

Benni Bosetto
Angels

14 September 2019 | 6 pm

Villa Il Cerretino, Poggio a Caiano

The earliest traces of the figure of the guardian angel of the hearth date back to the Assyrian-Babylonian civilization. By the name of *Karibu*, “the one who invokes”, the angel was represented with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic features, and with wings and hands extended in the gesture of interceding with the gods. The *Karibu*, from which the term “cherub” derives, was reproduced in the form of statuettes, inserted in the foundations of houses or kept in various rooms.

Recalling the tradition of the beneficial spirits of the house, the five terracotta sculptures of which *Angels* is composed, preserve the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic appearance and the apotropaic function attributed to the *Karibu*, representing the guardians of the Villa, whose history leads back to distant intrigues and opposed love.

Villa Il Cerretino, built in the first half of the fourteenth century, passed to the Medici in the fifteenth century and was then chosen, in the late sixteenth century, by Grand Duke Francesco I as the residence of Bianca Cappello, his lover and later second wife. A still existing secret passage allowed the two to meet, connecting Il Cerretino to the more famous Villa Medicea in Poggio a Caiano, where, once married, the spouses were killed by poisoning. The love story between Bianca and Francesco was strongly opposed and still constitutes one of the most infamous episodes in Medici history: Francesco I, unlike his predecessors, had a temperament little inclined to public life, his attention was absorbed by alchemical studies and the cause of his political failures was constantly attributed by his younger brother, cardinal Ferdinando, to the alleged witchcraft of Bianca Cappello.

As in a cathartic rite, Bosetto, reconnecting herself to existing mythologies, conceived a narrative functional to the place and its history, in an attempt to purify and seal what remained unresolved with the murder of Bianca and Francesco. The reference to the figure of the bat present in the sculptures refers to the two lovers and to the accusations of witchcraft addressed to them. An animal frequently associated with the spirit realm and the magic arts, some shamans saw the bat as the guardian of the night and the guide for past lives, in addition to being identified as a bearer of fortune in numerous civilizations, such as in ancient Greece.

The ornaments present in the sculptural group bring back to an archaic dimension, constituting a writing that, between figuration and abstraction, activates the apotropaic object, manifesting the beneficial power placed in the guardians, now animated according to the history of the Villa.

Benni Bosetto (b. 1987, Milan), lives and works in Milan. She earned her degree from Accademia di Brera, Milan, and she studied at Sandberg Institut, Amsterdam. Among her recent shows: 2020 - ADA, Rome, IT (upcoming); Almanac, Turin, IT (upcoming). 2019 – Kunstraum, London, UK, curated by Giulia Civardi (upcoming); Special Project, Artissima, curated by Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti and Guido Costa, Turin, IT (upcoming); Villa Il Cerretino, Collezione Biagioni, Poggio a Caiano, IT; Horst, Vilvoorde, BG, curated by Evelyn Simons. 2018 - OGR, Turin, IT, performance curated by Valentina Lacinio and Samuele Piazza; Fonderia Battaglia, Milan, IT; MAMbo, Bologna, IT, curated by Lorenzo Balbi; Fondazione Baruchello, Rome, IT, curated by Caterina Molteni; ADA, Rome, IT. 2017 - ArtVerona Collateral Project, organized by Mauro De Iorio, Verona, IT; Clog, Verona, IT, curated by Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti; FuturDome, Milan, IT, curated by Ginevra Bria; Tile, Milan, IT. 2016 – DAMA, Turin, IT, performance curated by Lorenzo Balbi; De Appel Art Center, Amsterdam, NL; Marselleria, Milan, IT. 2015 – Fanta Spazio, Milan, IT, project by Beatrice Marchi. Bosetto took part in the following residencies: Fonderia Artistica Battaglia (Milan, 2018); Pavillon des Indes (Paris, 2016); VIR Via Farini, (Milan, 2014). Bosetto was shortlisted for Premio Gamec and she was awarded Premio Fondazione Fiera Milano in 2019; she earned Premio Termoli in 2018.