

## The end is in the beginning, and yet you go on

### Borders of love and love of the borders Reflections for a reading of Geapolitica by Lihi Turjeman

Can we love only what we understand, or do we understand only what we love?

You stand before a work by Lihi Turjeman; you get lost in the large scale ecstatic experience that is immediately produced and you wonder which side you are on. There's always a choice, a path to take when looking at her works, because every inch of the canvas, every pictorial gesture of the artist is full of strokes, lines and perspectives, let's say borders: Geapolitica.

What is a border: a dividing line or a meeting place? On one hand, borders are thresholds, the more promising the more risky. Thresholds that opens up to the un-known, to the non-place, to the absolute Other. Can we really love what we perceive if it is unknown to the soul, if it cannot be brought down to an experience that may be filtered through what we know about the world? On the other hand, borders are barriers, bonds, as tight as they are respected, known and rooted in our culture.

We experience this kind of border every day, on our own skin: the shortness of breath after a long run, the sting in our gums when we bite into an ice-cream that is too cold, our sense of numbness after a night of heavy drinking. Those are borders of ourselves and of our potential. Politically speaking, borders may be found in that sense of restlessness that grasps us when facing the arrival of immigrants, the sudden fear of being followed through a park at night, the anxiety facing a disease appearing on the human body. Every shock, even that triggered by refusal, corresponds to a certain form of spirituality; every border offers the chance for it to be crossed, borders are here to show us that we are not in a complete control of our lives.

#### Thresholds and Secrets

Geapolitica does not answer the question. Not for a lack of arguments, but due to a different perspective – a term so dear to the artist – just as she changes our perspective, forcing us to observe her paintings on the floor.

The message of the works produced by Turjeman plays with the notion of threshold and secrets rather than with contents. In Geapolitica, the artist offers two distinct access points to her work. Two 'thresholds' through which to look at and judge her creations, 'the Creation', because art is always the keyhole through which we can access the secret of life as we experience it.

The first threshold is thus the one that we do not cross, an optical path. This is not an itinerary of Platonic induction, from specific matter to universal beauty, but rather a *via negationis*, a path cutting through the refusal to go any further, a persuasive and sceptical invitation to remain within the joy of sensory fruition, an aporetic path that leads nowhere if not towards the marvel of finding yourself where you already are. The threshold becomes an impassable border and we continue to dance along it, feeling the happiness of the surface.

The second threshold is an empirical path, unpredictable. A laborious, intense path, for it lies one step beyond the gateway: an invitation to enter the artist's creative process. What will we find in there: marvels or atrocities? Above all, who is in there? And once again, in the words of Pink Floyd, "is there anybody out there?"

Choosing this path does not drive introspection – her art is not mystical, but volcanic, vivid and provocative, it is an art that demands involvement, participation; it shows the way outside, beyond our physical and mental barriers, beyond our comfort zones. HAVE is the greeting written on the threshold of the 'House of the Faun' in Pompeii – a transition space. A request to enter so as to overcome something, not to get anywhere; the void with the mountains in the background of HAVE\HERE is a clear sign open to the mystery of crossing over, into the world beyond, the place beyond.

#### Mystery without Meaning

What secrets lie beyond the threshold? Lihi Turjeman's pictorial dramatisation does not reveal them, as she is less interested in the sense and more in the act of creation.

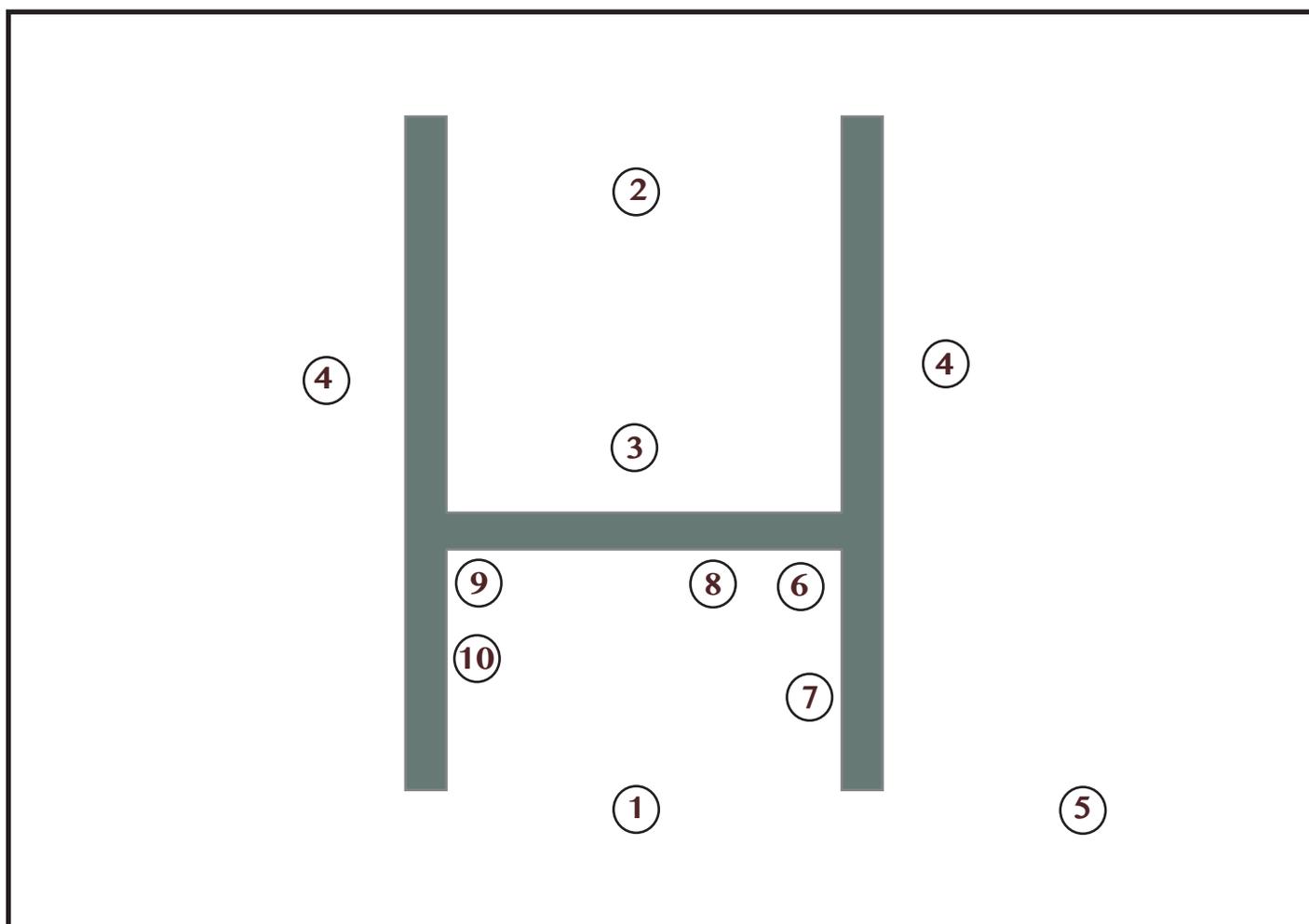
Going beyond the threshold and accepting the mystery, even if inside it there were no meaning. Perhaps this is the most fascinating node of Geapolitica. The pressing and urgent invitation to stay here, now, in a certain and particular situation of perspectival doubt, in a mysterious moment of Limbo, in which it is possible to seek out the secret of things by becoming a part of them. Is the work HAVE\HERE really a hospitable greeting, or should it be understood as a hidden desire for possession? In Dreams and Drama (the second floor piece in the exhibition) does the visual homage to old floors with their geometric patterns, obsessive to the point of self-annihilation, open up a path or a labyrinth? And the grids that may be glimpsed in the series of four canvases titled Rootstock, where do they place the viewer? Are they windows on a lunar world or bars that imprison us?

I like to think that in this exhibition, Turjeman investigates the impossible and finds the loss. The loss of sense, the loss of memory, the loss of direction. What kind of borders do we have to cross or not in order to remember what we have lost? Anyhow, whatever loss of meaning it is destined for, Turjeman's art is always open to a never-ending, solid research.

Even if nothing lies beyond the border, would it still be worth seeking the void, which Geapolitica represents with continual references to holes, to orbits, to eyes without a gaze, to lunar landscapes?

It would be worth doing so because man is the only being capable of going beyond such borders, the only one capable of reflecting in depth on himself, surpassing the unconsciousness of matter in the psychic chaos that describes his own existence. Even if we knew there was no one there waiting for us beyond the threshold, even if our path were already at its end after the first step, art would still be destined to take that second stride, and then onwards from there, as far as we can go. After all, as Beckett writes in his Endgame: “The end is in the beginning, and yet you go on.”

Gabriele Pieroni



- 1 Have, mix media on canvas, cm 400x600
- 2 Dreams and drama, mix media on canvas, cm 380x400
- 3 Codex, mix media on canvas, cm 155x100
- 4 Root stock, mix media on canvas, cm 190x155 (x4)
- 5 Untitled, mix media on canvas, cm 155x100
- 6 Lui (Him), mix media on canvas, diam. cm 35
- 7 Untitled, mix media on canvas, cm 50x35
- 8 Untitled, mix media on canvas, cm 50x35
- 9 Untitled, mix media on canvas, cm 70x50
- 10 White glows, mix media on canvas, cm 30x40s

The letter H is also present in the structure of the display, to give even more power to the welcoming motto. The letter H, included in the last work of Lihi “Non finito - Dig As High As You Can” is the international symbol for heliports, while it can also recall the words Help and Home