

## **BEN WIJNEN**

### ***The breath of forms / Il respiro delle forme.***

On this Earth, immersed and enveloped in the air, live, rest and move all beings and things. We inevitably end up not taking notice any more. Almost as if we had lost awareness of it. Perhaps it's more correct to say that it's the air that is *breathing* us. Living, what subtle wind blows in and through us! We are hardly conscious of the incessant dance of forms that air and light invent with our bodies. Absolutely fleeting forms. Unseizable forms that dissolve with the same evanescence of music. Forms that only to a watchful eye stunned by the breath of all things alive become inexhaustible source of emotions. Ben Wijnen's uniqueness is that he succeeds with his sculptures to give bodily substance, memory and feeling to their impalpable passage.

Therefore, as is always the case with true sculptors, his intuition – I'm tempted to call it foreshadowing – of each one of his figures relies on the synthesis of an instantaneous drawing, essential and sinuous. Marks that really try to emulate gusts of wind. Transposed in wire, some of his graphic inspirations really capture the grace of movements: the throb of a breathing body. So much so that, in my opinion, it would seem rather misleading (as could be appear at first sight) to consider as abstract or, in any case, strictly intellectual the most evident feature of his style. Because the evocation of memories suspended like a wind in the emotional stream of consciousness is "tactile" even before being "visual".

To achieve such palpable concreteness and the very transparency of the evoked emotion, the choice of the material is absolutely crucial for Ben Wijnen to obtain all possible expressiveness as only he can. Thus, in "Flight", it's the dazzling whiteness of the statuary marble that modulates the winged presence of the memory of a female nude. What about the malleableness of clay? What a sense of earthy fertility that rises and spreads out from the body of mother-plant "Richness"! Not even the hardness of metal scares the tenacity of Ben's hands. Just look at "Heart", rounded, sanded, smoothed, incredibly polished on the outside while the inside has been left rough, even with a simple fusion scrap he can translate and transmit an incredible stratum of different sensations. The glow of gold and the dark passage towards an unknown beyond. The dazzling beat of a sun-heart and the most secret shape of a female sex. The gate of light and of life engraved in a gem.

*Giuseppe Cordoni 2015.*