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In her latest project—*Love, Birth, Death* (which recalls another Eliot’s line, in *Fragment of an Agon*: “birth, and copulation, and death”), Rabbia intensifies the inscription of the human/vegetal/earthen microcosm of the 2014-15 paintings with a potentially macrocosmic iconography. This thematic expansion has, perhaps necessarily, a physical correlative in the pictorial one: *Love* (2016) is a 108x202 inch canvas that for its full diagonal (a size thus bigger than its width) is occupied by two hyperhuman bodies so interlaced that if an attempt were made to unite in a diagram their sticking out points these would form the equivalent of a sephirothic tree. *Love* imagines (puts into image) the initial/initiating couple, a copula of earth and sky; the woman is made of earth, vegetation, humus, roots, the man is an ethereal body, made of star dust. The primal couple not yet emerged from Chaos, of indistinct anatomies, suspended in a space and a time not yet divided into opposing modalities, and crossed like lightning or a tree trunk by the axis of the world. To measure its archetypal/future temperature, *Love* must be seen in contrast to the original couple in Egyptian iconocology where the sky (Nut) and earth (Geb) are separated by Ra, the sun god. In the imaged Egyptian myth, which has now become part of the pop imaginary, Nut is a nude, overarching woman who personifies the celestial vault while Geb is a man lying on the earth with his sex erect. In Rabbia’s painting, the original couple is imaged in a state antecedent to any division of being into the duality created by the advent of time. The bodies in *Love* rise up or fall into a stellar/arboreal/aqueous pictorial amnion, in a state of un-otherness; their legs are folded and crossed in an X-shape (the spider’s stratagem according to the Kamasutra?), while their clasped hands draw together with the arms a quadrangle that we might describe as *knothby*: the two torsos form opposite acute angles whereas the hands are clasped in opposing obtuse angles. The head of the woman, in constant expansion, falls in the picture’s lower left corner; that of the man, undergoing a contraction, springs toward the upper right corner. The two torsos interlock, with both legs of the woman folded while one of the man’s legs stretches out, and appear anatomically undifferentiated—the only heightened details are the excessive nipples—thus alluding perhaps to an original/final androgyny. These are bodies of plasmatic consistency, anthropomorphic nebulae in the process of becoming fully human, ethereal bodies close to accessing the astral body, or vice versa. The Bible would not have a name for them, for they imply a pre-Adamic stage and yet have been inscribed for centuries, for millennia even, in history, which is the history of painting. The fishbone/spine of dark energy that diagonally crosses the joint bodies, the picture’s axis both physical and metaphysical, which had appeared in an embryonic state in *NorthEastSouthWest*, converges analogically here with the mystical/mysterical energy that kundalini generates in bodies intertwined in tantric ecstasy: it becomes the tree of inner life. The liquid sky or the celestial water in which the hierogamy of *Love* takes place, from which the lovers emerge, is the hieroglyph of a mythical, resistant pictorial space, a space that suspends painting between a barely begun past and a future already finished.

Mario Diacono

(abstract from the catalogue text “Blue. The Resistance of Painting”)