE FERTILITY OF DEMETER) AND THROUGH AIR (REGION DOMINATED BY HERA, PLANT DEDICATED TO THE GODDESS WITH THE SAME NAME).

BY ANALOGY, THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION CONSIDERS THE SQUARE THE SYMBOL OF A HARMONIOUS LOCALE, THE COSMO. IN IT, EACH HUMAN BEING WOULD HAVE FOUR POSSIBILITIES FOR INSPIRATION: THE DIVINE, THE ANGELICAL, THE HUMAN AND THE DIABOLICAL. THE SYMBOL CORRESPONDS TO THE REUNION OF THESE POTENTIALS IN A TERRESTRIAL PLANE.

INSIDE A SQUARE, SECRET MEANINGS AND OCCULT POWERS ARE MANIFESTED. IT IS NECESSARY TO BE MOBILIZED INTERNALLY TO GET IN OR OUT OF IT. THE STAIR, WITH ITS STEPS OF VIRTUE, IS PRECISELY A MANNER OF ENTERING OR LEAVING THE SQUARE, SYMBOL OF CONCENTRATED AND POWERFUL ENERGIES.

IN THE PETICOV'S WORK, THE BLUE SKY IN THE INTERIOR OF THE SQUARE GETS CONNOTATIONS OF THE DIRECT MANIFESTATION OF TRANSCENDENCE, FROM THE PERENNIAL AND THE SACRUM. THE FACT OF IT BEING ELEVATED IN RELATION TO THE DARK STARRY SKY ALREADY GIVES IT POWER. AFTER ALL, BE IT IN BUDDHISM, IN ISLAM, IN DANTE OR IN CHINA, THERE IS THE BELIEF OF A HIERARCHY OF THE SKIES THAT MUST BE CLIMBED ONE BY ONE.

THE SKY REPRESENTS THE PLENITUDE OF THE HUMAN SEARCH FOR A PLACE WHERE THE PERFECTION OF THE SPIRIT IS POSSIBLE. IN THIS PAINTING, THE SKY IS BLUE, COLOR LINKED TO THE INFINITE AND THE TRANSFORMATION FROM REAL TO IMAGINARY. THE LEGEND OF THE BLUE BIRD OF HAPPINESS CORROBORATES THIS REASONING.

THE EGYPTIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, CONSIDERED BLUE AS THE COLOR OF TRUTH AND THE THRESHOLD THAT SEPARATES HUMANS FROM DIVINE BEINGS WHO RULE THEIR DESTINIES. TRANSITIONING FROM THE DARK TO THE BLUE IS REALIZING THE JOURNEY OF ALICE, GOING THROUGH THE MIRROR AND PENETRATING IN THE WONDERLAND, OF FANTASY AND DIVINITY.

THERE IS STILL A MOON IN THE BLUE SKY. IT IS A SYMBOL CONNECTED TO THE BIOLOGICAL RHYTHMS, TO THE WATERS, TO THE RAIN, TO THE VEGETATION AND TO THE FERTILITY. INCREASING IN SIZE, DECREASING AND DISAPPEARING, THE MOON LINKS ITSELF ALSO TO THE DREAM AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS, ELEMENTS OF THE NIGHTLIFE. IF THE WATER (HUMID) AND THE LAND (COLD) ARE CLOSE TO THE UNIVERSE OF DARKNESS, THE FIRE (HEAT) AND THE AIR (DRY) ARE ASSOCIATED TO THE DAY AND THE SOLAR SYMBOLS OF CONSCIENCE.

SURFACES THEN A RICH IMAGE. THE CRESCENT MOON (MANIFESTATION OF TRANSFORMATION AND GROWTH) APPEARS IN THE BLUE SKY (HARMONY) INSIDE A SQUARE (SACRED PLACE) IN THE MIDST OF THE DARK SPACE (CHAOTIC) WHERE ARE STARS (SPARKS OF CONSCIOUSNESS). TO LEAVE THE DARKNESS AND REACH THE COSMOS, IT IS NECESSARY TO RESORT TO THE FOUR STEPS (VIRTUES) OF THE STAIR (SYMBOL OF VERTICALITY).

WHO CLIMBS THE STAIR GETS CLOSER TO THE TRANSFORMING MOON, GROWING INTERNALLY. IF DARK IS THE ABSENCE OF COLOR, THE WHITE, PRESENT ON THE MOON, ON THE STAIR AND THE STARS, CONSTITUTES THE SUM OF COLORS. TRANSLATES A FEELING OF ABSOLUTE SILENCE, FROM A INTERNAL NOTHINGNESS TO THE BIRTH WHICH CONDUCTS TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ABYSSAL DARK.

THE WHITE IS THE COLOR OF THE DAYTIME REVELATION, THE INTERNAL TRANSFIGURATION THAT AWAKENS TO THE UNDERSTANDING. SO IT IS EXPLAINED THE WHITE HALO OF ANGELS, PURE BEINGS THAT EXPERIENCE THE THEOPHANY (MANIFESTATION OF GOD) AND REMAIN WITH THE LUMINOUS TRACE OF A KNOWLEDGE THAT SURPASSES THEM.

BEING THE LINGUISTIC SYMBOLS CARRIERS OF THE REFLECT/REFRACT DIALECTIC (REINFORCE THE DOMINANT IDEOLOGY, THE PARAPHRASE, THE REPETITION AND THE CONFORMITY / STIMULATE PARODY, THE DEFORMATION AND THE RENOVATION), THE ART MUST BE CONSIDERED AS A DOMINANCE OF REFRACTION UPON THE ACT OF REFLECTING, FOR IT DESTROYS THE PERCEPTIVE AUTOMATISM AND WORKS WITH THE RENEWAL AND THE REFRACTION THAT SYMBOLS ENABLE.

PETICOV DECONSTRUCTS REALITY TO OFFER IT TO THE SPECTATOR IN A NEW WAY. HIS MODERNITY DILUTES MORE AND MORE THE REFERRED CRYSTALIZED, VALUING THE WORK OF ART AS AN AUTONOMOUS UNIT, WITH OWN VALUES, AN AUTHENTIC SALUTARY TRICKERY (ROLAND BARTHES) IN WHICH ART FULFILLS ITS MAKE-BELIEF FUNCTION, STRIPPING THE APPARENT REALITY IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER, ESSENTIAL.

THE TEN SYMBOLS FOCUSED ALLOW FOR MANY DIFFERENT READINGS OF THE PAINTING IN QUESTION. THE OUTPUT OF THE BLACK SPACE THROUGH THE FOUR-STEPS STAIR LEADS TO LIGHT, WHICH, PRESENT IN THE STAIRS OF THE DIM SPACE, BECOMES MORE IN-

TENSE IN THE SQUARE THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE BLUE SKY AND THE WHITE MOON.

SYMBOLICALLY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO DECODE THE ELEMENTS INDICATED IN A PASSAGEM AS THE HOPE OF LEAVING THE CHAOS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ASCENDING VIRTUES, WHICH LEAD TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE. THIS, SCATTERED IN THE PRIMORDIAL DARKNESS, AND PLAINLY GLIMPSED IN A SACRED SPACE, SUBLIME AND TEEMING WITH HARMONY THAT CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE SUCCESSIVE TRANSFORMATIONS TOWARDS SPIRITUAL PURITY.

THUS, THE ART OF ANTONIO PETICOV FUNCTIONS AS A MASK THAT HIDES THE FACE. UNVEILING IT REPRESENTS THE DEATH OF THE MINOTAUR, IN THE LABYRINTH OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS, THANKS TO THE THESEUS'S SACRED SWORD, AND THE EXIT OF THE CHAOTIC UNIVERSE OF THE MIND, THROUGH THE USE OF ARIADNE'S STRING, ILLUMINATING LIGHT OF CONSCIOUSNESS WHICH THE DENSE WORKS OF ART GENERATE IN THE SPECTATOR, CHALLENGING HIM TO REPEATED INTERPRETATIVE EXERCISES.

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