

## “PRIMARY STRUCTURE”

Like painting, sculpture has repeatedly died and been reborn in our time, following the impulses of aesthetic actions and reactions, cultural morphings in society, expressive insurgencies in individuals. Also the *structures* of Enrico David's most recent work, linked by the artist with the title *Enrico 'La Caduta' David* (Enrico 'The Fall' David) – which metaphorically alludes to concepts of revolt and defeat, of loss that produces a Genesis – are *primary*, but in a direction that is antithetical to the meaning of that era-defining 1966 exhibition. In these structures, the primary is located in their heightened sense of immediacy and naked manuality of execution, in the transparency of a low-tech process, the use of natural or semifinished industrial materials carrying an expressive/mimetic function – in order to present the human body in ways that are close to the morphology and symbolism of sculpture's origins. These are structures that posit a mythical plastic language emerging from the originary chaos of matter, from a psychical/physical complexity – from a fragmentation, the Elementary, a creatural angst, from the investigation of an auroral stage. They are born from the avowedly anthropological vocation of a sculptural project that is alien to a technological will to power. Their primary-ness flows from the image's turning toward an initial obscurity. There is a divergence, however, in the contemporary practice of art, yet not an opposition, between artists for whom the future is orphan of the past, of the past's magical language, and others for whom the past converges and is even exalted in the technological discourse of the present.

However, it would be a mistake simply confining David's work within the definition of *sculpture*. As for other contemporary artists, for whom painting and sculpture (one might add, sometimes, photography, video, etc.) have become at this juncture two interchangeable means of expression, the choice to use one or the other is necessitated in him more by the urgencies of the imagination than by a desire to

experiment with diverse traditional techniques. In this sense, the archetypes here are not so much Degas, Matisse, Picasso, de Kooning, Barnett Newman, but rather the equalization of sculpture, object, and drawing as image enacted by Duchamp and Beuys. In David's work, medium, structure and image are functional to each other; he equally invests each of these three elements with the same primary impulse: while his sculpture is fundamentally indebted to a pictorial sensibility, his painting is characterized by the primacy of drawing, and drawing radically informs the construction of his sculpture. Line, in his work, is the dominant thinking.

Mario Diacono