
Critical text by Alessandra Ialà

Since 1993, ARIS' creative research has originated in *lettering*-that angular, abstract style that characterizes the letters of his *tag*. Over time, this evolved into a softer, more rounded mark, with which he began painting feminine silhouettes using brushes and rollers. Gradually, these silhouettes opened up into the formlessness of primordial masses, fragmented by the emergence of ambiguous organic creatures. These masses slowly began to unravel, while the creatures started to take shape and definition, acquiring structure and soul through layered superimpositions, spreading simultaneously across a wide variety of surfaces.

Since the beginning, ARIS' work has been a research into the mark that originated in inhospitable and inaccessible places within the urban environment, from the decaying walls of abandoned buildings immersed in nature to the anonymous surfaces of expanding cities. Yet this mark continues its existence through fluctuation, enclosing forms on the two-dimensional surfaces of paper and ceramics within the artist's studio, where painting alternates screen printing and drawing merges with modelling and cutting. A mark that has never surrendered to pure abstraction, always maintaining a connection with the natural world that inspires the artist.

Today, the original investigation into the mark has matured into a research in which the mark becomes form in space. Through continuous experimentation, metal allows these forms to acquire volume within the third dimension of SPAZIO C21, where viewers can move from a contemplative to an exploratory experience of ARIS' work. The entire corpus of original works presented here, expresses the simplicity of the pure emotional approach with which the artist addresses formal issues, without any programmatic elaboration of the mark, appearing to arise directly from the artist's stream of consciousness, imitating the natural non-linearity of human thought. In line with this *modus operandi*, the exhibition unfolds through an intense dialogue between the different types of works. The relationship between works on paper and layered metal sculptures, as well as between ceramics and wall-mounted metal installations, reveals the organic transformation of the mark into form and vice versa, enriching the viewer's perception with a certain sense of depth.

With this approach, ARIS demonstrates his ability to engage with sculptural language, creating works endowed with an intense vitality that immediately establishes contact with viewers, narrating absences speaking of presences, voids that evoke fullness. His sculptures allow the gaze to pass through them, assembling the different surfaces of the layers, only guided by instinct and curiosity, as the eye explores the multiplicity of overlaps, correspondences, decompositions and suspended intersections. At times, layers seem to merge through superimposition, while at others they intersect, then separate, generating plays of light, shadowed spaces, and alternating full and empty sections. From works on paper and ceramics, through window installations and interior wall pieces, to the sculptures in the central space, the artist's simple and immediate aesthetic dialectic unfolds through relationships of contrast.

Fluid presences of light, air and matter are sustained by the contrast of visual sensations: from the chromatic minimalism of blue and red outlining layered profiles against the white of paper and inverted ceramic amphorae; to the white metal cut-outs against the blue background layers of window installations; as well as the elegant chromatic contrast of neutral-toned painterly interventions on the raw metal surfaces of the floating wall works.

Further contrasts emerge through unexpected perceptual paradoxes generated by the selected materials. While a common material such as ceramic lends gravity to the lightness of drawing and conveys a handcrafted perception of the mark on matter, a less common material such as metal grants an unexpected and paradoxical lightness to forms, shifting the viewer's perception toward a dialogue between light and air through matter-or its absence.

Here, ARIS achieves what sculptor Henry Moore described in his writings as a form "that exists in the fullness of its spatial reality," through the reciprocal and respectful relationship between the nature of the mark and the nature of metal.

In medium and large-scale works, these visual sensations possess the power to transform the perception of surfaces and spaces, reconfiguring them and making the presence of air visible, as the light within shadow, the absence of matter. In smaller formats, these same sensations follow the rhythm of leaves dancing in the wind.

These structures appear both carefully composed and spontaneously fragile, formed by layered profiles whose ambiguity allows simultaneous interpretations as leaf-like organisms and humanoid figures merging into one another. Their sinuous shapes transform as viewers move around them, generating a distinctive sense of seduction—one that, echoing Moore's words, derives from the asymmetry characteristic of organic forms that grow by adapting to their environment and to the force of gravity. On a conceptual level, this compelling compositional model—central to the artist's entire body of work—reflects an equally compelling worldview, according to which all creatures, both sentient and non-sentient, interpenetrate and influence one another in a continuous transformative process of cause and effect, as is life itself.

ARIS (Viareggio, 1978)

Coming from the world of writing, ARIS began painting trains and walls from the first half of the 1990s.

Since the very beginning, he developed a marked inclination toward experimentation, which progressively led him to move away from lettering and incorporate within his works synthetic, liquid figures capable of constantly changing by blending into new forms and colours. This imaginary is expressed in public spaces not traditionally devoted to art with the same ease with which it appears on paper and canvas.

In his mural experimentation, often carried out in peripheral and abandoned spaces, he creates a unified relationship with the landscape that results from urban stratification and human passage.

This layering is also found in his studio works, on canvas and paper, where spray paint, tempera and markers overlap to create new surfaces over existing ones, emphasising processes of sedimentation over time.

In his most recent research, he combines an essential colour palette with the ability to create spatial depth within his works, which often relate to three-dimensional surfaces. ARIS' art can be encountered in public space, where murals and sculptures are present in various Italian and international cities.

His research has been exhibited in numerous national and international galleries and institutional venues, including PAC - Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan; the Italian Cultural Institute in New York; Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn; and Palazzo Blu, Pisa.

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