



Annali®

ON THE WINGED STEPS OF HERMES (I. Zanti 2008)

by Igor Zanti

“Oh Hermes [...], From the many resources, kindly cunning, marauder, herd guide, bearer of dreams, night watcher, thief at the gates, which he hurriedly showed his exploits among the immortal goddesses Homer, hymn to Hermes.”

The figure of Hermes, from a mythological and philosophical point of view, is very complex and hides many hidden meanings.

Traditionally, the simple role of messenger of the gods is attributed to this divinity, generated by the secret and nocturnal embraces of Zeus and the nymph Maia.

A more in-depth research reveals, however, that this role of divine herald is only a part of what Hermes has described in the ancient world in general, and in the classical Greek one in particular. Hermes was the protector of the crossroads, where the herm with his effigy and the erect genital organ were placed to protect travelers and travelers, he also watched over the souls who embarked on the mysterious journey to the kingdoms of Hades (was, in fact, separate divinity, in addition to Proserpina and Hades, associated with life in the underworld), it protected athletes and, perhaps in a deliberately mocking way, thieves, merchants and astute men.

Hermes' identification with the Egyptian god is not one of the symbolic incarnations of alchemical art. Alchemy, in addition to being a physical and chemical discipline, involved an experience of growth and a process of liberation and salvation of the author of the experiment.

In this perspective, the exploited alchemical science *sacralized* and brought back into a type of *metaphysical* and philosophical knowledge, assuming mystical and esoteric connotations, so that alchemical processes and symbols often possess an internal meaning within the development of science in connection with the same model. Precisely for this reason the cult of Hermes, following the Hellenization of the Mediterranean basin, has taken on a markedly mysterious and esoteric meaning, an meaning that has maintained in imperial Rome and that has been handed down, in various forms, to the present day.

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It will be surprising that Annalù's work (artistic name of the Venetian artist Annaluigia Boeretto) approaches Hermes, but a careful analysis will allow us to understand how many ideas used by our artist in their work can be traced back to the symbolic figure of the Greek god. In Annalù's works there is always a sense of metamorphosis, of passage, of evolution, a sort of journey between different states, between different realities, a spirit of research that shares some typical aspects of alchemical science.

The artist tries to fix in his works the moment in which the metamorphosis takes place, to understand the mechanisms and forces that underlie the process inherent in the transition from one state to another, whether it is a state merely physical, which of a psychological or spiritual state. Annalù, in his personal research, understands metamorphosis, in a broad sense, as the fundamental step to progress towards a new reality, towards a new consciousness, towards a new physical and cognitive dimension. On a formal level, in Annalù's work, constants are found. The artist relies on the metaphorical element of the butterfly (butterfly which has become a sort of distinctive figure in his recent production) which embodies the symbolic role of the concept of metamorphosis. The artist, through the wise use of different materials such as wood, concrete, resins, bitumen black, metals, tries to reaffirm this concept almost at a tactile level. The various elements come together, merge, like inside a cauldron of a magician or an alchemist, to create new realities, new physical states or to free the bodies they imprison.

It is important to understand how the tactile and material aspect is one of the fundamental elements of Annalù's work, as if the artist wants to suggest to the public the effort and energy that is released when a metamorphosis or the transition between a state and the other takes place: the effort of the chrysalis to become a butterfly, of the mineral to free itself from the rock that surrounds it. Annalù's work arises in that moment of transition between painting and sculpture, in a hybrid terrain that however allows the artist to experiment with different

expressive possibilities. Annalù leads us through an initiatory journey, mediated by a deeply feminine sensitivity and a sense of rarefied poeticity, a journey where we will meet ancient and ancestral symbols, where we will rediscover elements that are the basis of western culture, which will ask us questions about human existence, on the value of art as a means of knowledge, a journey that we will undertake alongside the artist following the winged steps of Hermes...

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