

SOME REFLECTIONS ON MARINO MARINI'S LEGACY THROUGH THE EYES OF HIS PUPIL, ALIK CAVALIERE

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ABSTRACT

This article assesses Marino Marini's legacy through the eyes of his disciple and successor as Chair of Sculpture at the Accademia di Brera in Milan, Alik Cavaliere. My investigation concentrates on Cavaliere's (mostly) unpublished journals, in which the artist reported his thoughts on his relationship with his teacher and most of their private conversations from the 1960s to the 1980s. Based on this information, my essay investigates the impact that Marini had on his pupil within the context of their artistic and personal relationship. The analysis focuses on Cavaliere's reworking of Marini's concept of 'the feminine', which the journals demonstrate stemmed from an exchange of opinions between the two artists. Exploring Marini's ambivalent idea of the 'feminine', oscillating between 'traditional kindness' and 'cerebral sharpness', I analyze how this concept affected his poetry and syntax. I argue that the dichotomous character of Marini's female nudes, seen by critics as struggling between plastic volumes and erotic surfaces, might be traced back to the artist's ambivalent idea of the 'feminine' itself; I then explore how the concept was assimilated and re-semanticized by Cavaliere in his work. In the second section of my paper, I apply this perspective to the analysis of two works, namely Marini's "Venere" [Venus] (1938-40) and the last work by Cavaliere, "Grande pianta Dafne" [Large Plant Daphne] (1991). Contextualizing my analysis within the frame of their complex artistic, professional, and personal relationship, I demonstrate how Marini continued to inform Cavaliere's work for years after his death, and that the idea of the 'feminine', in its ambivalence, was for both artists a subtle and powerful catalyst to address the complexity of the world.

Introduction

At first glance, Marino Marini's *Venere* (figure 1) of 1938–40¹ and Alik Cavaliere's *Grande Pianta Dafne* (figure 2) of 1991 are two artworks that have nothing in common aside from titles of classical derivation. On the one hand, a headless and armless female nude sculpture resembling an ancient Venus, and on the other, a tangled bush installation, magical and ghostly at the same time, hiding a bronze female silhouette –

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this would probably be the first impression of a hypothetical beholder looking at the two pieces. However, were they to linger for a moment, our viewer would probably start noticing that the works share something else in common: the very sight of them arouses a slight sense of confusion. Is that Venus an ancient relic? Is that bush made of real leaves and branches? It would seem so, but still... There is something wrong with them. To understand why the naive opinion of a hypothetical beholder should be relevant to an academic discussion about the relationship between Marini's and Cavaliere's art, it is necessary to take a step back.



Figure 1. Marino Marini, "Venere" [Venus], 1938–40. Terracotta, height: 44 1/2 in. (113 cm). Private collection.



Figure 2. Alik Cavaliere, "Grande pianta Dafne" [Large Plant Daphne], 1991. Bronze and brass, 177 5/32 x 161 13/32 x 157 31/64 in. (450 x 410) x 400 cm). Archivio Cavaliere, Milan.

Cavaliere started making art at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan under Marini's aegis, and as Cavaliere documented in detail in his journals, the personal and professional relationship between the two artists spanned more than forty years – a fruitful, intense connection which informed Cavaliere's work throughout his career. Thus, in light of both the apparent dissimilarity of the two artists' works and the documented importance that Marini had on Cavaliere, this paper aims to answer two questions: Which features of Cavaliere's art can be traced back to Marini's influence? And, to what extent might unpacking the implication of Marini's legacy in Cavaliere's work enrich the understanding of both artists' practices?

The springboard for my investigation are Cavaliere's (mostly) unpublished journals, in which the artist reports his thoughts on his relationship with his master and most of their private conversations from the 1960s to the 1980s.² Given that this primary source is

one-sided – that is, based only in Cavaliere's perspective – I analyze the journals by comparing them with some of Marini's writings and interviews, and I also ground my investigation within the framework of the critical literature on the artist.

The first section of this paper introduces Cavaliere's journals and how Marini's persona emerges in them. My analysis demonstrates how the exploration of the link between Marini's teaching style and certain formal features characterizing his work might prove useful in investigating the influence he had on Cavaliere's practice. The second section applies this perspective to the analysis of the two works before our hypothetical viewer – Marini's *Venere* and Cavaliere's *Grande pianta Dafne* (Large plant Daphne, 1991) – to show how Marini continued to inform Cavaliere's work throughout his career. Ultimately, my analysis aims to disclose how Marini's idea of the feminine was at the core of Cavaliere's reworking of his master's legacy; and how “the feminine,” both as artistic subject and conceptual inspiration, was, for these two artists, a means to give shape to the complexity of the contemporary world.

I

“I have always taken notes about what Marini told me with a twofold purpose. Firstly, because I liked the way he spoke, and also because, in my heart, I have always thought of using this material to write a book about Marini himself.”³ This confession opens Cavaliere's summer journal of 1967. He never wrote a book on his master. However, this statement of purpose unveils that Cavaliere did not write down his thoughts about Marini simply episodically; rather, the artist was led by the systematic intention of gathering impressions and evidence to compose a sort of portrait of him. In writing about Marini, Cavaliere's prose alternates personal observations and literal quotations. The latter are introduced through the formula “Marini says,” a sort of *ipse dixit* meant to highlight the truthfulness and authority of the statements reported. Despite this, the personal nature of the journals makes it impossible to determine to what extent such quotes are reliable. Nevertheless, from the perspective of an exploration of Marini's influence on Cavaliere's work, the inherent subjectivity of the journals can be considered a richness rather than a limitation, providing unique access to Cavaliere's perception of Marini, their relationship, and what the artists wanted (or did not want) acknowledged for posterity.

Cavaliere met Marini in 1942 at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, just a few months before the latter's voluntary exile to Switzerland, in early 1943. In 1946, when Marini returned to Milan and resumed teaching at Brera, Cavaliere attended his sculpture classes. In 1956, Cavaliere became Marini's assistant and, in 1970, his successor as chair of sculpture. Marini died in 1980, but years after the end of their formal professional relationship, Cavaliere was still writing about his teacher, taking on the role of witness – and thus repository – of Marini's legacy. In his journal in 1984, Cavaliere wrote: “I followed Marini in his work and teaching,

I am thus the most reliable witness of his teaching.”⁴ In this sentence, the repetition of the word “teaching” (*insegnamento*) is not accidental and has a twofold meaning. In the first instance, Cavaliere uses the term “teaching” to refer to Marini’s lectures; in the second, the word is meant in the broadest sense of “artistic legacy.” These two levels are indissolubly connected when it comes to understanding the artistic relationship between Cavaliere and Marini, and their mentor-pupil bond cannot be prescindied in such an investigation.

Thus, before delving into an analysis of the poetries of the two artists, it is essential to first reflect on Cavaliere’s impressions of Marini as his teacher. In this regard, the journals highlight two specific features characterizing the figure of Marini-teacher. Firstly, the freedom of his teaching style. As a matter of fact, unlike many other professors at Brera, Marini “did not create a crowd of epigones,”⁵ for his way of teaching was free of any sort of academic impositions. Cavaliere describes Marini’s teaching style as poised between freedom from schematism and close guidance, “escaping any possible prefabricated cultural cage – like in a game where rules are meant to free the imagination.”⁶ For this reason, Cavaliere always saw Marini as a “model” in the purest meaning of the word, namely, as a “point of reference,” who led his students by leaving them “free from any institutional constraint.”⁷

Secondly, Cavaliere highlighted the effectiveness of Marini’s eloquence. According to the pupil, Marini used to combine theory and practice in his lectures (“his [Marini’s] words were impregnated with a subtle practical knowledge”) by speaking in language both rich and impalpable at the same time. Cavaliere describes Marini’s eloquence as concurrently “essential” and “flowery,” a combination of sharpness and warmth resulting in a “vibrant” and “living” expressiveness.⁸ The main challenge in reporting his conversations with Marini consisted of preserving the “living” character of his eloquence – “Marini’s words were tangible while he was talking, then, as soon as written down, they evaporated.”⁹ In light of this, the first element that emerges in the analysis Cavaliere’s written descriptions of his mentor is the coexistence of two opposite semantic areas. On the one hand, the artist deploys terms expressing the idea of concreteness (tangible, practical); on the other, he draws in words belonging to a more nuanced and subtle semantic area, ascribable to an idea of intangibility and, more elusively, essentiality (subtle, essential, theoretical).

The coexistence of opposites that Cavaliere perceived as characteristic of Marini as a teacher was mirrored by Marini’s judgment on his pupil’s work, again as reported by the journals. In this regard, two elements take center stage. Firstly, Marini defines Cavaliere’s art as simultaneously destructive and creative (“According to Marini, my art is characterized by different inputs – I am discontinuous but perforating, destructive but creative”),¹⁰ and he establishes a causal link between disruption and truth (“our world

needs to destroy first in order to be true”).¹¹ Secondly, in his comments on Cavaliere's work, Marini puts the accent on the need for art to be imaginative (“Marini said my work is still too realistic, and, despite entailing subtle features, it is not yet imaginative enough. He is right.”)¹²

This last point is not a dichotomy per se; however, as shall be seen, it becomes one when contextualized within some statements Marini made about his own art. Marini's emphasis on the necessity for art to be imaginative is an element occurring not only in Cavaliere's journals but also highlighted by Marini himself beginning with his first public statement on his own poetry. On the occasion of the Second Roman Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale, in 1935, Marini claimed that he considered art to be initially and exclusively inspired by nature, which is then overcome through abstraction.¹³ Continuing from this perspective, Marini stated that “interpretation” and “transformation” are key for artists, otherwise they are “at the mercy of the real,” which lacks any sort of artistry at all.¹⁴ However, Marini's position with regard to figurative and abstract art is more complex. As a matter of fact, it is not difficult to find additional statements by the artist in apparent contradiction to earlier ones. For example, interviewed in 1959, Marini claimed that “abstract art has a major limitation,” namely, “it lacks the feeling of reality.”¹⁵ In light of this, Marini's comments about Cavaliere's work needing to be more imaginative and less realistic are less than conclusive, for Marini's own position regarding imagination and realism in art is, again, twofold itself – oscillating between the realms of figuration and abstraction.

The duality of concreteness-rarefaction characterizing Marini as a teacher, as well as of creation-disruption, or realism-abstractness, emerging from Marini's comments on Cavaliere's work, might be a useful in approaching certain features of Marini's poetry that are central in Cavaliere's reworking. In this regard, the representation of the female nude and the concept of “femininity” as a specific context of influence are most significant. There is a recurring element in critics' interpretation of Marini's female nudes, despite their evolution over time: the identification of a syntactic coexistence of stylization and carnality. Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti described Marini's *Nudo o Maschera* (Nude or Mask, 1936), displayed at the Venice Biennale in 1937, as animated by an interplay between “fragments of cold and archaic stylizations” and a “subtly inquisitive, hungry, and agile femininity.”¹⁶ As Flavio Fergonzi has pointed out, in 1937 Roberto Longhi recognized in Marini's most recent female nudes “a secret dialectic between rarefaction and solidness.”¹⁷ In 1946, Lamberto Vitali, in commenting on Marini's 1938 *Giovinetta*, displayed at the 1939 Rome Quadriennale, highlighted the antinomy between the construction of pure forms and the “taste of living flesh” characterizing the work.¹⁸ Similarly, in 1950, Cesare Brandi used the incisive expression “plastic epidermis” to describe the expressive power of the surfaces of Marini's female nudes.¹⁹ These comments highlight how the main thread emerging

from the coeval literature on his female nudes is the identification of a coexistence of opposites similar in nature to those identified by Cavaliere regarding Marini's way of teaching and speaking, and also traceable in Marini's judgment of his pupil's works. On the one hand, there is the reference to the idea of concreteness, sensuality, expressive vibrance, and realism; on the other, to the idea of abstraction, stylization, and essential sharpness. In this regard, it is interesting to observe how such dualism is mirrored by Marini's own idea of the feminine itself, as reported in Cavaliere's journals: according to Marini, there are indeed two kinds of women. The "feminine" woman is warm, carnal, and welcoming, while the "cerebral" woman is sharp, intellectual, and kind of disembodied.²⁰ Marini's concept of femininity seems to coincide precisely with the tension, emphasized by critics, between the vibrant carnality of his surfaces and the sharp stylization of his volumes – as though, in a sense, every female nude made by Marini simultaneously expresses his ideas of a vibrant and warm femininity and a sharp and plastic one.

Contemporary critics' observations on Marini's nudes were echoed by most studies on the subject at the time, demonstrating a multitude of qualitative antinomies encompassed into a framework of duality that aligns with the figure of Marini that emerges from Cavaliere's journals – namely, in the coexistence of pure shapes and model truthfulness.²¹ This concurrence seems indeed to reflect Marini's thoughts about the need for art to be figurative (model truthfulness) and abstract (pure shapes) at the same time – in other words, this relates to Marini's reference that art should be imaginative without losing the "feeling of reality." Based on this information, we will next explore the role played by Marini's idea of the feminine to investigate the extent to which it affected Cavaliere's reworking of his teacher's poetry.

II

One of the most relevant observations about the teacher-pupil relationship between Marini and Cavaliere is Guido Ballo's assertion that Cavaliere essentially learned from Marini how to take materials "down to the basics of bare bones."²² According to Ballo, Marini's main legacy in Cavaliere's work is the creation of "skinless" sculptures. Ballo was most likely not referring to Marini's opulent female nudes, but rather his tormented postwar works.²³ The artistic relationship between Cavaliere and Marini reached its pinnacle in the 1950s and 1960s, as Cavaliere completed his studies at Brera and became Marini's assistant as chair of sculpture. At this time, Marini had basically abandoned the female nude as a subject. When asked why he had done so in an interview in 1959, Marini answered that his "women" could no longer fit in the contemporary world, because their "state of grace" had been lost forever due to the horrors of the war. According to this reasoning, the only possible way for Marini to make art from then on was through "broken and collapsed" characters, to borrow the artist's

own description of his Horsemen.²⁴ This idea of disruption and ghostliness is what Ballo identified as the primary legacy of Marini's poetry in Cavaliere's work. In his introduction to Cavaliere's exhibition at the 1964 Venice Biennale, Ballo described the distressing atmosphere of the work as "loaded with a nightmarish tension, a sort of grief lucidly imprisoning our subconscious and evoking impossible escapes."²⁵

In the 1960s, Cavaliere produced trees, fruits, gardens, and forests – "arboreal-floral" subjects, as Gillo Dorfles called them²⁶ – that appear both naturalistic and antinaturalistic at the same time. Every branch, leaf, and veining displays the highest level of mimetic exactitude, achieved through Cavaliere's masterly use of the ancient technique of lost wax, a method of metal casting in which molten metal is poured into a wax mold, in Cavaliere's case formed around real leaves and branches. In this way, he duplicated the original model and also denaturalized it in metal – a material that imprisons the vibrant life of nature through its hardness.

Such translation, of a natural item into its perfectly artificial alter ego, results in the "hallucinated" and "ghosting" effect identified by Ballo as fundamental to Cavaliere's sculptures from the 1960s. Works such as *Il fiore, i fiori, le radici, la terra* (Flower, flowers, roots, soil, 1965) (figure 3) resemble fossils more than flowers; they are like fragile pieces of nature preserved by time, where the living organism is just a residue, a sort of denaturalized organic memory crystallized in an object.²⁷ Despite the alienating atmosphere dominating Cavaliere's works from the 1960s, the artist's concept of nature, while the basis of these works, is not as distressed and nightmarish as it might seem. In his journal in 1964, Cavaliere noted: "I keep thinking about the sense of nature. Sometimes I imagine a *natura naturans*, lush and munificent; other times I think about nature taking over all human work; a powerful nature."²⁸ He added: "My flowers must be cruel, monstrous, intrusive, gentle, and fake to be true."²⁹ With these words Cavaliere graphically expressed the duality entailed by his idea of nature: on the one hand, nature is harmonious and munificent; on the other, it is voracious and monstrous.



Figure 3. Alik Cavaliere, “Il fiore, i fiori, le radici, la terra” [Flower, Flowers, Roots, Soil], 1965. Bronze, brass, and steel, 92 33/64 x 48 27/64 x 36 39/64 in. (235 x 123 x 93 cm). Archivio Cavaliere, Milan

In a journal from 1965, Cavaliere described his concept of nature by employing the expression *madre e matrigna*, an Italian saying that describes a twofold femininity: nurturing (*madre*) and unkind (*matrigna*) at the same time.³⁰ It is clear that, for Cavaliere, nature was not just an object but an active subject, a sort of female character with a double personality. This was Cavaliere’s poetry in the 1960s, when his relationship with Marini was at its finest. In the features of unkind ghostliness, identified by Ballo, and nurturing munificence, both characterizing Cavaliere’s idea of nature, it is possible to catch sight of the influence of Marini’s ambivalent idea of the feminine. In this sense, it is possible to argue that while in the 1950s and 1960s Marini’s work was turning to the representation of disruption, resulting in his abandonment of the female nude due to the loss of the “state of grace,” his twofold concept of the feminine continued to have an effect on Cavaliere’s poetry.

To assess the importance of Marini’s influence on Cavaliere’s work, it is essential to seize its temporal extension, to see how it goes beyond the years of the personal relationship between the two artists, persisting even after Marini’s death. For this reason, I will analyze *Grande Pianta Dafne*, which, made in 1991, was one of Cavaliere’s last works. In 1986, six years after Marini’s death and about fifteen years

after their collaboration at Brera, Cavaliere confessed in his journal that Marini's teachings had never abandoned him, for although Marini was no longer "in his head," he was still "in his heart," with so many of his mentor's statements and intuitions continuing to come back into Cavaliere's mind.³¹

For my analysis of Cavaliere's work, I next turn to Marini's *Venere* from 1938–40: a voluptuous female body, headless and armless, like an ancient sculpture exhumed after being forgotten for ages. Languidly resting on the right leg, the body exudes a sense of timeless imperturbability, as if it has been in this world forever; it is like an archeological find belonging to an undefinable time. However, the tormented processing of the red terracotta vibrantly suggests real flesh. Though the figure is headless, its combination of timeless shapes and fleshy surface gives the impression that it is alive and watching us, as a sort of unperturbed and silent witness.

Cavaliere's *Grande Pianta Dafne* meanwhile presents itself as a large-scale tangled plant, an impenetrable lushness of branches and leaves, realistic in every single veining. The lost-wax technique has produced an appearance as natural as it is artificial, simultaneously vivid and ghostly. However, differently from Cavaliere's arboreal-floral works from the 1960s, this plant hides the bronze silhouette of a woman – Daphne – on the inside.³² The choice of Daphne is key: she is the nymph who asked the gods to turn her into a tree to escape from Apollo. Thus, as a mythological character whose erotic female body becomes an asexual plant, Daphne quintessentially expresses the duality of the feminine: carnal and disembodied. Daphne's figure is two-meters high and, compared to the luxuriance of the surrounding branches and leaves, appears glaring and impalpably shy. In the relationship of the essentiality of Daphne's figure and the richness of the plant around it, it is possible to trace the dialectic duality characterizing Marini's female nudes and his idea of the feminine; in other words, all those antinomies – concreteness and intangibility, sensual realism and sharp stylization, carnality and intellectualism – that can be summarized in the macro duality of pure shape and model truthfulness.

However, the multifaceted dialectic between vibrant realism and timeless pureness of shapes entailed by Marini's *Venere* is dismembered and recomposed by Cavaliere through the representation of Daphne's metamorphosis. Intrinsically, the plant surrounding Daphne seems to entail the same ambivalence between ghostliness and carnality, sharp artificiality and natural realism, characterizing Cavaliere's works from the 1960s – their generous and unkind (*madre e matrigna*) concept of nature. The relationship between this kind of nature and Daphne's stylized and essential figure increases the realism and the truthfulness of the vegetal model, as if the carnality of Daphne's body was entirely absorbed by the plant, making the nymph a disembodied

silhouette of pure form. Daphne, the mythological character whose metamorphosis entails the duality between human and nature par excellence, is both the plant and the female two-dimensional figure hidden on the inside.

Cavaliere's work seems to multiply the duality expressed by Marini's concept of the feminine as in a game of mirrors: on the one hand, the plant is impregnated with both Daphne's vibrant carnality and the spectrality resulting from the fact that the real body of the nymph no longer exists; on the other hand, Daphne's essential silhouette is the only explicitly feminine element of the work, and, at the same time, the most disembodied and aseptic. In Marini's *Venere*, the duality entailed by the artist's concept of the feminine is contained in the single element of Venus's body; in Cavaliere's *Grande pianta Daphne*, the representation of Daphne's metamorphosis turns the antinomy into a narration in which the antithetical elements reflect each other by combining, decomposing, and intersecting themselves in Daphne's figure and in the plant the nymph's body is turned into. Accordingly, it is ultimately possible to recall Marini's idea of "transformation" as the essential condition of art as his most essential legacy – reworked by Cavaliere. By staging the representation of a transformation (Daphne's metamorphosis), Cavaliere creates a new condition of possibility for the representation of the essential duality entailed by Marini's concept of the feminine, and thus gives new life to what the elder artist, after his experience during the war, thought was no longer possible.

Conclusion

It is now time to return to our hypothetical viewer, whom we left contemplating the two works. They may have interrogated themselves about the works' ambiguous appearances: Is that Venus an ancient relic? If so, why does her skin seem so real? Is that plant made of actual leaves and branches? If so, why does it look so ghostly? While certainly naive, this kind of questioning, triggered by the uncertain and slightly perturbing appearance of the works, unwittingly grasps the most essential point entailed by Cavaliere's reworking of Marini's legacy: the creation of a kind of art that, by raising doubts and questions, actively engages the viewer in the process of defining the work's meaning. As highlighted by critics, from the 1930s to more recent studies, Marini's syntactic (and, as has been seen, poetic) contradictoriness ultimately reflects his intention to give shape to the complexity of the world.³³ In this sense, Marini's concept of the feminine, in its essential ambivalence, gave birth to works, such as *Venere*, that are deeply connected to the contemporary world in the most "alive" and fruitful way. Such works radically question the viewer in their aesthetic experience. Confirming that Marini did not create a "school of epigones," but rather taught his students to freely experiment, the two works analyzed are extraneous in terms of outward appearance, as much as they are essentially bound by the idea of art that they express. By reworking Marini's

concept of the feminine and the perturbing – the meaningful duality their combination entails – Cavaliere gave body to what, according to his perception of his teacher, was the essence of Marini's poetry: creating an invented reality in which our world can reflect itself, like in a game of mirrors.³⁴

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CITATIONS

1. Debate on the date and title of the work is ongoing. The work was long been dated to 1945. See Umbro Apollonio, *Marino Marini* (Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1953); Patrick Waldberg, Herbert Read, and Gualtieri di San Lazzaro, *Marino Marini, l'opera completa* (Milan: Silvana, 1970); Carlo Pirovano, *Marino Marini scultore* (Milan: Electa, 1972); and Pirovano, ed., *Omaggio a Marino Marini* (Milan: Silvana, 1974). However, there is a picture of the work in the catalogue of the exhibition *Mario Mafai – Marino Marini*, held at the Galleria Genova in 1941; this information requires that the dating be adjusted to 1940–41, if not earlier. *Venere* is the title and 1945 the date on the deed of sale of the work, as published in *La Collezione Mattioli. Capolavori dell'avanguardia italiana* (Milan: Skira, 2003), In Giovanni Carandente, ed., *Marino Marini, catalogo ragionato della scultura* (Milan: Skira, 1998), 106–07, no. 149, the work is dated 1938–40 and titled *Giovinetta*. I have decided to keep Carandente's date and to use the title *Venere* as the one appearing on the deed of sale.
2. Cavaliere's journals and agendas cover a time span from 1953 to 1998. There are a total of sixty-one journals and thirty-eight agendas, plus fifteen "libretti," reporting impressions and notes of exhibitions visited by Cavaliere over four decades. All the journals, agendas, and libretti are kept by Cavaliere's widow, Adriana Cavaliere, in her house in Milan. Only part of the journals from the 1960s are published in Elena Pontiggia, ed., *Alik Cavaliere. Taccuini 1960–1969* (Milan: Abscondita, 2015). Some excerpts of the journals from other decades are published in: Pontiggia, ed., *Alik Cavaliere. L'universo verde* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2018); Arturo Schwarz, *Alik Cavaliere. Poeta, filosofo, umanista e scultore, anche* (quasi una biografia) (Milan: Electa, 2008); Francesca Porreca, ed., *Alik Cavaliere. Nei giardini della memoria* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2008); Giorgio Cortenova, ed., *Alik Cavaliere. Racconto, mito, magia* (Venice: Marsilio Editore, 2005); Alik Cavaliere and Guido Ballo, *I luoghi circostanti* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 1991); Alik Cavaliere, *Lo studio* (Milan: Puntoelina, 1990). This paper considers both the published and unpublished journals with a focus on the latter. I had access to the unpublished material thanks to the kindness of Mrs Cavaliere, who opened the door of her home and guided me through the journals.
3. "Ho sempre negli anni preso appunti su quanto diceva Marini con duplice intento: perché mi piaceva, e perché ho sempre pensato in cuor mio di raccogliere questo materiale in un libro su Marini stesso." Alik Cavaliere, Taccuini, June 11, 1967. All translations unless otherwise noted are mine.
4. "Ho seguito Marini nell'insegnamento e nel lavoro. Sono quindi il testimone più attendibile per quanto concerne il suo insegnamento." Cavaliere, Taccuini, March 19, 1984.
5. "Marini non creò uno stuolo di epigoni." Ibid.
6. Cavaliere, Taccuini, October 7, 1982.

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7. Cavaliere, Taccuini, March 19, 1984.
8. "Era un uomo aperto, con una fiorita, vivace e al tempo stesso intensa, conversazione essenziale." Cavaliere, Taccuini, April 16, 1993.
9. "La difficoltà di riportare colloqui avuti con Marini è proprio data dalla forma del suo linguaggio fiorito, vivace, fatto di frasi o parole che nel parlare corrente hanno un preciso peso e significato e scritte svaniscono, evaporano." Cavaliere, Taccuini, April 5, 1962.
10. "Ho, secondo Marini, una natura varia, fatta di diversi impulsi e influssi. Discontinuo ma perforante. Distruttivo ma creatore." Cavaliere, Taccuini, 1962.
11. "Il nostro mondo deve distruggere prima per essere vero." Cavaliere, Taccuini, January 22, 1962.
12. "Marini ha detto che i miei lavori erano ancora legati ad un realismo osservato e, pur avendo cose sottili, non erano inventati. Ha ragione." Cavaliere, Taccuini, April 9, 1962.
13. *Il Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale. Catalogo Generale* (Rome: Tumminelli, 1935), 88.
14. *Ibid.*, 89.
15. Marco Valsecchi, ed., "Impariamo a conoscere gli artisti italiani. A Firenze toccai la barba di Rodin," *Il Giorno* (Milan), September 8, 1959.
16. "Il suo mondo ha maturatamente trovato la sua misura." Carlo L. Ragghianti, quoted in Barbara Cinelli, "Marino Marini e la critica. Qualche fonte, una mancata storiografia e una leggenda," in *Marino Marini Passioni visive. Confronti con i capolavori della scultura, dagli Etruschi a Henry Moore* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2018), 44. For more discussion of this work, see Giammarco Russo, "I nudi femminili e le Pomone," in *Marino Marini Passioni visive*, 113–14.
17. Flavio Fergonzi, "Prima della fama internazionale. Temi della ricerca scultorea di Marino Marini tra gli anni trenta e i quaranta," in *ibid.*, 29.
18. Lamberto Vitali, *Marini* (Florence: Edizioni U, 1946), 26. See also Fergonzi, "Prima della fama internazionale," 18.
19. Cesare Brandi, "Periplo della scultura moderna: Marino Marini," in *L'Immagine*, no. 16 (Rome: Istituto Grafico Tiberino, 1950), 545.
20. "Dice come la donna femminile non fa l'amore complicato, ma solo riceve. Di come sia la donna cerebrale, più fredda ad inventare l'amore nuovo e mentale." Cavaliere, Taccuini, June 11, 1967.
21. Fergonzi, "Prima della fama internazionale," 28.
22. Guido Ballo, "Alik Cavaliere," in *XXXII Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia* (Venice: Edizioni Serenissima, 1964), 123.

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23. I refer specifically to Marini's *Cavalli* (Horses) and *Cavalieri* (Horsemen), described by the artist himself as "broken and collapsed" figures coming out of the "flames" of the war: "Praticamente la terra ha vissuto le distruzioni e i cataclismi che spensero la luna. Questi miei cavalli rotti e crollati, questi miei cavalieri dalle teste senza sembianze, sono le figure uscite da queste fiamme." Valsecchi, "Impariamo a conoscere gli artisti italiani. A Firenze toccai la barba di Rodin."
24. *ibid.*
25. Ballo, "Alik Cavaliere," 124–25.
26. Gillo Dorfles, *Alik Cavaliere* (Turin: Galleria La Minima, 1967).
27. For further discussion about the relationship between natural and artificial features in Cavaliere's 1960s works, see Pietro Bonfiglioli, *Cavaliere e la sostituzione della natura* (Bologna: Galleria de' Foscherari, 1967); and Henry Martin, *Natura morta*, trans. by Milly Graffi (Rome: Galleria La Medusa, 1967).
28. "Continuo a pensare al senso della natura. Mi viene in mente ora una 'natura naturans,' lussuriosa e generosa, ora una natura che inghiotte e distrugge l'opera dell'uomo, una natura potente." Cavaliere, Taccuini, June 1964.
29. "I miei fiori devono essere cattivi, mostruosi, invadenti, gentili, falsi per essere veri." Cavaliere, Taccuini, July 10, 1964.
30. Cavaliere, Taccuini, July 5, 1983. The expression *madre e matrigna* comes from nineteenth-century Italian literature. Works such as *Zibaldone* (1817, 1832), *Dialogo della Natura e di un Islandese* (1824), and *Ginestra* (1836) by Italian poet and philosopher Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837) are the most important references on the use of the expression and the discussion of its philosophical implications. Although Cavaliere used the expression in his journals, he did not explicitly reference Leopardi; thus, it would be inaccurate to draw direct parallelisms between Leopardi's poetry and Cavaliere's art. In his 1967 essay "Alik Cavaliere e il determinismo della natura," Pierre Restany highlights how Cavaliere's idea of nature is only apparently joyful. According to the French critic, Cavaliere's arboreal-floral works are animated by an inner conflict between freedom and determinism and express a twofold idea of nature as joyful and cold. See Restany, *Alik Cavaliere e il determinismo della natura* (Brescia: Galleria del Minotauro, 1967).
31. "Marini è uscito dalla mia mente, ma resta gradevolmente latente nel mio cuore. Comunque talvolta mi tornano alla mente sue frasi o intuizioni." Cavaliere, Taccuini, May 9, 1986.
32. The myth of Apollo and Daphne was not new to Cavaliere's poetry. In 1970, the artist made a large-scale installation titled *Apollo e Dafne*, dedicated to their story. See Schwarz, *Alik Cavaliere*, 126.

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33. See Cinelli, "Marino Marini e la critica. Qualche fonte, una mancata storiografia e una leggenda" and "Nuove sfide formali del secondo dopoguerra," in Marino Marini *Passioni visive*, 42 and 206; and Marco Meneguzzo, ed., *Marino Marini. Il Museo alla Villa Reale di Milano* (Milan: Skira Editore, 1997), 9.
34. "[Marini] Crea forme, come viste in specchi, nel quale si rifletta il nostro mondo chiaramente, ma di una realtà inventata." Cavaliere, *Taccuini*, October 5, 1965.

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Marta Colombo is a PhD Candidate in History and Philosophy of Art at the University of Kent, UK. Marta's research focuses on Italian artist Alik Cavaliere and how the artistic ferment in post-WW2 Milan forged artistic currents anticipating some of the most significant subsequent artistic trends. Marta holds an MRes in Curatorial Knowledge from Goldsmiths, University of London, an MA in Aesthetics, and a BA in Philosophy from the University of Milan.

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