

# Interview with Sebastiano Pallavisini

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by Lisangela Perigozzo ~ 11th June 2024

On the occasion of his solo show at LuogoArteContemporanea, BESTIE SENZA PADRONE (beasts without a master) Sebastiano Pallavisini answers some questions aimed at deepening his artistic research.

**\* Animals have always been present in the life and imagination of man, generating a complex system of stories and symbols, both in Eastern and Western cultures. Their association with a symbolic and allegorical level has led to a progressive stylization of forms in their representation, albeit with different methods between East and West. How do you use painting, sculpture and drawing in your investigation into the essence of animal nature?**

Drawing, painting and sculpture are the tools that allow me to investigate the animal world; through drawing I try to animate animals, to understand how they move, what they think, their habits. They are tools that help me reflect and understand them, identifying myself with them. These techniques are not the only tools, I spend a lot of time looking at animals looking for information etc. but in the end everything is conveyed into the painting: all the images, reflections and observations flow there. Not that I think of anything in particular while I'm painting, it's whatever comes first.

**\* From your works emerges the desire to free animal representation from the symbolic and anthropocentric perception typical of human beings, instead capturing the primordial essence of these creatures. What aspect of the animal do you want to immortalize in your works and with what intent?**

There are different aspects that interest me when I represent an animal, I usually decide to use an image when it excites me, and when this happens, a light bulb goes on. It's not clear to me either what I want to communicate, perhaps there isn't an attempt to convey something but rather trying to understand what that image is instilling in me and bringing it back to canvas, creating another image, different, new, which however transmits something similar, stronger or weaker if it goes wrong - the result is unexpected. So it's more like an image evisceration or translation process. In general what interests me about the animal is its variety of shapes and movements. Often a paw or a tail or a horn convey to me a meaning that perhaps is not at all hidden and to be deciphered as we believe but lies in appearances, in the horn itself, and is simply the incredible imagination and creativity of animal forms.

**\* Since ancient times, the encounter with animals has represented an opportunity for man to confront his own identity - it is no coincidence that the word "animal" derives from the latin word "anima", which means soul. Why is it important to rediscover our ancestral instinctivity? Do you believe that his understanding can reawaken the primordial connection between man and nature that has long been dormant due to careless technological evolution?**

Since ancient times, animals have been recognized as having a bond or kinship with humans. Even if sometimes on the surface we may seem very different, it is undeniable that there is a connection and it is enough to observe the behavior of, for example, ants: by observing them for a short time you realize how many things we have in common. Personally I think that animals hold some secret or treasure that we humans once shared but have forgotten; the only way to find it is to try to understand them - it may even be that there is no secret or that the chest is empty. In any case, I believe that trying to understand how they act and why can help us not to misunderstand them and ourselves, to arrive at a new and advantageous relationship for both of us.

**\* What does returning to the Ark mean to you and how can we do it?**

Returning to the Ark for me means re-learning to see with an "animal eye". The Egyptian gods had animal heads and human bodies, perhaps meaning that these beings were capable of seeing in both worlds: they were therefore hybrid beings. The simplest way to "return to the Ark" is to bring your gaze to the animal's level and try to see like it, supporting it, identifying with it.

**\* What animal do you like to depict most and why?**

There is no particular animal that I like to depict more than others, even if there are some recurring animals that I cyclically depict, such as the deer, the dog, the bear. Perhaps they are the animals that most remind me of man in their gaze and movements. I usually like to represent large, articulated animals, while I struggle to depict birds due to their often too static shape, apart from a few exceptions such as the cormorant - I like its neck. At the moment I'm painting monkeys even though they often have a too human look and so I don't do their eyes.

@seba\_pallavisini