

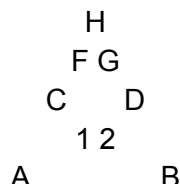
Letter from Francesco Somaini to Enrico Crispolti

23rd March 1979

Dear Enrico,

First and foremost, I fully and wholeheartedly agree with you regarding the book about our participation in the Venice Art Biennale. I also agree to give two drawings to the gallerist. And, I'm interested in a certain number of copies (say 30 to 50) for another drawing or lithograph. I now wish to tell you about the essay for the Bologna book. Firstly, and this needs to be brought up now, it is getting urgent since I still have to have it translated. Second, it will need two quotes, or rather "references" if you prefer.

A) While taking the color photos, I rediscovered two high reliefs that, together, formed the part that lies horizontal to the ground in that *Retable*, that altar of Life and Death that I had begun in 1967 and continued in 1968. It included the two Thanatos Athanatos as guardians of the temple A + B offset by the two springs representing life, C and D.



The two gaping, half-open doors or portals, F G, on the theme of death, opened onto a large square or cube of TRIUMPHANT LIFE which never progressed beyond the H drawings.

This complex piece was never carried out because, at the time, I was unable to conceive and create the LIFE element. Now that I would know how to do it following the Antropoammoniti theme, I have no desire to make such an altar. I put this picture with Arcevia as a symbol of the whole book. Nevertheless, the two unfinished pieces were imprints, and looking at them again led me to realize that they already contained the roots of the trace-imprint idea, which I later forgot and then rediscovered with Arcevia starting in '76.

This brings me to the second issue.

B) The Trace is becoming ever more important for me, and it's taking on a theoretical dimension that I'd like to talk to you about in person or on the phone. That might be the conclusion of your paper. I hereby enclose the sheet on the imprints that was pasted at the Biennale: I look forward to integrating it with my new thoughts when we speak.

Ciao, see you soon

Francesco

The two IMPRINTS that, along with the corresponding SCULPTURE-MATRICES form part of the display of this Biennale are the core of a more complex and multifaceted ongoing project for the city of Duisburg, in the Ruhr area. It is a counterproject whose commissioning is rooted in a concerned cultural demand regarding the focal Königstrasse and the struggle of Neuenkamp residents against the recent and overbearing Fina installation.

Those ANTROPOAMMONITI that, from 1975 onwards, have been densifying a WRAPPED and constrained body into a circular image apt to rotation, "a continuous bas-relief, a memory, a bodily imprint that sinks and merges with the earth and the landscape" are its immediate antecedents. Here, the SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THAT WHICH IS WRAPPED PRESENTS THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOMA INTO TOPOS, and aids the metamorphosis of the corporeal element into a place, of sculpture into a landscape. The corporeal element can revitalize the urban context in its formal and thus psychological being VIA THE MEDIATION OF ITS METAMORPHOSING INTO PLACE. Since 1970, MACROICONS symbolizing the values of a recovered primordial naturalness were being proposed as an emotional compensation for the human disqualification within the city. Amidst the steel mills and mines of the grim and dismal conurbation of the Ruhr, in an environment that appears to be completely devoid of humanity, these traces can turn into direct connections between sculpture, environment, and urban context; they can tell of the flesh, of life, and be tinged with hope.

Photo caption: A moment of the making of the Trace using its matrix: *Antropoammonite XVI*, 1978.