

Fondi Persi (Lost Bed) is Antonio Teruzzi's eternal return. It is not just a work of art; it is an extension of his hands and soul. The origin of the new art series *E insieme uscimmo a riveder le stelle* (Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars together) goes back as far as Antonio's work. It is in continuity with everything he has done before, reflecting his natural and instinctive consistency. This new chapter of Fondi Persi comprises twelve paintings (60x80 cm) plus a larger one. It satisfies Antonio's deep-seated need to complete the series and open up new creative opportunities. The starting point is the finding of an old 1887 copy of the *Divine Comedy*, whose pages had irreparably bled from aging. A lost frontispiece, missing pages, destroyed sheets, engravings that appear as little treasures rescued from the passage of time. Antonio Teruzzi treats Dante's work as a sacred text, an integral part of human history, infusing it as the lifeblood of his paintings. As if through a personal synecdoche, Teruzzi seizes the material component of the *Divine Comedy*—the pages—to further eternalize not Dante's thought, but rather the intention to awaken the souls of men which he shares with him. Man is never alone. Teruzzi proclaims that it is only together that we can come forth to rebehold the stars. Individual responsibility must undergo a metamorphosis and turn into collective will to exorcise our numb times, relinquish the fears of the present and again contemplate the sky. Stars are indeed the red thread running through these paintings—as the target destination of the gaze, as a metaphor for the soul, as the origin and endpoint of humankind. Admiring them necessarily requires impoverishment, a return to the humble origins of men who are prone to marvel and discovery. In some of the paintings, Teruzzi uses bare, raw jute—a recurring element in his work since the beginning of his career—to express the need to recover a primordial desire for revelation. The four paintings inspired by Dante's *Inferno* arise from a grid of caged pages pasted on canvas, in which a hellish

shade of red struggles to keep them occult, only to lose its battle. Dante's words cut through the canvas and offer themselves to the observer. The very compositional arrangement arises from man's need for rationalization, his necessity to subsume good and evil under moral or spiritual rules. Teruzzi uncovers the human mechanism of dealing with the irrepresentable through rational, manageable, and governable cages. In the Purgatorio paintings, pages undergo a transformation: they are no longer material but instead ideal, mental, intimate. Like a sculptor, Antonio thins the layer that separates us from the irrepresentable and brings out the notes of a man, of a poet, of all men. Words intertwine on canvas, breaking through the grid. In III Purgatorio, the irrational emerges in the form of an iteration of cosmic symbols. The signs of the eternal dance with the symbols of the masculine and feminine on the canvas. They fluctuate between scratched-out words and autobiographical figures. Man becomes an active protagonist, standing up against the new horizon, the new boundary separating the above and the below. These paintings are turbulent and dynamic. Gold is there because black is still there: black fights against shining gold. In II Purgatorio, this war-like dynamic pushes the figures in a constant ascent towards mystery. Man purges himself of the triviality of his own anthropological assumptions and persists in his inner search, thus becoming pure and ready to mount onto the stars. These souls (or earthly creatures?) also appear in III Paradiso. There, they float in a pale, veiled gold that seems to hide the true meaning of infinity. The Paradiso paintings are not heavenly; they are earthly and ideal. Jute returns as one big page ready to be rewritten. Charismatic symbols are borne on an impalpable wind. The pure, ideal horizon is corrupted by the rough edge of jute.

Quarta dimensione – Insieme uscimmo a riveder le stelle (Fourth dimension – Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars together) is the final painting. It is

*the largest one (100x73 cm), created using mixed media on water canvas. This work breaks the circle; it corrupts the perfection of the number twelve. By coming full circle, it breaks it to open up new future possibilities. The stars pierce through the deep black canvas, altering the surface as if they were ablaze. They are bright burning points struggling to emerge and be seen. Without darkness, without the night, the beauty of the stars could not be fully grasped. This is the condition of man, living his daily hell, purgatory, and paradise. Fear, love, courage, and pain confirm our existence, our journey, our here and now, wherein the stars remain the only mystery. Antonio Teruzzi does not claim to provide answers to mankind's fundamental questions. He perceives Dante Alighieri's work as an intention, a key to interpreting existence. Like a modern shaman, he poses these questions to the observer. Antonio assumes the role of a pure artist, challenging the cultural superstructures that presently cloud our vision. He chooses to call the future "life," offering his sensibility to point towards the stars and inviting us to rebehold them.*

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