

THE MEETING between artist and critic determines, at times, a change and often a revolution: the critic senses his mind projected in a new universe, the artist continues his work with greater assurance; the critic feels his philosophy and ideas have been enriched and become more profound; the artist in turn discovers new images and new stimuli, has more courage, more enthusiasm; the critic always learns something from the artist and the artist learns something new from the critic. These meetings are always fascinating, especially when the critic is not just an arid machine, but also something of an artist, and when the artist has some ideas of philosophy. It is always a magical moment which creates new aesthetic visions. The phenomenon is not as rare as one thinks: just in this century it happened with Breton and the Surrealist painters, Apollinaire and the Cubist painters, Marinetti and the Futurist painters and also in more recent avant-garde movements in Italy. Of course violent contrasts between critics and painters have not been lacking either but this is a different story or a degeneration. Generally, the two activities of critic and artist are complementary. The critic must naturally be a road, a path, and his words clear and illuminating, creating a philosophical work of analyses, in-depth studies and, sometimes, also of exegesis.

When these two wills are able to meet the results are always better. Andrea Granchi has constructed a highly original exhibition, without betraying or modifying his origins and his history; he has explored other paths and faced other ghosts, which were not entirely alien, but which in this circumstance needed to penetrate a territory still partially unexplored. This exhibition, then, made up of works mainly executed in 1992 and 1993, and therefore prepared exclusively for Aosta (as is the case in most of our exhibitions), can be divided into four phases or themes, apparently different, but in reality united by a common idea: that of the underground world of the mind, the mysterious world which lives within the earth.

The first theme is that of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: boundless universe, infinite, disturbing, continually changing. The *Metamorphoses* are a sort of philosophical work: they represent the continuous struggle between man and the divinities, without it being clear who will prevail in the end: seemingly the Gods, but the Gods too are subject to the same metamorphoses as men. Here there is also an underground world, but the whole of Ovid's world, including his worlds of air and water, lives in an underground dimension. Not only Hades but the Heavens too are in an abyss.

The second theme is taken from an unusual and little-known novel written in French by Giacomo Casanova: *Icosameron*, another philosophical novel by an author who made a philosophy out of licentiousness. It tells the story of two young people – a brother and sister – who take a journey to the centre of the earth, where they meet a population who communicates with a musical language and where they give birth (incestuously and, therefore, still more disturbing) to thousands of other beings. After many adventures they return safely to the earth. They have completed another journey to the bottom of the abyss.

Then Granchi faced a third theme, that by Jules Verne in his *Voyage to the Centre of the Earth*, but what do the protagonists of this adventure in the bowels of our planet meet? Two things: monsters and the remains of an ancient civilization, terror and the



Dell'Incertezza dell'Essere, 1980
sei maschere + luce radente 250 cm.

philosophical discovery of the eternity of life, a savage and primitive world and a refined and, perhaps, perverse world.

Granchi's final journey brings us closer to modernity: *L'Arte della Fuga* by Giuseppe Pontiggia is another journey in the subterranean of our consciousness. In his novels there is always someone hiding, someone without a name, the Homeric Nobody of our civilization; there is always someone who is Another, someone who speaks in the name of Another and Another who thinks and acts in the name of something which is invisible, and here too death and life meet halfway.

Andrea Granchi has not, of course, illustrated these four literary works, but has projected them on the surface of his pictures as if they were the echo of his painting. And since we are talking about literature, even if the exhibition has nothing literary about it, but could rather be defined as *philosophical*, even the poem, normally chosen for each exhibition, could only be by an artist familiar with the subterranean of consciousness: Giorgio De Chirico, dedicated to melancholy, a theme which is no stranger to all Andrea Granchi's works. It is a melancholy familiar to Ovid, for example, as well as Giacomo Casanova, something of a gypsy in his soul and in the end condemned to defeat, despite all his amorous conquests and a life full of adventure and risks and thus, real emotions. One sometimes needs to be melancholic in order to be happy and to well and truly live.

JANUS