



sacrifice and silence

piacenza · galleria Biffi Arte · easter 2013

edited by carlo pulsoni and carlo scagnelli



*Sacrifice and Silence*

edited by Carlo Pulsoni and Carlo Scagnelli

Piacenza, Galleria Biffi Arte, 14<sup>th</sup> March—7<sup>th</sup> April 2013



with the support of



*Print run: 799 copies. 700 copies are for sale; 99 copies are out-of-commerce.  
The out-of-commerce books are numbered from 1 to 99.*

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For sale print run: book size 6.3 × 8.67 in; ISBN: 978-88-97738-29-9.

Out-of-commerce print run: book size 6.7 × 9.46 in; ISBN: 978-88-97738-30-5.

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# *sacrifice and silence*

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**A**s a firm manager, I have always considered a must and a pleasure to use also for the benefit of the society what the company earns thanks to the hard work of its workers and employees. And art, in all its forms, but also as the expression of thought through the writing, are human activities from which a sane community earns, without any doubts, a large benefit.

*Formec Biffi* is a firm which, even in these not so easy years produces profit, but without running after it because it does not want to renounce to its top priority: that of the research for the highest quality. It is right that a part of this profit comes back to the society through the offer of beauty and culture for which I have founded in 2009 *Biffi Arte*, a Gallery which slowly but tenaciously has become a place of proposal and research which as an importance even on a national level.

A book like *Sacrifice and Silence*, with its numerous voices which face a delicate or even painful theme when it goes deep down to the root of the human experience, is a book I am proud of adding to those already born thanks to the will of doing and thinking which belongs to *Biffi Arte*.

*Pietro Casella*

And everything was silence. Nevertheless in that keeping silent arose a new start, sign and change.

Rainer Maria Rilke, from *Sonnets to a Orpheus*

**T**he white page of *Word* which opens up on the monitor when you decide to write something is—to my opinion—the image which most of all illustrates silence, maybe because no one there recognizes a failure yet...

Even if it could seem strange, no one associates in a convinced way the silence to an image, but completely the opposite: the absence of it. This is the logical consequence of living in the society of appearance where everything is proposed as well as it would be an icon, a symbol.

The idea of this exhibition was born in the autumn of the 2012 and, as all the things that in a second moment reveal to be very complicated, it should have been like drinking a glass of water. The starting idea was very simple: for the Easter 2013, the Gallery I manage proposes a convicted and cured exposition of the celebration of the Easter with different artists of different cultural and religious background: christian, jewish, orthodox, Islamic, but also convicted atheists. As the commander of this cultural *ark* a theologian who, as a curator, would have kept the right direction.

I illustrated my project to my friend Carlo Pulsoni in a long and enthusiastic phone call. I thought I had clear the aim of the project, but during the conversation the initial idea got transformed in something different. How marvellous life is, if you are ready to question all your certainties to embrace something new!

So this exhibition was born, for me precious and of a great visive power, where have been invited to expose their works six artists: Giuseppe Corrado, Camilian Demetrescu, Graziano Gregori, Ali Hasoun, Lena Liv, Enrico Pulsoni.

The journey is opened by a very fascinating object, the reproduction in natural measures of the shroud realized by Barrie Schwartz, the official photograph of the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP), the team which has conducted the first deep exam of the shroud in 1978.

The Octagon is the image chosen as symbol of the exhibition because



it is one of the principal esoteric symbols not only for the art but also for the christian and Islamic tradition: a geometric figure which alludes to the resurrection, to the rebirth.

The images of the masterpieces exposed and the stories of the artists are part of this book which opens with a meditation of the spanish writer Pablo d'Ors. Three paragraphs of his book *Biografia del Silencio*, still not published in italian, with other twenty-three reflections regarding the theme of Sacrifice and Silence. What unites them is the fact that *no one knows no one*, a mysterious enigma which finds a solution in being together. The opposite of who renounces to run on his own, even knowing he has good legs to do it. They are personal depositions, tales, poems and essays on request or obtained for friendship. For me this is the occasion to thank all the authors.

*Carlo Scagnelli*

**R**eferring to Montale's well-known verses ("we can only tell you this today / what we are not, what we don't want"), the curators are not able to define if not denying what this volume is: it is not the catalogue of the exhibition *Sacrifice and Silence* which will be inaugurated on March the 14<sup>th</sup> at the Biffi Gallery, neither it is a philosophical—literary collective on this theme. In reality maybe it is, without wanting it, both. If it is possible to schematize an idea which has undergone an evolution completely unpredictable, we can assert that in the beginning there was the exhibition; then, to the exhibition, arose, enriching its contents, Pablo d'Ors meditation, which was then accompanied by a series of personal reflections commissioned *ad hoc*. We do not know whether if there are books which were born this way or if they ever existed. We did really enjoy the experiment, therefore we thank all the artists and authors who supported the project.

*Carlo Pulsoni*

*A sincere thanking to the translators for their praiseworthy job: Sabrina Bracchi, Beatriz Canals, Attilio Castellucci, Lucia Fenton, Alex Zucker.*

## *The Art of Waiting*

**I**t has taken me four decades to understand that we start to live when we eventually give up daydreaming about ourselves. That we start bearing fruit when we stop building castles in the air. That nothing exists if it does not take root in reality. The more you become familiar with reality, whatever it may be, the better. As with the child who is learning how to ride a bike and is only able to do so when he actually plunges into the task but will fall down the moment he stops to think how good or bad he is at it, so it is with us all when trying to carry out any given activity. Once we start passing judgement on results, the whole magic of life vanishes and we collapse; and this is so regardless of how low or high we have dared to fly. This is, in a nutshell, what meditation is out there to teach: to immerse ourselves in whatever we are doing. *“When I am eating, I am eating; when I am sleeping, I am sleeping”*: apparently this is how Zen is described by a great master. In this spirit not only do we waste much less energy when doing an activity but we also come out of it, as it were, refreshed. Human beings have the power to recharge themselves by means of action. I will illustrate this with an example.

Since my early days as a writer I have always known which pages from my books were inspired and which were not. After all, it is very easy to guess: the inspired pages are those I wrote oblivious of my own self, immersed in the writing process and swept along by its current; on the contrary, the less inspired ones are those on which I worked harder, the ones I planned and wrote guided more by reason than by intuition. Thus I believe that in order to write, as well as to live and love, we should not grasp but let loose, we should not hold back but rather let go. The key to almost anything lies in the magnanimity of detachment. Love, art and meditation, at least these three things, work this way.

When I say that we should be free or unattached, I am referring to the importance of trusting. The more a human being trusts another, the more he will be able to love. The more the creator devotes himself to his creation, the more he will get in return. Love—like art and meditation—is trust, as simple as that. And also practice, of course, because trust needs to be trained.

Meditation is a discipline to increase our ability to trust. We sit but what is it that we actually do? We trust. Meditation is the art of waiting. But, what are we waiting for? Everything and nothing. If we waited for something specific, this waiting would be worthless because it would be fostered by the desire to get something we do not possess. But, as it is disinterested and free, that waiting or trust turns into something truly and genuinely spiritual.

We have all experienced how boring and uncomfortable waiting can be.

As it is the very art of waiting, meditation can be quite boring. Thus our faith has to be great indeed to enable us to sit still and keep quiet! And that is exactly the case: it is all a matter of faith. If you have faith in sitting down to meditate, then your faith will increase the more you sit with that aim in mind. Thus I could even say I meditate to have faith in meditation. Though seemingly inactive, when I sit I understand better that the world does not depend on me, and that things are the way they are regardless of whether or not I intervene. To be able to understand this is very healthy: it puts man in a humbler position, not at the centre, and it shows us the real man in the mirror.

To become a meditator, apart from sitting one, two or three times daily, for twenty or twenty-five minutes at a time, I did not have to do anything special. I just had to be what I had always been until then, but fully conscious, fully aware. I had to put all my efforts into just checking the comings and goings of my mind, have imagination at my service instead of being, like a slave, at the service of my imagination. For if we are our own masters, why should we behave like servants?

Awareness led me to amazement. Actually we develop as human beings only insofar as we let amazement enter our everyday lives, that is, only if we become more and more like children. Meditation—and that is something I really like about it—helps us regain lost childhood. If anything that I see or experience does not surprise me at all it surely is because, while it emerges or even before it does so, I am biased or prejudiced against it, thus preventing it from displaying to me its full potential.

No doubt it is quite unique to be amazed at an activity we do every day or even several times a day. That is why it is necessary to do some training. After all everything is a matter of awareness; this is what we discover when our training is continuous and to the point. We come

to understand that we can only be happy when we eventually perceive reality. I will give an example.

At the end of my latest intensive meditation retreat—an entire day that once a month I fully dedicate to this activity—I went for a walk in the mountains and for some time, maybe an hour, I felt an extraordinarily profound joy. Everything looked so bright, so beautiful, and I had the inexplicable feeling that I myself was not on a mountain but rather that the mountain was my own self. It was getting dark and the sky was overcast, but to me it was all the more beautiful that way. I had sat for so long that day that my right knee hurt but, strangely enough, the pain did not bother me. I could even say it was somewhat amusing and I accepted it without any resistance. Laska, my dog, was running to and fro upon the rocks. Watching him, it dawned on me that my dog lives intensely every moment of his life; after having observed him for a while, faithful as he has always been to me, I came to the conclusion that, at least in that respect, I want to be like him. Now I understand why I once made up my mind to own an animal: to bring out the animal inside of me.

The feeling of utter joy I had experienced during my walk in the mountains disappeared all of a sudden, but thanks to it I think I now have a clearer idea of the happiness I seek. At this very moment, for instance, I am at home writing by the fireplace. Laska is lying at my feet and I can hear the rain falling outside: I cannot think of a bigger sense of plenitude. Wood to burn, books to read, wine to taste and friends to share all these things with. Not much more is needed for true happiness.

Some days after the retreat, I climbed up the same mountain, but to me it was by no means the same. Actually, I was not the same any longer. We cannot chase after the happiness we once felt, it would be absurd. So what conclusion have I come to after all? That happiness is essentially a state of awareness. And that if we confine ourselves to the act of perceiving, we will eventually arrive at what we are.

The more we meditate, the bigger our powers of perception are, and the more subtle our sensitivity becomes, that much I can say for sure. Our senses are no longer dull, which was often the case before. Our vision is refined and we start to see the real colour of things. Our sense of hearing is heightened to an incredible degree and we start to perceive—and I say this without at all meaning to wax lyrical—the real sound of the world. Even the most prosaic things look brighter and simpler. We

walk more lightly. We smile more often. The atmosphere seems full of something essential and riveting. Sounds great, doesn't it? Awesome. But I have to admit I have had such feelings on very rare occasions and for just a few seconds.

Most of the time I am drifting between the person I used to be before meditating and the person I am turning out to be now. "Drifting" is the right term: sometimes here, meditating, sometimes who knows where, wherever I get carried away to by my numerous distractions. I am very much like a ship; and more like a fragile boat than a solid cruise liner. The waves play with me as they please, but as I watch them come and go, I gradually become the swell and no longer know what has come to pass to my small boat until I actually find it: "Oh yes, here it is", I say to myself, "drifting". Every time I embark on that boat, I stop being myself: and every time I dive into the sea, I find myself again.

*Pablo d'Ors*

## *My Lord*

Once Maria realized her neighbour was God. She saw him in the boy at the laundromat, an aged guy without honour, with swollen ankles and a not funny face, ex drug—addict but not “so ex”, because when he saw some money he immediately ran to get high. He did not know other joy. In front of the counter, getting a shirt back, Maria told him:

“Lord I recognized you. Please do not reject me.”

The guy, Andrea, was a swine and he laughed at her with his brother—in—law, the owner of the laundromat. As a joke, he accepted her invitation and in the evening he went to her, imagining some dirty and spicy game.

The house was clean as an altar. At his presence Maria was ecstatic and perfectly honest, like in front of a real divinity. She served him the dinner, silently.

Then she prayed him to go up to a small bench posed on the table of the kitchen.

And when he was there, sitting idle, Maria knelt down in front of him and prayed.

He kept from laughing at her and noticed every detail, already savouring the story he was going to tell his brother—in—law.

Maria told him:

“Lord, you know how I struggled for meeting you. I have seen you so many times without understanding anything. But now that I have found it out, I’ll adore you. Ask me anything, and I’ll do it.”

Andrea sneered, and especially excited to have the opportunity of retelling this, told her:

“Show ‘it’ to me.”

Maria blushed:

“Oh Lord, among all the things you could ask me to do, do you really need this?”

There are so many other tests. Walk on the hot bricks, for example, to drive nails, fast, spittle, hair shirts... Yes, I know, also with Teresa

and with Caterina you had sensual relationships. But you have never done this way! I know you are a modern god, but I feel shy.

And she looked at him with the most sincere eyes of the world, hesitating. She was so simple and radiant in her faith, that Andrea told her

“It was to test you (in any case he could have told his brother—in-law). And, you know? I have enough of your nudity, it disgusts me!”

It was true: he lived with four people in two rooms, and dirt reigned there.

Kneeling, the undone hair brushing against his feet, Maria promised him her life. And the cult started.

Once home, Andrea made a feat: he disappointed his brother—in-law. For the first time in his life he was courageous enough to resist him. Andrea told him a version of the story and the brother—in-law started thinking Andrea was no more his slave.

Because Andrea now had a secret.

Secretly, he started visiting Maria once a week. In the small white bathroom, among small evergreen, Maria washed him, cut his nails and hard skin, with such a high piety for his body, so devastated by bad food and bad thoughts.

She bent over him like a mother, she changed his diet, so that she made his ankles, as well as his conscience, thin.

She felt compassion for that obscure incarnation: a sacrifice without comparisons.

No one knew about her divinity but her.

Comfortable it was, for Christ! What did he do so grandiose?

He was born beautiful, thin, disciples, glory, mob, agony and spot-lights... but to be embodied today, in the person of Fenestrieri Andrea, not a famous and poor fat man. Well, it was a great test.

Now, God really was embodied in the last, the most humble. One of those who'd never show up on the tv. She was so proud to be the only witness of a looser god.

After having cleaned and made him this way, like new, she gave him a fragrant shirt, a shirt for a God, and she put him on the small bench.

Maria was so deeply devoted, that Andrea step by step began to be a better and better god.

He guided her in her problems and he told her about his sadness. The brother—in-law, who exploited him, and Maddalena, the bar woman, who made him cry.



Indignant that a woman could refuse him, Maria asked him:

“Did you tell her you are God?”

Andrea shook his head with divine sadness:

“She is not like you, if I tell her I am God, she’ll send me to a mad-house.”

There was a big difference between Andrea on the bench and Andrea down off the bench.

When he took on the divine nature himself, purified, with the freshly—launderd shirt, his moral sensibility was huge. But, once down from the bench, he was a liar and a thief. He stole money from Maria to buy drugs and denied it.

For these faults, Maria loved him with higher passion. Signs of his being a sinner touched her more than the inspiring words said on the bench.

She worked twice to provide for him and she thought:

“He took on himself all our damnations, without exception. Also on this he wins on the superb guy of Galilea. Andrea is really miserable. Lord, how much should I suffer for You, to redeem your sufferings?”

Once, while she was adoring him, kneeling, Maria refused to take her neckerchief off. Andrea got use to the caress of her long hair on his feet and he gave it like and order. Maria made the neckerchief slip on her neck and he had a bump: she completely cut her hair.

“Maria, you were already so ugly! What have you done?”

“A sacrifice. To share your cross, you are loosing your hair, and what about me? What should I do?”

The divine anger exploded:

“That’s enough! I can stand no more sacrifices and martyrs! Do you understand I am a different god? I am a god of joy and light. If you want to make me happy, please try to be more beautiful. Love your body like you love yourself. You must know, also God improves himself in the centuries. I have changed. The other time I was exhibitionist, thirsty of physic pain. Why are you always making comparisons to me? You always want to be better than me, to overcome me. Why don’t you think about your disgraces? Think about your insomnia, about your emphysema. My Father put you in such a miserable condition. Is it not enough for you? Pure vanity. Also the saints, that’s why I sent them all to the

hell. If you believe in me, make your hair grow, use make—up and wear a dress with flowers.”

After this lesson Maria became step by step a little bit more beautiful. On the street, all whistled at her. Andrea, enabled by the secret game, became more agile and wise.

It was the beauty to betray them. The brother—in—law suspected something and he found out they were meeting each other. He tried to laugh at Maria with Andrea, and he hurt him on his face.

The situation started being difficult. The town gossiped. Andrea could not stand it. He was a determined man and they went away together, to another town.

To compensate him of the captivity he live with his brother—in—law, Maria began working, while she continued adoring him, on another table in another kitchen.

After the unlucky advances of their first meeting, Andrea did not try anymore physical contacts with his devoted. He loved so much being adored.

When Maria adored him, her big breast on the table, Andrea felt something in the middle of a fierce erection and the will of bursting into tears. He couldn't make a decision and eventually he fell in love with another girl, young, gorgeous, and wealthy.

He went away with her.

Maria tried not to be jealous: he could do everything he wanted. First of all he was a man, and then, God.

Yes, she trembled, for an instant, and when they were saying good-bye, she asked him:

“But... did you tell *her* about it?”

He reinsured her with the sweetest of the reproaches. That was enough for her.

She was completely satisfied by the inestimable grace—that only she, in the whole world, has recognized him.

But, once alone, being of stubborn catholic education, her thirst of agony won. And she abandoned herself to it. Now he was not there to

tell her about the gospel, of the health and so she let herself, gently, gloriously, die of hunger; under the light sun of the garden, in Her memory.

Andrea at the same time had enough of the other girl and took a train to come back to Maria to be adored again and again.

He arrived in time for the funeral. It was raining. A small-town funeral; some pharisees, two suppliers, one curious man.

Among the small gathering, Andrea noticed a big boy with a moustache—and who is he?—His heart slipped, he suspected.

After the ceremony the guy came close to him, asking naturally:

“You are God, aren’t you?”

“The deceased—answered Andrea, coldly—thought so.”

The gathering of people went away. They were walking together, lonely figures in the grey scenery.

“About me—told the boy—she thought I was the archangel, Gabriel.”

“Really? And what did you do?”

“Nothing special. She dedicated me just a marginal cult, I was one like the others. Maria was strictly monotheist: and you were the one and only, until the end.”

Andrea stopped, thinking:

“Do you know, Gabriel? This second apparition cost me more than the first. At that time there I was the hung-over in torture, the more striking contact with the human condition. But being separated from the one you love. I had never met this pain. This pain makes me a man.”

And the young boy, squalid and with a receding hairline, with his raincoat and his umbrella, got up from the hearth and went to the heaven, flying, up.

*Ascension, on a rainy November.*

*In the heaven, music by Paolo Conte.*

*Barbara Alberti*

*Coincidences of Silence and Word in the Parzival (1200-1210)*  
*by Wolfram von Eschenbach*

**I**t seems, in the *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach, that only the answer made aloud could save the same Parzival and the King Anfortas. The story is well-known: Parzival assists in the more complete silence to a ritual of which he does not understand the meaning, when all the bystanders keep silent and the King Anfortas' unstandable physical and moral presence becomes clear.

Wolfram says Parzival keeps silent, stubborn, not because he does not share the king's sufference, but because he takes literally Gurnemanz's teaching, that a good knight does not make too many questions. And also because he thinks someone is going to give him some explanations.

Anyway, Parzival is the one who is predestinated to free the king from his sufferings, at the condition that he asks the cause of what he sees (exterior sign of his participation to the other's unluck).

So his silence condemns Anfortas to suffer again and Parzival is harshly told off for this, it is clear he should learn to speak at the proper moment, and this will happen, after various events, at the end of the narration.

Nevertheless, when he finds again the way to the castle where the strange sacrifice is made, Parzival, at the beginning, does not say anything but, kneeling three times in front of the Graal, inside of him prays God to help that man, so proved by the pain. Only later on, he asks Anfortas about the cause of such a huge pain, and it is only because he silently prayed that God listens to him and the King is resained. So, what saves the king, the silent prayer or the answer which was made? Or the inner way made during many years?

If to the pain, to the experience of the sacrifice it is possible to answer with clamour (as it happens to many people in the *Parzival* who look for earthly recognitions and challenges the events) or, at the opposite, choosing, like a sign of worried detachment, the silence for the world (so, for example, the same Parzival when he proclaims aloud that he does not want to serve a God of whom he does not understand the will and "disappears,, for a long time from the narration), in both cases the individual does not learn and does not grow.

But sacrifice coincides with life so it should be faced and solved, and that is at what aims, at the end, the balanced relation among word and silence in the so waiten scene of the king's recovery, and Wolfram in his romance, in more than an episode, suggests the formula on which that relation is based: it is the inner silence to give balance and to save, it is the inner silence which allows the person to make light inside of himself and around him, to search and so to redeem himself, opening the way to the overcoming of every pain which from an exeptional event is redacted to a necessary moment of life. From that silence digs then spontaneous and salvific the right word, whose fine is to communicate to the others about what the silence told. And, as a fact, silence and word can coincide, but the condition is that both are expressions of an act of will which is born and becomes stronger *in interiore homine* to get open for the others.

*Laura Auteri*

## *The Silence and the Anxiety*

Philip Roth announced, in 2012, that he was going to stop writing romances. Furthermore, that he was not going to write any more. The clamour provoked by his decision, not only among the media, lets us understand it was not only a personal case, motivated by the ages, maybe by his tiredness, owing to his biography, but a gesture that invested the dominant idea about making literature in a time and condition of market where the silence is unthinkable. The writer is asked to write. If he is an author of success, everybody waits for him to write as much as possible.

The silence is considered a desertion on the plane of market of culture, as well as on that of the market of the ideas.

Nowadays the idea that an author should say something is quite popular. This conviction is partly shared by the thesis of a conservative icon like George Steiner, who in *Language and Silence* expresses his idea for which “the writer who feels the condition of the language like something which could be brought into question, has only two alternatives, to make his idiom be representative of the general crisis or to choose the suicidal rhetoric of the silence.”

This is the typical condition of the intellectual in the 20th century, which is not necessarily the Roth’s one: for him the decision of the silence is not related to the “grammar of the inhuman” like in Steiner, but, more simply, maybe more secularly, it seems to be the final point of a journey.

We should not forget what an author of less literary importance like J.D. Salinger demonstrated, until building of it a personal myth: that it is not possible to exactly overlap the biography of the “I who writes” to the one of the “I who lives”; and it does not represent, despite of what people told and would tell, an exception.

Writers disappear every year. A recent example is the publishing of a book *Sinapsis: Posthumous Writings of an Author Who Is Still Alive* whose author, Matteo Galiazzo, after three romances some years ago, did not publish anymore.

When his last book, written at the time when he “was writing” was

presented, he explained that he gave up without regrets, absorbed by his daily life.

It is not a fact that he is completely honest or that he is completely right. It is true that, above every myth or maybe in the heart of every myth, the silence can be a culturally secular event.

It is the silence of an individual—I—who—does—not—write—any more and not necessarily a silence of the literature: for which we may think, equally secularly, that the individuals eventually do not have such a great importance. If we want to cite the Proust of the *Guermantes*, “the silence increases” and we would, if anything, add “the anxiety of the one who is waiting” because it is impenetrable, if we are talking about the silence: more scandalous for those who are listening than for those who, suddenly, keep silent.

*Mario Baudino*

## *The Sacrality of Children's Silence*

Usually we associate silence with reflection, prayer, a trip to the mountains or a visit to a monastery. In moments of depression we may perhaps think about cemeteries. But to know what silence really is, we should ask children. Only they know the unease that always accompanies silence and the need to make noise when they are in it.

Talking to oneself out loud or singing is the most effective antidote. In every case, for children, there is nothing more difficult than “keeping silent”, even though adults are always requesting it.

To “keep silent” is their first sacrifice (*sacrum facere*), the first distinction that separates one world from another, the sacred from the profane. And maybe only young children are still capable of feeling, *timore et tremore multo*, the meaning of this separation. The silence which is so difficult for them to “keep” when adults ask for it, is the same silence which attracts them. It is enough to see them when they are playing hide—and—seek. The frantic excitement of hiding is always accompanied by a sort of collective ritual, the index finger placed on the tip of the nose, almost as if to evoke the magic of the silence which will come.

With the “death of God” we mistakenly think our society has also removed the difference between sacred and profane and therefore sacrifice. So that the only sacrifice that still exists appears to be destruction by terrorists who sacrifice their life in order to kill, rather than to save. This sacrifice generates only fear; a paralyzing fear, without the curiosity, vitality, or trepidation of every authentic *sacrum facere*.

As for the world, reduced to nothing more than a profane world, it seems increasingly vacuous and inhospitable, increasingly less attractive, increasingly incapable of penetrating the disturbing beauty of its own mystery.

To experience silence every so often as if were a sacrifice, without forgetting the voices and noises of the world, indeed ardently desiring them and in this way making them even more beautiful: that is what we should learn from children.

*Sergio Belardinelli*



## Superhuman Silences

...infinite / spaces... and superhuman / silences and deepest quiet / I hide myself into my thought; where almost / my heart is scared.

**I**nfinite and superhuman, in the violent warping of the *enjambements*, is the space of the thinkable where the mind discovers its being finite, and therefore the scaring being unbearable of whatever representation of the *infinite*, which Jacopone described as “figure which cannot be represented”. The infinite does not have an end, does not have borders neither in time nor in space; it is eternal, it is everywhere, between “always” and “sea”. Its *quies* is so deep that it can be imagined only as a limit, hinting, from the limits of the human, to the *over*. Figure which cannot be represented is the infinite; and therefore not possible to be retold, only with the bypassing images of the metaphor. And so it is not audible the sonorous tonality of the thought, populated by terrifying, superhuman silences.

In such a motionless quiet, so poor of acoustic vibrations, are embodied the experiences of terror and stupefaction, this getting scared of the heart in front of the vastness of silence, in the creative moment where the thought can configure the “leap of the opening movement of the text”, which “represents an indeterminate which became determinate” (C. Colaiacomo, *Camera obscura*). In this way is actuated the hard mediation between the still silent *intentio* and the act of speaking, thanks to a *signification langagière* of the language: “My words surprise me and teach me my thought” (Merleau-Ponty, *Sur la phénoménologie du langage*).

Also the contemplation in *La vita solitaria* (Lonely life) describes “the distance like distance”, and becomes contemplation of the “heaven of the interiority” (A. Prete, *Trattato della lontananza* [Tractate of the distance]), in the instant point where a “deepest quiet” scans the earthly horizon, limit of the human visible and audible, and “it gets one with the silences of the places”.

There is a coincidence in this *point* of this being ultimate of the horizon, among the silence which precedes the arrival of the poetic word, the quiet of the world and of the mind which meets its own end in the silence when it raises up to the highest state of consciousness and knowl-

edge, the “high fantasy” which closes the *Comedy*, the Riccardo from San Vittore’s *alta consideratio*, evoked by Ezra Pound in the chapter dedicated to Dante in *The Spirit of Romance*.

For such a type movement the “heavenly border”, which “the view excludes” in the first draft of the Neapolitan autograph of the *Infinite*, generates the “last horizon” corrected on top of the line and received by the autograph of Visso, until the Starita 1835: the formidable conquer passes through the reflections in the *Zibaldone* on “so poetical” words and ideas (“*last, never again, the last time etc. etc.*” which “are of a great poetical effect, for the infinity etc.”: the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 1821), becoming stronger with a new meditation on a verse by Petrarca (“from the Pyrenees to the last horizon” *RVF* 28, 35), annotated in the Stella edition 1826: “to the furthest western places of Europe”. Man’s mind ‘becomes a horizon’ and ‘finds his bearing’ between the infinite spaces and superhuman silences; which, in the *Monarchia* (III 15, 3), mentioning the neoplatonic *Liber de causis*, Dante assimilates “orizonti, qui est medium duorum emisperiorum” in a fragile balance between corruptible and unfading, finite and infinite.

And from the *Infinite* a bridge of ideas and words conducts to the *Dominant thought*, where it is experimented the “terrible” spatiality of the pure thought in its standing out against the silence which is conserved inside the blossoming of the voice and which resists in the heart of the tongue while it is looking for words to nominate the reality, things, ideas:

So sweet, so powerful / dominator of my *deep mind*; / terrible, but dear /  
a present from heaven... As like tower/ in a lonely field, / you stay lonely,  
giant, in the middle of it.

The thought towers like a giant over the unlimited fields of the human mind, in the loneliness which is the deepest *quies*: in the earthly life cannot be experienced but as a fiction, like an absolute and abstract state of imagination. To manage to think about itself, to listen to the voice being born from the silence in the moment of creation, the thought must sacrifice substance, subtracting, like Michelangelo, composing “by taking away”. It is here that the thought crosses the border, becoming borderless, when it fulfils the pure experience of the border, of the limit which the word puts forward against sense: and it seems to destroy itself falling beyond it, in the never ending.

The bridge which connects the *Zibaldone* to the *Canti* [Songs] trans-

lates the wandering framework of the thought in the measured breath of the *song*, it makes blossom in an fluent harmony of rhythm the interruptions, the starts, the gaps, the pauses of the long *researching* in the silence and emptiness. “Around the mortal desert”, around the “high ways of the entire universe” (*Il pensiero dominante* [The dominant thought] 97 and 144), Leopardi, as only Dante before him, catches and transcribes in words the journey of the mind which is moving “to different ports / through the vast ocean of the being” (*Par.*, I 112-113).

There the *I* falls, it becomes possible to know and say the coincidence of the infinite space, of the superhuman silence, of the deepest quiet where the mind is dominated by the *poetant thought*.

This happens on the silent threshold which introduces to the act of creation and then it leaves away, in the supreme point of contact between the *reality*, which can be perceived with the senses and that, *false*, of the mind; this happens in the moment when it is being generated the event which Simone Weil (*La pesanteur et la grâce*) called *dé-crétation*, desistance of the mind which precipitates in the original white, after having given verbal form to the thought, and at the end it does not move, when it is in the supreme point of the non representation and of the return to the silence where the song of the voice is wholly collected, and then “going away to die step by step” (*La sera del dì di festa*, 45):

C’est Dieu qui par amour se retire de nous afin que nous puissions l’aimer. Car si nous étions exposés au rayonnement direct de son amour, sans la protection de l’espace, du temps et de la matière, nous serions évaporés comme l’eau au soleil; il n’y aurait pas assez de je en nous pour abandonner le je par amour. La nécessité est l’écran mis entre Dieu et nous pour que nous puissions être. C’est à nous de percer l’écran pour cesser d’être. Il existe une force “déifuge”. Sinon tout serait Dieu.

“Nous serions évaporés comme l’eau au soleil”: the evaporation of the *I* on the sun of the poetant thought is inscribed in the origin of our time.

“De l’évaporation et de la centralisation du *Moi*. Tout est là”: this is how is inaugurated, in the spirit of Augustine and Pascal, the ‘opening’ of the heart which Baudelaire collects in that strange *journal intime* representing the first collection of fragments—aphorisms of the Modern, *Mon Coeur mis à nu* (I 1).

And Fernando Pessoa, in the same line of Augustine (“Inquietum est cor nostrum”, *Conf.* I 1, 1; “Não ha socego no fundo do meu coração”,

*Livro do Desasocego*, n° 227 ed. J. Pizarro), absorbs and translates literally Baudelaire's idea: "Tudo se me evapora",

Everything evaporates. My whole life, my memories, my imagination, all that it contains, my personality, everything evaporates. I always feel that I have been another person, I feel of having thought and heard other. I am looking at a show with a different scenario. And what I am looking to, is myself (*Livro do Desasocego*, n° 373 ed. J. Pizarro).

In the Nerval's "Je suis l'autre", in Rimbaud's "Je est un autre" falls through the poetant thought of the modernity. Space, time, substance are, according to Simon Weil's intuition, the screen, the "protection" of the I from the blinding light of the divine "soleil". Poetry is born, intact, in the interstice of this defensive bulwark, between silence and voice, in the abdication which is subtraction, neutralization, *retraite* (R. Barthes): "We maintain what we abdicate, because we save it like dreamt, intact, eternally in the light of the sun which is not there or of the moon which cannot exist" (*Livro do Desasocego*, n° 437 ed. J. Pizarro).

In the art of our time, the sacrifice of the reality and its representation constitutes the protection for the poetant thought, the redemption of the core of silence enclosed in the heart of the poetic voice: from the veneration of the form and its figuration we pass to the cult of the dust as a residue of the evaporation of the I and of the time in so different artists like Giorgio Morandi and Francis Bacon ("Dust seems eternal, it seems the only thing able to last forever"). To sacrifice, to subtract, to abdicate, it is the master way of the asceticism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which, earthly, refers to Augustine, Dante, Petrarca, Pascal, Leopardi, in that recovering of the spiritual genealogy outlined by Ungaretti in a letter to Piero Bigongiari, of the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1950: "The history of the Italian poetry is simple: its secret is always in Augustine: directly, as in Petrarca, indirectly, as, through Pascal, in Leopardi".

The thought already renounces to imagine the "infinite / spaces", the "superhuman / silences", the "deepest quiet", and, this way, it gains them.

Cancelled every trace of representation it remains only the glance, as Franz Kafka teaches in a admirable fragment in the *Blue Octavo Notebooks* "To see ourselves as an extraneous thing, to forget what we have seen, to save the glance".

Corrado Bologna

## *The Story of the Neaniskos about Jesus' Facts*

Light and darkness, life and death, what is on the right and what is on the left, they are brothers: it is not possible to separate them. That is why good people are not good and bad ones are not bad, life is not life neither death is not death.

*Gospel of Philip, § 10*

the women go to the sepulchre with the ointments. The stone is moved. The women see a young man sitting on the right, in a white dress, and they get scared

“do not be afraid—ineffable is the anguish without word. My hope was not the one of an impious person, as ear which does not make wheat grow if brought by the wind, as light storm foam on the sand or breath in heaven; it was not like the memory of a one—day host who, going away, shakes the dust off his sandals

at first came John. Dressed in camel fur, ate locusts and wild honey: he was voice for the desolate earth and his signs speak in the water. So Jesus was baptized in the Jordan. Once ripped the veil of the heaven, the voice of the shadow was heard: *You are the beloved son*

then he was in the desert among beasts and angels and then he proclaimed the gospel: time has already come. And he was among people, alone. He commanded on the impure spirits, while people got frightened: *what's this?*. He chased demons away and healed the sores of leprosy; the blind saw trees and men, untied was the knot of the mute's tongue; those who were sleeping, got up. He imposed the silence to the mystery, in vain. The mob followed him without understanding

after coming up on the mountain, he called to him his disciples to send them around the world. One day his mother and his brothers came, but he, indicating those who were around him, said: *here is my mother, here are my brothers*

he taught with words they did not understand because his heart was made of stone. *The father's kingdom*, he said, *is like a nude seed which germinates on earth: stem then ear then grain then fruit, and then comes the scythe.* They got scared

he gave to the crowd, sitting on the green of the grass, some bread and some fish and he went away. Like a shadow they saw him on the waters and again they were astonished, because their heart was of stone: they had eyes and did not see

to the scholar he told about the vanity of the laws, but they did not understand: they did not have a child's heart. Therefore he talked about death and about life in death. He went up the mountain and dressed with light; the cloud came and it called: *My son*

young and rich, I followed the commandments. Once I saw him and I ran to him: *Good Master*, and I asked to be in the time after times. He looked at me and he loved me. Then he told me: *leave what you are and follow me.* But I went away without a word

death took me. My sister knelt down in front of David's son and he came, angry, to my tomb. I screamed. He took my hand and I was again. So I looked at him and I loved him. After six days I went to him: I wore a white dress on my nude body. He talked to me about the mystery

he went to Jerusalem talking about death and life in death: his disciples followed him upset. After entering the temple, he knocked benches and chairs over and chased the merchants from the house of prayer. Then a woman oiled him with the perfume of nard

after the dinner with his disciples, he was in a field of olives praying. Anguish accompanied him; his friends were sleeping. He looked at the earth: *Father, let it be as you want.* The time was near

*Rabbi*, said Judas, and he kissed him. The crowd pressed with spades and sticks and they caught him like a thief. All abandoned him. I was still following him in my white dress. So they stopped me: I let the dress fall and I escaped, naked.

spit, blows, screams. Simon denied him three times and, when the cock sang, he looked at him in silence. Pilate asked him: *What is the truth?*. He did not answer. They laughed at him. Here is the man: here is the son of the man. The mob was yelling: *Crucify*. He got up dragging the cross, on his head a crown of thorns

at midday darkness came and the sky got obscure until three o'clock. So he screamed: *Father, you abandoned me*, and passed away. You, women, observed detached

his body rolled up in a sheet was deposited in a sepulchre bored out in the rock. They placed a boulder in front of it. You were there

do not be afraid. He is not anymore. He precedes you: announce it to his followers”

the women flee full of fear and amazement. They do not tell anything to anyone, because they are afraid

*Giovanni Borriero*

## *Give me your Son*

**I**n Judaism and in Islam—which do not recognize him as a precursor of Christ and his passion—the figure of the Abram’s son, asked as a sacrifice by God himself who conceded him Abram in his old age, is absolutely central. But it is Koran that underlines most of all the silent approach of the two in front of this dramatic and, apparently, senseless injunction:

And when he reached the age of starting to work with his father, he told him: “My son, a vision told me I must immolate you to God: what do you think I should do?” He answered: “My father, follow the order: I will be, if God wants, patient!” / Now when they resigned to God’s will and Abram put his son face downwards / in that moment we screamed at him: “Abram! / You verified your dream: so we compensate those, who are good!” / And this was the clear and decisive test. / And we redeemed his son with a great sacrifice / an we blessed him amongst the posterity: / Peace on Abram! (37, 102-109).

The tones of this narration, not so tragic like the ones we find in the Bible, made of a conversation almost banal and without any pathos, are consonant to the meaning of the term “islam”: total submission, trusting abandon and oblation in the hands of the Omnipotent. Today, while Islam and the figure of its founder are often exploited for political aims and even to justify extreme acts of violence, the rapprochement of the person and work of Muhammad to the Abram’s one, appears emblematic and interesting, taking again to the real root of the religiosity, made of listening, humility, faithfulness... and as well made of fight, to be interpreted like rejecting the idols and being ready to bring into question false certainties, trusting obedience which can stand to pressures and proofs, because there is the faith in the divine will which, through prophecy and revelation, proposes again the way of salvation which would not exist if Adam’s sentence would have already compromised all and which lasts in time as mercy, repeating its message, always old, always new.

At this point it is not so relevant to note that the Jews identify the character on hand with Isaac, Muslims with Ishmael and Christians as



the image of the future embodied Word. Moreover, next to this one, the only one to be near him and to alleviate for a while his pains during his Way of the Cross, it was, not for a case, a silent peasant—Simone from Cyrene—maybe ignorant, probably pagan, certainly a stranger in Israel, while all his disciples eclipsed being afraid and one—after having betrayed him—let himself go to desperation.

*Paolo Branca*

## *Risk of Silence*

Not because of shyness—or not only because of it—some youth keeps suspiciously silent in front of other people's speech.

*He was like that: a severe judge*, he mutters, remembering how he used to be during his university days. In those days, he condemned whoever dared to speak (his coetaneous and seniors alike) of their utmost negligence: either the never-ending speech of a fellow in a bar, or the verbose lessons descent from a highly-placed podium never failed to annoy him; all of those 'speeches' sounded shallow and fake.

He felt, or he thought he felt, that their words should have been totally different from those imperfect—even humiliating—ones which he was forced to listen to. He thought that any articulation which took form of speech ought to be composed of words of careful—selection; and speeches were to bare coherence with the transparent and naked reality which was to present itself through and beyond the language.

His severity on words, however, resulted up cornering the very himself. He began to keep himself in silence; timidly, on one hand, admitting himself as being impotent in proper articulation; and confidently, on the other, being queerly proud of his verbal impotence.

He read *Lord Chandos' Letter* of Hofmannsthal and he parted from it shortly, according to what he thought he had understood regarding the limit of language. The book was soon gifted to a young student on her birthday, and he encapsulated himself in the shell of silence.

What happened afterwards? When did he resign to break the silence finally? Did he managed to rip away the right words from cavities that were yet—to—be inaccessible to the too-modest tentacles of his intelligence?

For a long time he'd had this tendency: he had blushed whenever he tried and failed to speak out. And the blush—a sign of shame and weakness—was the very catching—fire that had inflamed the pure nudity of his silence. There must have been, however, a moment when he broke

the silence and give up the virtue of the blush. When was it? And how long, since then, has he made ‘speeches’ until now? Now that he is, and has been, able to speak, he must face to a severe question: how tedious, false, inappropriate and futile are his words which he is trying to write on the theme of *silence*?

\* \* \*

Discretion, he believes, is a virtue of sensibility of some human beings whom he tends to admire. As Baltasar Gracián writes in one of his aphorisms: the feeling is *libre* and “must not be violated. It withdraws itself in the sacred realm of silence; and whether or not it allows itself (to do something or say something) is (only kept) in the shadow of a few sensible personae.” To the wise arab Luqman attributed is a phrase he told his son: “I have so regretted speaking, but I have never regretted keeping silent.” And Sem Tob de Carrión, medieval poet, put an ancient Arabic and Talmudic sapience in verses in this way: “Sy fuese el fablar—de plata figurado / Deue ser el callar—de oro afynado.” “Speech is silver, silence is gold” (Thomas Carlyle).

Other sayings, on the other hand, warn us of the emptiness of silence: what is hidden behind one’s silence might be mere absence of one’s ideas or his or her idleness. An Arabic proverb goes “A person is hidden under his tongue”, meaning the manner through which one expresses oneself reveals one’s personality and virtues.

One day he attended a lecture. Now he remembers: a person with a singular face was commenting on *Billy Budd*: on the final sacrifice of the beautiful sailor who was hanged and hoisted into the sky; on the risks and seductions of Billy Budd’s stammer. He admired the lesson and the following lessons: Mr. Singular-face was speaking in a language which had been unknown to him. Yet he understood it. The moral of the story was revealed, and he determined to draw out words one by one, with the utmost carefulness, escaping from the cavern of *emptiness*.

Now he asks himself: now that decades have passed from that day, *haven’t I forgot about the silence?*

*Andrea Celli*

## *The Silence of the Facts*

How often we are pressed to search, accept, cultivate the silence. But it is not true, for the most part, that the western world loves silence. This is for us the hugest dimension of anguish; it follows, in those who experiment it, a sort of intolerable tinnitus which starts when all the noises shut down, and make us regret about them.

The refuge in the peace of the nature to abandon the noise of the human relations, so recommended by the ecological culture, is an escape from the public arena where the tiring fight takes place with its complex weaves and expedients, to feel ourselves recognised, the escape towards the world, the natural one, which *is* and continue *to be* infinite, without any need of being legitimated or accepted by someone.

But the quiet of the nature is a temporary balsam: the nature “is what it is”, without need to be legitimated, like pain, for the one who feels it, like sadness for those who experience it.

The facts, perceived like they are, accepted only because they impose themselves, are the epitome of silence which makes scared. So, from the enchant of the nature we go away to come back to the noises of the arena. Unless we do not have the capability, or the weakness, to continuously perpetrate the initial enchant, that accompanied the tales that I wanted to be repeated *ad nauseam* when I was a baby.

In the same way, also the sacrifice is not well tolerated, and is connected, in something, with the anxiety of silence.

Deaf to his etymon, sacrifice is for us a painful act where life has constricted us.

“How many sacrifices I had to do to make you...”: it would be better if you would not have been constricted, that things would have been, like they could have, different.

Sometimes sacrifice is a credit we must draw, one of the many cards purchased to ask, in a forced way, again, a substitute of the recognition.

Also sacrifice can be collocated in the silence of the events that are, only because they are. And do not ask more.

In *The Blue Octavo Notebooks*, Kafka presents the human like a being who “passes from a cell which he hates to one he has to learn hating.” Only one hope accompanies him in his everlasting transfers, and that is that the Lord once will pass and say: “Do not shut him up again, he’s with me!”

Even if we do not adopt Kafka’s pessimism, how can’t we notice that we also need to be saved? But not by the sequence of cells, or not only by them.

By our freedom to obtain things indifferent the one to the other, by the silence in presence of questions we do not know, or we do not know anymore, even how to formulate.

The hope is that once, the silence, a silence which gives answers without having received questions, will wind around us like a warm blanket which attenuates the cold, that once a sacrifice will be made with the serene satisfaction that saving another one we have saved and gratified him and ourselves.

*Luigi Cimmino*

## *He Was Still Playing*

**H**e was still playing in a band of R&R and making a big noise, but when the sound intertwined and went away hand in hand with the others, it seemed to him he was flying. In that flight there was a loss of will, so that the sound became a light buzzing and then silence.

Opening his eyes, he saw people with hands posed on their ears. And so? Someone likes strawberries, someone has allergy on them. Is silence only a concept?

He could bring his guitar to the furthest land, switch it off and then listening—there was not silence. Thoughts that the place evoked, brought a sound and the colours another again, and they arose in addiction the one to the other, like as if they were born from a Generator or from the Creation.

There was no silence, at least because his heart was beating, his veins pulsing, the grass growing, the wind blowing and the night arriving, bringing other noises, other dirty silences. How was the Last Dinner? Now he is painting when it is cold and dark and these are the two conditions which can generate the silence, silence broken by the requests of the paintings and by the rubbing of the brush on the wood desk: cover me, put me in light, heat me up, look at me, turn me upside down and see me, cancel me and start me again and then put me next to my brothers. Who knows when he suspends his work, the paintings continue talking among themselves? Neither in the absence there is silence.

That project started in August, when the heat and the light had many hours of life.

The windows were open and children's yells and the passing of the trains were not extraneous noises but they were part, they did not interrupt but stimulated the thought. He was totally taken up by his work, so that he did not hear anything else: it was an industrious silence.

I have seen this silence in the painting of the Crucifixion, an absolutely mute painting, so indifferent to us looking at it.

How was the Last Dinner? Conscious or silent? The empty glasses posed on the tablecloth did not make noise. The fork knocked against

the plate tinkling, the knife cut the bread, a grain of pepper fell from the spoon. His ears amplified the chewing and the gurgling of the water he was drinking. A cover unscrewed from a little jar, an opened drawer, a chair dragged on the floor, the buzzing of the light switched on, the water of the kitchen sink on the plates, the click of the latex gloves taken off from the hands and the pencil which takes notes on the cleared table.

How are dinners today? Do we still hear these noises or are we showered with the music which we nowadays find not only in the restaurants, but also in the houses? Let's refuse this passive music. Let's listen to the noise and the silence, because one needs the other.

Silence makes us pay more attention to our actions and to be more conscious of the values they represent. The Christmas evening, during the midnight mess, he suffered the applauses for the ritual baptism and some days after he suffered the same applauses to a funeral, losing this way sacrality and mystery.

He still was in the cold and darkness, painting—the white colour remained in silence, the red one screamed, the black scared and the others waited for their turn. When I went to visit him in his studio, he hugged me, but only to hear from me once again that it would be necessary that Jesus returns with his phrase “I did not come to bring peace but the spade” and, so, yes, all would remain with their mouth opened and, for a moment, there would be silence (apart from their breathing).

That man is me, Norberto Civardi.

*Norberto Civardi*

## *Sacrifice and Silence*

**Y**es, I admit it: to say something about this enthralling theme reasonably cows me. Nevertheless, I accept “the challenge” and I intervene in this refined project. *Sacrifice and Silence*, therefore, according to the idea that puts them in relation; but I ask myself, thinking about it, if the two aspects are necessarily connected, out of a catholic context. The two terms, infact, even if filled in some way with something *terrible*, in my opinion, can be treated separately. That is why my interpretation will tend not to put them always in a strict relation.

The term sacrifice makes me think, maybe owing to my professional attitude, to the famous tiles about the Isaac’s sacrifice, thought by Leon Battista Alberti and Lorenzo Ghiberti, at the beginning of the XV century, for the project of realization of the north Door in the Baptistry in Florence.

Nevertheless, this subject which foreshadows Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and about which people have still questions, reminds me, in the wave of that fundamental chapter of the great tradition of the just mentioned humanism, moments connected with my school education.

I refer to Giulio Argan’s interpretation of the Florentine project in his manual of *History of Art*. Argan had the merit, although we can discuss about the effects of his method, of writing so that he can capture the reader’s attention and fantasy, even if he writes where the space is like a tyrant, a scholastic book.

Also, the iconography of the Isaac’s sacrifice, continuing with the free association of ideas, conduces me to the José Saramago’s *Cain*; in its pages the great Portuguese writer, facing such an important theme, brings me back to the initial proposition: the consideration about sacrifice and silence; in this case silence is astonished in front of the power of a fact like the cruel test God asks Abraham, which I cannot understand completely and accept, as well as Saramago. So I realize, step by step, that I have refuted myself: between sacrifice and silence there is more than a connection. Connection which makes me state, in contradiction with my initial proposition, that it is a very well matched couple.



Despite this, I would like to conclude with a thematic sliding and separate, at least apparently, the two categories. I think about silence like a moment of reflection and pause, like a condition to which more and more people aspire because they have enough of a world which has made of the noise its constant soundtrack. From the cities to the insides, from nature to the so called non places like malls, airports, stations, even in the libraries, everything is pervaded by a continuous buzzing made of yelled words, of loud conversations, bad music at high volume, in a noise which narcotizes us.

It cheers me up, even realizing my words could sound like a nostalgic yearning for an hypothetical passed time, when I read in: *Voices. Sonorous Anthropology of the Ancient World*, where Maurizio Bettini conduces the reader on a surprising trip into the phonosphere of the ancient world of Greece and Rome. A context, I get to know, not silent because filled with the beating of the hammer of the smiths, the noise made by tinsmiths and blacksmiths, by the squeaking of the carts and, obviously, by that concert of many voices animated by sounds of different intensity like those emitted not only by the birds' twittering but also by bleating, neighing and howling of the animals.

Jose Saramago's book mentioned is *Caim* (2009), Italian version by Rita Desti (*Caino*, Milano, Feltrinelli 2010); Maurizio Bettini's book (*Voci. Antropologia sonora del mondo antico*) is published by Einaudi (Turin 2008).

*Gabriella De Marco*

## *The Silence of the Shots*

...and, if all my life, my conscious life, would not have been "as it had to"?

Lev Tolstoj, *Ivan Il'ič' death*

I have been a policeman since 30 years. On September 14<sup>th</sup> 1992 I was driving my car along Mazara del Vallo (Trapani) coast to go back home after an intense day of work. On that day, my profession took me to put my feet on the threshold of the unknown where no one wants to reach, but there all of us will go to at the end of our existence.

I remained for a long while on the threshold, I entered a new dimension, not physical so that I became all one with what surrounded me. I did not feel the difference between heaven and earth, there was no detachment between me and the vault of heaven. Heaven, earth and I... were one thing, immersed in a light silence without waiting.

The event which threw me to the ultimate limit of the human life was an attack from the Sicilian mafia, a criminal organization made of people who are infallible authors in causing to others, for sinister interests, an inhuman sufferance which ever finds in homicide its highest expression and perfection.

Injured at my head, I replied to their fire and, even if they also had a kalashnikov, they did not succeed in their abominable intent.

The three had never failed their target and they represented the bosses of the bosses of the brutal criminal Sicilian organization, Cosa Nostra. My screams in the search for help, the yells of support of the few bathers witnesses were like a shield to the cruelty of the shots, they split the silence, so they took me away from the threshold of the beyond.

That day is engraved in my memory and it left me an incessant tiring question without an answer: why have I not died?

I think the question I ask myself does not reveal the fact in its randomness but its sense. And the question enlarges even more as a sense if I look at the other policemen who, before me, in similar circumstances, were killed by the same criminal organization; if I consider this fact as a unique and incalculable opportunity to know the threshold of death;

if I imagine that the unfortunate door of the absolute sufferance would have given loneliness and dismay to my wife and sons, who were children at that time.

It's true, "the sense" is the element of the existence, like water is for the fish. The question of life—for a person—is that the life itself which is not pleased with living, but pones in front of itself and continuously asks about how to live with the others in harmony and peace. Without questions the existence fades away, a person becomes a thing. If the question about the meaning of life is a mystery and there's no answer to mystery, on how to live it the answer is simple, to concur in being good people, a race that should mobilize all in the name of the peace.

When we escape a tragedy, we feel the need of thanking someone who dominates us and we do not see. But we perceive its presence especially inside of us, even if we refuse it. This is God. He is present and does not need our approval to be here. Surely I do not have more merits than my policemen colleagues, magistrates and other innocent people, who have been thrown away by the cruel action of the mafia, which follows painful ways in the horror of the violence.

God, and I apologize to him if I imagine my thought evoking his name, has allowed me to live further so as to continue my existential way, which in this occasion urges me to make you participate in the sense of that human event which places life at the centre, bounding me and my assaulters. The question of life is the same for all. No one can inflict inhuman suffering to the other and if he does it, he denies life and himself.

*Calogero Germanà*

*Silence and Memory: A Personal Reflection*

A boy was born to Anna and Gyula Löbl on June 29, 1931, in the Hungarian town of Vác. His name was Miklos Gábor. On the day of his thirteenth birthday, he was deported with his parents to a brick factory in Monor. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1944, he was sent to Auschwitz, where he was murdered in the gas chambers and his body was cremated. No tomb, no gravestone; he became one of a million and a half Jewish children murdered in the Shoah. Miklos's father died of hunger shortly afterwards, but his mother survived. After the Shoah she met another survivor. They married and had a child: my father. The three immigrated to the recently established state of Israel.

A great silence surrounded the Shoah in the first decades of Israel's existence. Nobody wanted to hear the details of what the survivors had gone through. Many survivors preferred silence over trying to speak about atrocities that transcend the limits of human language and representation—indeed, of human thought. Any attempt to “speak the unspeakable,” they assumed, would not be understood. Thus, it was only with other survivors that my grandmother talked about her past. Her brother, who returned to Vác, managed to obtain two photos of her son: one at the age of seven or eight, hugged by his grandmother, and another taken not long before his death. By the time my grandmother died, in 1985, the photos were blotched with the marks of her teardrops.

Ever since I first saw the photos of the light-haired boy with dimples in his cheeks, I was haunted by the thought that Miklos would be forgotten—reduced to utter silence, as if he had never lived. When the thought became unbearable, I began looking for information about him; in my grandmother's old documents, in the Yad Vashem database, in Hungarian archives. And so I learned that Miklos's birth was an event of great importance for his extended family. His mother's uncle Shmuel Singer, a merchant from Baja, served as godfather in his *brith*. His Jewish name, Yosef Yehuda, commemorated his paternal grandfather. His nickname was Miki. He lived for thirteen years in no. 33, Kossuth Lajos St.; a seven minutes' walk from the house of his beloved grandmother Frida. His wide smile in their joint photo attests to their mutual affection.

Miklos's father, a doctor who filled in for the province's head physician, did everything he could to protect him. When a ghetto was set up in Vác in March 1944, he obtained permission to remain with his wife and son in the family residence. For three months Miklos was spared the harsh conditions of the ghetto, but when deportations began the family was sent to Auschwitz. Upon arrival in the death camp, children who stayed with their mothers—deemed too weak for forced labor—were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Miklos's parents hoped that if he lined up with his father and the other men he would “pass” as an adolescent and his life would be saved. For the next forty years, his mother was tormented by guilt for not insisting that he stay with her.

Much loved by his family during his lifetime, Miklos's memory was cherished by relatives who survived the Shoah. In 1956, his mother submitted a page of testimony about him to Yad Vashem. His uncle got hold of his photos, and his mother kept these together with a photo of a memorial plaque commemorating the Hungarian victims of Nazi persecutions. She also held on to a postcard, received in 1972, showing the memorial monument to the victims at Auschwitz. As late as 2004 Berta, a cousin of Miklos's mother who remained in Hungary, filled a page of testimony about him for the Holocaust Memorial Center in Budapest.

Nothing that Miklos Gábor Löbl wrote has survived. We do not know what his hobbies were or what used to make him laugh. His memory is still shrouded in a horrific silence. But it *is* his memory; and it is not *only* silence.

*Tamar Herzig*

## *The Silence of True Sacrifices*

Sacrifice and silence are two terms with too vast implications to face them as philosophical propositions, but in a few lines. I choose, therefore, to define them within tropes rich of implications, but that we often find in everyday conversations.

If we pay attention to this kind of conversations, we could dare the hypothesis that sacrifice corresponds to the silence as the maternal love does to the serenity of her children. Yes, we could say so, but: is it possible? Is it legitimate to do it, or does it depend on different points of view?

Sometimes even the best of mothers reveal or leak out how the inevitable sacrifices of the maternity (like, for example, renouncing to sleep in the days of breast-feeding) are heavy for them.

It can seem foolish, but it can happen that the best sons of those among the best of mothers, leave the nest with a heavy obliged gratitude, that takes off the lightness to the feeling that more than any other should guarantee a free flight: love.

Only about love is possible to talk, if talking about sacrifices, because who would sacrifice himself for someone or something for which the heart does not quiver? It follows that, if the silence of the sacrifice is strictly connected with love, a fourth element, inseparable from love, should be taken into consideration: spontaneity.

And so the spontaneity connected to a real act of love evokes the figure of the hero, embodied, for example, in Salvo D'Acquisto.

The touched sympathy which that sweet young guy in uniform causes, makes me firmly believe in the silent intention connected to his generous act. Others, I think, were there to amplify his impact: the German occupiers to frighten, and the Italian occupied to find there the power to react.

Something similar to the clamour of hymns, exaltations and invocations that mark with a sonorous to the sacrifice of the self of the saints martyrs. Because in the term sacrifice (= to make sacred) is their vocation.

It is therefore hard to believe that all that was then connected the concept of sacrifice, can, in practice, be connected to silence. However not to the intimate and really silent anxiety of the one who chooses to sacrifice himself.

*Giacoma Limentani*

### *But... Does Silence Exist?*

If I think about my existential experience, not so many times I managed to perceive the silence. Every time I got concentrated to hear it, to feel it, I realized our world is a world of noises, some of them deafening, some of them pleasant like the sounds of nature, of space, of time. And now, closed in my studio, writing this text, it is evening, I hear the noise of the keys and the rain falling down. The silence is a research, an aspiration to a condition. Without any tension to a possible perfection.

Every time I pay attention to the silence, it comes to my mind one of the most significant works of the XX century, which contains the essence of an unreachable artistic thought. The *4'33"* by the American composer John Cage, composed in 1952 for every musical instrument or ensemble. The score gives instructions to the one who executes it not to play for all the duration of the time, a very long time, where the one who listens must be in a particular mood, in a condition for many aspects unnatural. Cage's journey to arrive to *4'33"* has been difficult. People say he started from an important experience which occurred to him, the visit to the anechoic chamber at the Harvard University. His will was to listen to the total silence, but he found himself listening to two noises, one more acute one more deep. Cage was shocked and the acoustical engineer who was with him explained him that he heard the voice of his own circulatory and nervous systems in action.

The silence is an utopia until there is life. It is a convention. The duration, which gives the title to the composition, refers to the absolute zero, positioned at an unreachable temperature. After the first performance of *4'33"*, Cage said: "They have not understood. Silence does not exist. Some people believed it was silence, because they ignored how to listen, in reality there were so many accidental sounds. During the first movement it was possible to hear the wind blowing out of the window. During the second movement rain drops started to patter the roof and during the third people themselves produced every kind of interesting sound talking or going out of the hall." Silence is a tension, a tension to the absolute like for some artists the emptiness. I think about some



of Lucio Fontana's works from his maturity, about his cuts, about the absolute in some of Mark Rothko's works, about the Yves Klein's blue.

The tension to the silence could become a different way to face the existence in a world of clamours, noise, bother, where everything is undressed from its pureness to be transformed into something else. We have taken the sense away from music, which in most cases is the sound track, the background of our existence, we have taken the sense away from the images, which accompany us in a perceptive uninterruptedly *horror vacui*.

We live in a world without smells. We are afraid of becoming old, we do not accept the idea of the death, absolute silence. We are afraid to reach the deepness of the phenomena and we float, on the surface. We love listening to the echo of our voice, always looking for an audience. So lives the major part of us, obviously. Thanks God, there are exceptions.

The silence is an utopia. It does not exist, not even in an anechoic chamber, but it could become a guide, a sort of point of arrival to start conducting, day by day, a different existence where there is no heroism, exasperation of tones, but only the attempt to be, eventually, able to listen to what surrounds us. It can be the person near who is talking, a Bach's sonata, or, more simply, the nature, lavish with sounds, extraordinary in their essential simplicity.

*Angela Madesani*

## *The Silence is the Language of the Sacrifice*

**T**he only authentic sacrifice that, in different ways and time, can happen to every one to experience, is expressed only in a deep silence. But sacrifice is also something immediate, which interrupts in our every day life with such strength that we do not have the time to think, to meditate, to choose. The consciousness that we renounce to something for something else or for someone, coincides with the certainty that it is the only possibility we have, like if there were no choice, even if there are choices, in reality, and they are many; it would be possible to weigh them up, to discuss them... but this is what we regularly do in our daily life.

There are moments, on the contrary, when there is no time for all of this, the present has to be immediate and, most of all, it does not ask us for explanations. Time and voice transform, explain and bring to acceptable conclusions, but they cancel the sacrifice.

These are rare moments, that do not occur everyday, but that give sense to a whole life. Only when you have been through such a similar experience you feel its strength, fullness, you understand that it could not be differently, and you taste its richness. The time and reflection would have introduced in that tiring and painful but full event what is superfluous, useless, and they would have diluted in inefficient occasions the only real possibility, that of sacrifice.

Literature offers us many examples of such strong experiences. Myths and personages from literature tell high and painful experiences, those which only heroes can live, but they remember us about the fact that, in the right proportions, we can also taste intense moments of deep silence and sacrifice.

In the *Book of Judges* we read the story of Iefte, Galahad's son, who was chosen as the guide and head of the army and who "made God a promise": "If you make me win the Ammonites, when I come back from the victory, I will destine to you and I will burn as sacrifice the first creature which will come out from home and meet me" (11, 30-31).

This episode has offered the poets occasions for many reflections. The creature met by Iefte when he came back was his daughter, who needs therefore to be sacrificed as the consequence of her father's vow.

To her is assigned the difficult mission of giving a sense to her father's promise (maybe it is her father's generic need). In front of such immolation silence is not possible, there is the need to yell, for months, your desperation before accepting the situation, and this scream of pain cannot be shouted in a place like others but only in that extraordinary place where a deafening silence reigns; it wraps everything up and makes your hand turning around, the mountain: "Audite montes tremum meum"... that is the only adequate place to absorb such big experiences; it is an immense and strong space, but also extremely limited and always ready to crumble, the only one where it is possible to catch even if in part, the enormity of the mystery which surrounds us, perceiving it, knowing it intuitively, without understanding it.

It is only in that place that you can hear the real silence, you can scream as much as you want, everything is dissolving and you can understand how useless it is to try to give a voice to something, there is no need, the sense is there and it is touchable, in that silence. A 16th century, a French poet, Rivaudeau, fascinated by the figure of Iefte's daughter, after having made her wander around, as in the biblical tale, in the mountain, makes her say:

Or à Dieu mes deux mois, or à Dieu mes compagnes, / Et vous (très sûrs témoins de mes larmes) montagnes / Or mon temps est fourni, et plus le terme est prêt, / Ce que je craignais tant, moins me fâche et déplaît.

"Goodbye months, goodbye mountains, safe witnesses of my tears, my time is finished and, the more the time keeps near, the less I fear what I was afraid of."

No explanations, no judgement in this tragic story, the pain has been screamed out in the only place where silence reigns, the sacrifice assumes its complete meaning.

Every one of us can live his sacrifice, necessarily different from the one we remembered, but some ingredients are always compulsory: first of all the silence, then, if it is possible, the mountain that makes everything clearer.

*Mariangela Miotti*

*Silence which Ends and Begins with a Period.*

The period is a sign of pause, and is written as a dot in European languages. In Japanese, it draws a tiny circle. It is called *maru*, a circle, and connotes not only a pause but also a deep silence glimpsed through the little hole drawn. *Maru* is an abyss of silence: a visualized narrow entrance to the sphere of silence that lies between the lines, written and to be written.

It was Shinobu Orikuchi, a prominent linguist and poet who belonged to the first generation that started using *maru* in Japanese writings, who, as the first poet in the history of our literature, came to be aware and mindful of the depth of silence a single period could embrace.

In 1925, as long as two years after the Great Kanto Earthquake that devastated his home-ground Tokyo, Orikuchi eventually published his first poetry book titled *Between the Sea and Mountains* which metaphorically means 'Where We Live', breaking his two-year-long post-disaster silence. The opening song that put an end to his muted years was an exquisite *tanka* in the middle of which, and at the core of the *Where*, he uniquely placed an ever-long pause incarnated in the form of *maru*.

*Kudzu flowers, trampled, renewing their color,*  
*This path, in the mountain,*  
*A man, has gone by*

In this *maru*, through this narrow path to the space between the lines, we hear motionless Orikuchi holding his breath, long and deep. Captured by the vigor of recuperating kudzu flowers, he became *actively* speechless.

The poet finally voiced *This path, in the mountain* and *A man, has gone by*, implying that *any* man must keep walking with sureness of step despite all the vagaries of nature and life; it was only two years after the earthquake—and only after this extended breathing of *maru*—that Orikuchi could utter the discerning and introspective latter half of the *tanka*.

In Japanese art, silence means neither a radical sterile void nor a remnant of extinguished articulation. It's a positive act of sensing. Or it's a mute gesture of one's act of waiting. Whilst poised in silence, the artist strives to seize the moment at which *something* comes to take shape in the form of articulation he or she pursues. Silence is, in this sense, like a photographic negative ready to be printed on sensitized paper. It's a state of pregnancy: it's a dumb albeit fertile womb of forthcoming enunciation which leads to eternity, and of a song which is to be heard only by ears tuned to silence.

The late composer Toru Takemitsu said: *Confronting silence by uttering a sound is nothing but verifying one's own existence, and it is only that singling out of one's self from the cavern of silence that could really be called "singing"*. Having undergone external and internal extreme silences, Orikuchi finally sang; and it is in his song that we discover a cavern of silence the resonance of which lingers in our ears ceaselessly.

*Only silence flows into the stream of eternal time. (Pierre Reverdy)*

And only in this stream can we hear real songs, which *I* have yet to sing.

*Sayuri Okamoto*

*ad infinitum*

Just like Yahweh,  
The Polynesian god Yo  
Created the world by sheer force of  
Words:  
“Let there be light,” etc.

The words Yo used  
Became part of magic rituals,  
Serving to summon infertility,  
Impotence, senility, and  
Melancholy.

And whenever someone succumbs to anxiety,  
A shaman is permitted to repeat the words  
By which the world  
Was created.

Because re—creation is the only way  
To get out of it.  
Because a hole in the soul cannot be darned,  
Or a broken heart set in a cast.

There is only one thing to do:  
Re—create the world,  
The same world, with the same  
Words, but new

And hope that some stroke of fate, unforeseen  
Flap of wings, gust  
Of wind, lagging wave, or  
Quicker spermatozoid

Will bring

Serenity of the soul and a decrease  
In black bile.

*Patrik Ouředník*

*Ballad of S.*

I ask myself how you can trust  
The burned landscape and in this hour  
Of demons where you find the power  
To join trembling hands  
And to pray (and be it never for you).

Where are the proofs and how the joy  
Sparkles of being part, if every trace  
Of Him seems vanished in the silence  
Year after year, away from Nature,  
Away from the History, measuring the steps...

Our small story lasts  
As much as a turn of guard and it does not extend  
For More than one day, two days of walking:  
How to know who spies on us,  
Who looks at us from above but never talks...

You are not afraid of the deaf hour, hard, still  
Which takes the sense away from all your patience,  
You are not agitated: you are waiting someone to ring  
And start playing with his  
Desperation the eternal match.

He is not here, He is not now, but He is,  
He is embodied in you and in you He gets ill,  
Starts suffering again, offering himself  
Like the only food for those who understand him,  
Without the guard of the sentinels.

There is no one who calls. Passes away  
Life between a room and the tv,  
Which now makes us sick and confuses us,



No one informs or yells: “He was born! He was born!”  
But we are all like leafs, hanging on.

You wait for them a little bit before they fall down  
Or you pick them up—and your hand trembles.  
I ask myself how His face talks to you,  
How can you save Him from death  
In everyone who knocks, here it’s dark...

It’s October, it is the huge darkness of the nights  
Which approach on the day, like the time.  
Who are you, what unites us and who is He...  
Nothing much remains, not much space still  
Until resting in the earth.

*Daniele Piccini*

## *The Noise of Creation*

In the XI book of his *Confessions*, Augustine asks himself about what God was doing before creating heaven and earth, to face then the subject of nature and the existence of time. He does not arrive though to state that before the creation of the world silence was reigning. It is the act of the creative word which, in creating the Creation, breaks the silence. It is not a case that in his gospel, Johan defines God like *verbum* “word”. Only thanks to silence and in the silence it is possible to perceive the sound of the world which is being created, but at the same time, the creative word is born like sacrifice of the silence. Only today in the Creation it is possible, if one wants, to choose to go back to the silence sacrificing the word.

*Carlo Pulsoni*

## *The Presence of the Silence*

There is a phrase that says: “Words are precious, but more precious is silence.” A common definition of silence: absence of every form of noise, sound, voice. Acceptable, but banal. Silence is something more relevant. First of all, it is not an absence, but a presence. For example, an individual who listens in silence to the noise of the sea, is more present than another one who, in front of the sea, blethers a silliness like: “The sea is not like it used to be” or “Those who do not live in a coastal city cannot understand the pleasure that a walk on the water’s edge can give on a Sunday morning.”

Silence is therefore not necessarily an absence of communication, but at the opposite it can represent a new possibility to expand it, in the sense that we learn communicating also by keeping silent, which is obviously not easy, because we are used more to speak than to listen. The silence of listening allows the other to talk and the one who listens to understand, and to participate to the language in a cooperative way, allowing us to fill the emptiness which separates us.

The silence is already a message itself and the choice to keep silent should be considered a proper linguistic act. Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* writes that “The conscience talks only and constantly in the world of silence.” The philosophy listens to the silence like the horizon of the sense, which is other from the meanings, but in which the meanings are communicated: it is like Heidegger writes, the fount of the names.

The great psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, made a conference at the Sorbonne with the title “The foolishness of speaking.” He remained in silence for a whole hour and he justified himself underlining the meaning of silence in the context of communication: silence represents the biggest part of a speech and without pause a speech is not understandable.

Among the human experiences, the one of keeping silent occupies a very relevant place and makes us enter in contact with ourselves and reveal significant aspects of our personality. The silence of the interior-

ity allows us to doubt about our certainties, suspending our judgement, reflecting on the words told and on those we would like to pronounce. The inner silence is the necessary space for our language to be deep-rooted in the deeper reality of our soul.

In silence we listen and know ourselves better, the thought is born and becomes deeper, we understand more clearly what we desire to tell or what we wait from the other, we choose how to express ourselves.

*Domenico Ribatti*

## *The Median Part of the Night*

If the fields have hedges, is so that the eye is not to be the owner of infinity, if we teach to the baby the articulation of the words, it is because thought will not be dangerously able to extend itself infinitely over the world.

With the words, it soon becomes possible to build sonorous worlds whose spires, so far from the earth, think they are sustained by themselves, they ignore there is a silent ground antecedent to their loquacity.

They can even arrive to consider hell the world quietly curve which existed before every word and speech, which exists down there, untouchable by those games of sorting out which people call ethics. Think about the squandering of the voices above the world which does not hear them, about the tales of justice which invent what happened and does not exist anymore, tales, which give to instants passed a verbose corporeity which would take days before referring it; think about the confessions that seek an ear where to lose themselves, to the sorrows which they express in exclamations, exaggerations: they polish them from their individual characteristics in order to make from them philosophies, for them not to die in the act of being.

It was told you one story a day, when the darkness of that incoming night seemed to frighten you, when to the night they opposed a light for the night not to be night anymore. The child you were, does not exist anymore, so do not try to fabricate him again with your words. You would be better to wait for the fourth of the seven parts in which Isidore divides the night: the *intempestum*. Don't be afraid of it. Dissolve there your rapes of marionette.

*Intempestum est medium et inactuosum noctis tempus, quando agi nihil potest* says Isidore: it is that median part of the night where it is not possible to do anything. And he adds, then, breaking the conceptual iron which traps the mind with the absolutes: *tempus per se non intellegitur, nisi per actus humanos. Medium autem noctis actum caret*: time is not reachable as time, but only through a person's actions. And the median part of the night lacks of every human gesture.

Take advantage of it. Do not look for figures in the air. Do not stand

up to make gestures which no one is there to see. Would be wrong the world not making noise while it is respecting the universal machinery which includes it? And, would you have reasons to talk about it at this hour of the night? Where would be the ear which is waiting for them? Would you have differences to make, to demonstrate how thin the point of your research is? But, if in the world they are all together, why do you want to separate them?

Do not listen to me. Do not wait for the cock to speak. It is sleeping. Go. Do not ask me who I am. Do not tell me who you are. Search with your hand where are the marbles. There are those which are standing, and between them there is an emptiness through which you can pass. There are horizontal ones, they are a cover for the dead. They do not have nothing more to tell you and they do not have anymore a figure which could fulfill gestures under the light to be seen. There is no atlas which takes into consideration this darkness. In this darkness there are no shapes which are born from the things, because even making a shape would be doing something, and in the middle of the night nothing is burdened by this toil.

*Jakob Shalmaneser*

## *Sacrifice, “Holy Space” of a Meeting*

**D**espite common understanding, sacrifice—from Latin *sacrum facere*, “to make something holy”—doesn’t primarily refer to a suffering or deprivation to be avoided or of which to be afraid. Instead, it means something which is “made holy” in relation with somebody else, out of a conscious intention. It is a “space” that I myself can make holy and, in its very meaning, implies an encounter.

We can differentiate between:

1. The ritual sacrifice, which peoples have celebrated for deities ever since the beginning of time.
2. The “ordinary” sacrifice, which is part of our everyday life:
  - a) It can be made out of the affection felt towards somebody (i.e., I’m giving something or I deprive myself of something for someone else or for God Himself).
  - b) The sacrifice requested or imposed from the outside can be “something made holy” only if one personally and intentionally adheres to it.
  - c) The sacrifice made for a material purpose (i.e., I deprive myself of something in order to obtain something else for my own profit) cannot be considered as a real sacrifice because it is not ultimately addressed to a ‘you’.

Since the beginning of History, men have known the kind of sacrifice which is expressed in rituals: they choose, set something apart—such as an animal, the harvest, or whatever else they wish—in order to make an offer to the deity, to honour it and gain its favour, according to the logic of *do ut des*. This behaviour reveals a relationship with the deity marked essentially by fear.

However, the concept of sacrifice has developed in time, as notably witnessed by Holy Scriptures and the history of the people of Israel. The latter, in the way in which it is told in the Old Testament, shows that God reveals Himself and gradually leads His people from a ceremonial relationship expressed with material sacrifices to a heart—felt relation-

ship with Him, a covenant of Love through which both the experience and knowledge of Him grow.

Within this relationship, the sacrifice progressively acquires a spiritual dimension. In such a journey, it is surprising that God reveals how inseparable the sacrifice made for Him is from the relation with our fellow sisters and brothers. In fact, the sacrifice that He appreciates is not the offering of animals, but rather our listening to Him in conjunction with mercy and justice towards the others.

Finally, there is a sacrifice “of praise”, expressed by the generous devotion of our own time to praying and deepening our friendship with God, until our life becomes a “sacrifice in praise of God”, similarly to the lives of St Francis and St Clare of Assisi, and of many other saints.

So, true sacrifice:

- always occurs within a relationship;
- stems out of love, or is welcomed because of love;
- is a generous deed: We sacrifice, we make holy something that belongs to us up to the point that such a sacrifice appears to others to be a waste (i.e., the time dedicated to listen to the others, to look after a terminally ill person, or to God in prayer)
- is intentional and, even when superimposed from the outside, is still accepted by free will;
- is enshrined by silence.

However, the first sacrifice is that of God himself. In Christianity, it is Christ who makes Himself a living sacrifice, by saying to God: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. [...] Then I said: Behold, I have come to do your will”. Therefore, this means for us: “Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”.

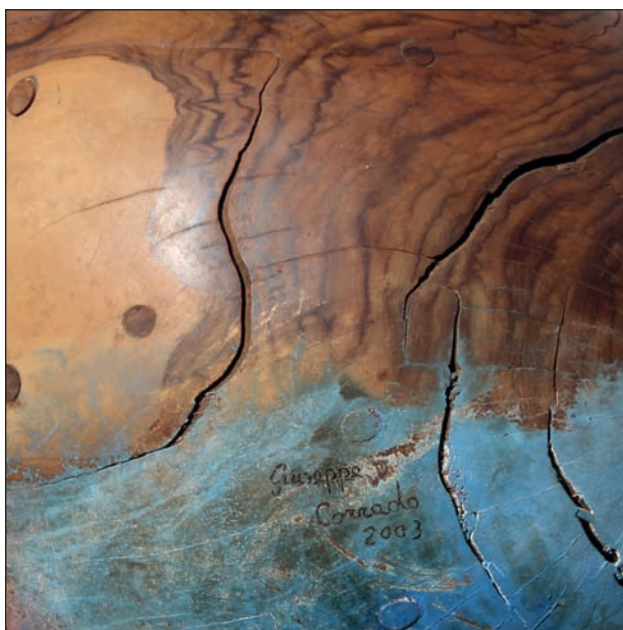
Christ’s sacrifice is the *space* in which not only every deliberate sacrifice, but also every suffering is accepted, welcomed, and embraced by God, thus becoming—in Him—something *holy* and *precious*, a place open to Life and to an encounter.

*Sr. Monica Benedetta Umiker, Ordo S. Clarae*



## GIUSEPPE CORRADO

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**G**iuseppe Corrado è nato il primo gennaio 1960 a Montesano Salentino (Lecce), dove vive e lavora. Diplomato al Liceo Artistico di Lecce, si iscrive all'ISEF di Foggia, vi completa gli studi e si dedica all'insegnamento per alcuni anni. Ubbidendo al richiamo dell'arte, abbandona il ruolo di docente impegnandosi nello studio dei classici greci e dei protagonisti del Rinascimento, lavorando intensamente come pittore e ancor più come scultore.

Sue le opere di grandi dimensioni come il monumento all'*Emigrante* nella piazza omonima di Matino (Lecce), la fontana del *Putto su delfino* realizzata in pietra leccese in piazza Bacile a Spongano (Lecce), il *Nettuno* sul lungomare di Gallipoli e il monumento in marmo ai *Caduti* in piazza Caduti a Botrugno (Lecce).

Ha realizzato inoltre importanti opere di arte sacra, quali il grande *Cristo* in legno donato a Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II, la statua della *Protettrice del Sangue di Cristo* nell'Istituto Regina Pacis di Bari, la *Pietà* e la *Madonna col Bambino* nel nuovo Seminario di Lecce, gli elementi strutturali e architettonici – l'altare, l'ambone, le sedute, il battistero – e il quadro che rappresenta il *Peccato originale* per la chiesa di Depressa (Lecce).

La sua esperienza ventennale nell'ambiente della scultura salentina barocca trova spazi rappresentativi di straordinaria importanza in Italia, in Germania, in Sudafrica e a Hong Kong, ricevendo consensi di critica e di pubblico.

La sua forte grinta artistica e abilità plastica costituiscono un contributo significativo alle tecniche di lavorazione della materia. Mostre personali in Italia e all'estero caratterizzano la sua attività artistica a far data dal 1989.

Nel 2012 gli è stata conferita la Laurea Honoris Causa in Arte dall'«Arts-Sciences-Lettres» – Société Académique d'Education et d'Encouragement di Parigi come migliore scultore italiano vivente.

**G**iuseppe Corrado was born on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1960 in Montesano Salentino (Lecce), where he lives and works. He attended the Artistic School in Lecce and then the ISEF in Foggia and then he taught for some years. Following his instinct towards art he left his role of teacher engaging himself in the study of the Greek and Latin classics and the protagonists of the Renaissance, concentrating on painting and sculpture.

His large scale works include the monument to the *Emigrant* in the homonym square in Matino (Lecce), the fountain of the *Cupid on Dolphin* realized in stone from Lecce in the Piazza Bacile in Spongano (Lecce), the *Neptune* on the Promenade in Gallipoli and the *War Memorial* in the Piazza Caduti in Botrugno (Lecce). He also realized important works of sacred art, like the large *Christ* in wood which he gave as a present to His Holiness Giovanni Paolo II, the statue of the *Patron of Christ's Blood* in the Istituto Regina Pacis in Bari, the *Piety* and the *Madonna with Child* in the Seminar in Lecce, the structural and architectural elements—the altar, the ambo, the chairs, the baptistery—and the painting which represents *The Original Sin* for the church in Depressa (Lecce).

His twenty years experience in baroque Salentine sculpture occupies positions of extraordinary importance in Italy, Germany, South Africa and Hong Kong, receiving the approval of critics and the public. He is well known for his artistic vision and mastery of various materials.

Personal exhibitions in Italy and abroad characterize his artistic activity since 1989. In 2012 he received the *Laurea Honoris Causa* in "Art" as best living Italian sculptor by the «Arts-Sciences-Lettres»—Société Académique d'Education et d'Encouragement in Paris.



*La coscienza*, h 190 cm, 1999

*La coscienza [The Conscience]*, h 74.86 in, 1999



*Flagellazione*, h 30 cm, 1998  
*Flagellazione [Flagellation]*, h 11.82 in, 1998



*Crocifissione*, h 45 cm, 2003  
*Crocifissione [Crucifixion]*, h 17.73 in, 2003

In epoche passate Giuseppe Corrado sarebbe stato l'artista-stregone ammirato e temuto per le presunte facoltà sovrannaturali delle sue opere in cui è espresso un sentimento in forma purissima che ha radici tanto profonde di ispirazione da riuscire nell'emozione: *Sono tanto semplici gli uomini, e tanto obbediscono alle necessità presenti, che colui che inganna troverà sempre chi si lascerà ingannare* (Machiavelli, *Il Principe*).

La *Coscienza* è un personaggio enigmatico e surrealista seduto su di una panca: l'attenzione per i dettagli fanno sembrare la figura *vera*.

Il silenzio dell'artificio scenografico scuote e interroga la nostra presunta innocenza di fronte all'accadimento delittuoso.

In the past Giuseppe Corrado would have been considered as an artist wizard, admired and at same time feared for supposedly supernatural powers, since his masterpieces create a feeling in the purest form that provokes ecstatic emotion: *People are so simple, and they obey their present needs so, that the one who deceives will always find someone who will allow him to do it* (Machiavelli, *The Prince*).

The *Conscience* is an enigmatical and surrealistic character sitting on a bench—the precision in the detail makes the figure seem *real*.

The silence of the scenographic artifice shakes and questions our assumed innocence in the face of the criminal act.

CAMILIAN DEMETRESCU

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**C**amilian Demetrescu, nome d'arte di Paul Constantin Demetrescu (nato a Buzăeni, in Romania, il 18 novembre 1924, naturalizzato italiano e morto a Gallese, il 6 maggio 2012), è stato pittore, scultore, scrittore e studioso di storia dell'arte. Si diploma all'Accademia di Belle Arti di Bucarest nel 1949, portando avanti studi paralleli di medicina e filosofia. Membro dell'Unione degli Artisti di Romania, lavora in silenzio e per sfuggire al condizionamento ideologico del regime comunista e svolge allo stesso tempo l'attività di storico d'arte e scrittore; nel 1969 viene censurato per inadempimento alle regole ideologiche del sistema e, dopo il fallimento della Primavera di Praga, riesce a fuggire ottenendo asilo politico in Italia.

Per uscire dall'incubo del realismo socialista – che imponeva all'artista di rappresentare la realtà non così com'era, ma come sarebbe dovuta essere secondo le indicazioni del partito –, in Italia passa a una forma di astrattismo simbolico che riparte dagli archetipi della realtà vera, dalle forme primordiali della vita: l'uovo, la conchiglia, le geometrie della natura. Nel 1970 Giulio Carlo Argan sarà il primo critico e storico dell'arte italiano a interessarsi al suo lavoro artistico.

La sua arte e la sua vita subiscono una svolta in seguito a un profondo cambiamento interiore e all'incontro, nel 1979, l'anno della sua ultima mostra d'arte astratta a Parigi, con lo storico delle religioni e scrittore rumeno Mircea Eliade. D'ora innanzi Demetrescu abbandona l'astrattismo per dedicarsi a un'arte ispirata al sacro, e i suoi lavori hanno uno spiccato carattere etico-religioso e un nuovo pubblico, soprattutto nei movimenti di risveglio spirituale.

Demetrescu pubblica il suo primo volume nel 1997. Si tratta di uno studio sul tema del simbolo nell'arte romanica dal titolo *Solstizio eterno*, dedicato alle basiliche di San Pietro e Santa Maria Maggiore di Tuscania, al duomo di Civita Castellana, alla collegiata di Lugnano in Teverina, alla cripta del Duomo di Nepi. Nel 1998 esce il secondo libro, *Proverbi di pietra*, sulle cattedrali romaniche di Piacenza e Ferrara, opere dello scultore e architetto medievale Nicholas.

È invitato due volte alla Biennale di Venezia, alla mostra Grafica Internazionale, alla Mostra del Cinema e al Festival dei Due Mondi di Spoleto, nel 1972, con una sala personale.

Nel 2000, su invito del governo rumeno, espone a Bucarest un'ampia mostra antologica intitolata *30 anni d'Arte in Italia*, con più di trecento opere del periodo astratto e figurativo, realizzate nel suo esilio italiano. Nel 2004 apre a Roma la mostra antologica intitolata *Hierofanie – La forza del simbolo tra nichilismo e speranza. 35 anni d'arte in Italia. Arazzi, sculture in legno, dipinti e grafica* – allestita in due sedi romane: all'Accademia di Romania espone le opere del primo periodo astratto; e nella Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri le opere d'arte sacra del secondo periodo.

Nel 2008, su invito della Prefettura Pontificia, sono trasferiti in modo permanente in Vaticano nove arazzi – il ciclo delle sei *Hierofanie*, l'*Annunciazione*, l'*Abbraccio Cosmico* e *San Giorgio che uccide il Drago Rosso*, il patrono della Romania circondato dagli occhi del popolo che si riaprono alla fede e alla libertà vietate dal comunismo, dedicato alla rivoluzione rumena del 1989, oggi collocati nelle sale per le udienze private del pontefice.



**C**amilian Demetrescu, who was known as Paul Constantin Demetrescu (Bușteni, November 18<sup>th</sup> 1924—Gallese, May 6<sup>th</sup> 2012) was a painter, sculptor, writer and history of art researcher. He was a Romanian citizen and a naturalized Italian. He obtained his diploma at the Academy of Arts in Bucarest in 1949, while at the same time studying medicine and philosophy.

A member of the Union of Artists of Romania, he worked in silence and to escape from the ideological influence of the communistic regime, he worked as an art historian and writer; in 1969 he was censured for not having fulfilled the ideological rules of the system and, after the failure of the Prague Spring, he managed to escape obtaining political asylum in Italy.

In order to escape from the nightmare of the real socialism—which imposed on the artist the responsibility to represent reality not as it was, but as it should have been according to the instructions of the party—, in Italy he started a form of symbolic abstractism which restarts from the archetypes of the true reality, from the primordial forms of life: eggs, shells, geometries of nature. In 1970 Giulio Argan was the first Italian critic and art historian who took an interest in his work.

His art, as well as his life, underwent a turning point after a deep inner change and the meeting in 1979, the year of his final exhibition in Paris, with the Romanian writer and historian Mircea Eliade. From this point he leaves abstractism behind to dedicate himself to an art inspired by the sacred, and his works will take on a marked ethical—religious character and attract a new public, most of all in movements of spiritual awakening.

Demetrescu's intense activity as historian finds its apex in 1997 with the first book about the symbol in the Romanesque art entitled *Eternal Solstice*, dedicated to the basilicas of San Pietro and Santa Maria Maggiore of Tuscania, the Duomo of Civita Castellana, the Collegiata of Lugnano in Teverina, the Crypt of the Duomo in Nepi. In 1998 the second book *Proverbs of Stone* was published, regarding the Romanesque cathedrals in Piacenza and Ferrara, masterpieces by the same medieval sculptor and architect Nicholas.

He was invited to exhibit his works twice at the Biennale in Venice, at the International Graphic Exhibition and at the Festival of Cinema and the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, in 1972, with a personal exhibit.

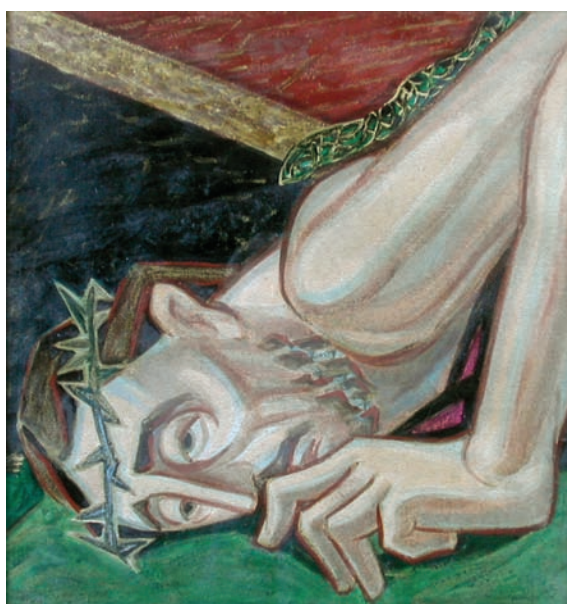
In 2000 the Romanian Government invited him to stage a huge anthological exhibition entitled *30 years of Art in Italy* in Bucarest, with more than three hundred abstract and figurative works realized during his Italian exile. In 2004 he opened the anthological exhibition entitled *Hierofanie—The Strength of the Symbol among nihilism and hope. 35 Years of Art in Italy. Tapestries, Sculptures in Wood, Paintings and Graphic* in two Roman locations: the Academy of Romania—featuring works of his first abstract period; and the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri—works of sacred art from his second period.

In 2008, by invitation of the Papal prefecture, nine tapestries were transferred permanently to the Vatican: the cycle of the six *Hierophanies*, the *Annunciation*, the *Cosmic Embrace* and *Saint George killing the Red Dragon*, which shows the patron saint of Romania, surrounded by the eyes of the people reopened to the faith and freedom forbidden by communism—a tapestry dedicated to the Romanian revolution of 1989, which today is located in the rooms reserved for the Pope's private audiences.



*Via Crucis Atomicae*, olio su cartone; 15 opere 50 × 53 cm; 14 opere 35 × 50 cm, 1985  
*Via Crucis Atomicae*, oil on cardboard; 15 works 19.7 × 20.88 in; 14 works 13.79 × 19.7 in, 1985









«Non sono cattolico. Non sono occidentale», ha confidato durante l'incontro di presentazione dal titolo *Per sconfiggere il drago* alla mostra del *Meeting*, nel 1982.

«Non sono nemmeno libero pensatore. Sono semplicemente un cristiano battezzato cinquantasette anni fa col rito ortodosso.

Un cristiano arrivato però alla fede pochi anni fa. Qui, in Italia.

Sono un cristiano scultore. Non ancora uno scultore cristiano.

Se la mia anima si è convertita senza fatica, non altrettanto facile sarà per la mia arte. Essere un artista cristiano è lo scopo attuale della mia ricerca.

Per liberarmi dall'incubo del cosiddetto realismo socialista, appena arrivato in Italia ho scelto la strada della ricerca astratta. Oggi tale scelta non mi soddisfa più.

Non credo che i temi cristiani si possano raffigurare in immagini astratte.

Per venirci incontro, Dio si è fatto uomo; sarebbe assurdo che l'uomo, partecipando a questo incontro, diventasse figura geometrica, immagine astratta».

Camilian Demetrescu, discorso tratto dall'intervento al *Meeting di Rimini*, 1982

"I am not a Catholic. I am not western—he revealed during the presentation, entitled *To Beat the Dragon*, at the exhibition held at the *Meeting*, in 1982—neither am I a free thinker. I am just a Christian baptized fifty—seven years ago with the Orthodox ritual."

"A Christian who arrived to the faith a few years ago. Here, in Italy. I am a Christian who is a sculptor. Not yet a Christian sculptor.

If my soul was converted easily, it will not be so easy for my art. To be a Christian artist is the current aim of my research.

To free myself from the nightmare of so called real socialism, when I had just arrived in Italy, I chose the path of abstract research. Today this choice does not satisfy me anymore.

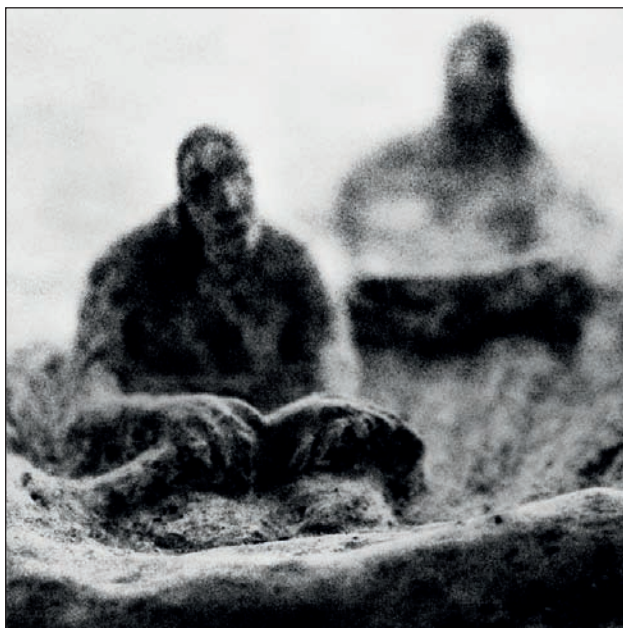
I do not believe that Christian themes could be represented in abstract images.

To comply with us, God became a person; it would be absurd, if a person, participating at this meeting, would become a geometrical figure, an abstract image."

Camilian Demetrescu, speech at the *Meeting di Rimini*, 1982

GRAZIANO GREGORI

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**G**raziano Gregori, scenografo e costumista, è nato a Castorano (Ascoli Piceno) nel 1954. Consegue il diploma di Maturità artistica ad Ascoli Piceno e la laurea in Architettura a Firenze. Vive a Colli del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno). Dal 1983 lavora stabilmente come scenografo costumista nel Teatro del Carretto, e considera quest'esperienza fondamentale per la propria ricerca artistica ed espressiva.

Innumerevoli le sue realizzazioni, in Italia e all'estero, dai costumi alle scene, in spettacoli di prosa e d'opera, con attori quali M. Mastroianni, V. Moriconi, F. Branciaroli, U. Pagliai, P. Gassman, R. Falk, D. Cantarelli, M. Bartoli e con registi di prestigio quali E. Marcucci, D. Abbado, L. Squarzina, A. Konchalovskij, G. Kramer, G. Emiliani e P. Degli Esposti, create per il Teatro Antico di Siracusa, il Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, l'Arena di Verona, il Teatro Massimo di Palermo, il Petruzzelli di Bari, il Regio di Torino, il Teatro dell'Opera di Vienna, il Festival di Spoleto, il Festival di Edimburgo, il Rossini Opera Festival.

Ha illustrato libri (*La principessa della torre*, Emme Edizioni, 1982, e *La fattoria degli animali*, Edizioni Olivetti, 1991) e ha realizzato mostre con disegni, bassorilievi, costumi delle sue realizzazioni sceniche: alla Galleria Nuages, a Milano, nel 1996; al Palazzo dei Capitani, in Ascoli Piceno, nel 1997; a Colli del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno), nel 2008; presso la Galleria Ceribelli, a Bergamo, nel 2009; alle Cartiere Vannucci, a Milano, nel 2011 e alla 54<sup>a</sup> Biennale di Venezia 2011.

**G**raziano Gregori, set designer and costume maker, was born in Castorano (Ascoli Piceno) in 1954. He attended artistic school in Ascoli Piceno and Faculty of Architecture in Florence. He lives in Colli del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno). Since 1983 he has worked as a set designer and costume maker in the Teatro del Carretto, which he considers as a fundamental experience in his artistic and expressive research.

He has numerous experiences, in Italy and abroad, from costumes to sets, in the theatre and opera, with actors such as M. Mastroianni, V. Moriconi, F. Branciaroli, U. Pagliai, P. Gassman, R. Falk, D. Cantarelli, M. Bartoli and with producers of the level of E. Marcucci, D. Abbado, L. Squarzina, A. Konchalovskij, G. Kramer, G. Emiliani, P. Degli Esposti, created for theatres such as Teatro Antico in Syracuse, Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Arena in Verona, Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Petruzzelli in Bari, Regio in Turin, Teatro dell'Opera in Vienna, and festivals such as the Spoleto Festival, the Edinburgh Festival and the Rossini Opera Festival.

He has illustrated books (*The Princess of the Tower*, Emme Edizioni, 1982, and *Animal Farm*, Olivetti, 1991), and staged exhibitions of drawings, bas-reliefs, and costumes from his theatrical career, among these the Galleria Nuages, Milan, 1996; Palazzo dei Capitani, Ascoli Piceno, 1997; Colli del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno), 2008; Galleria Ceribelli, Bergamo, 2009; Cartiere Vannucci, Milan, 2011; 54<sup>a</sup> Biennale di Venezia 2011.







*Segreti Lavacri*, 14 formelle in gesso, 45 × 26 cm, 2012  
*Segreti Lavacri* [*Secret Bathing*], 14 plaster panels, 17.73 × 10.24 in, 2012





*Segreti Lavacri.* Installazione con quattordici formelle in gesso realizzate con la tecnica dello stacciato che indagano la Passione di Cristo.

Segreti, perché segreto è ciò che si va a scoprire attraverso il percorso della installazione e il corpo come in levitazione quando raggiunge la luce, lo spazio bianco.

Segreti, perché i gesti che le donne compiono di fronte alla morte, quella di Cristo e quella della storia di ciascuno, sono sottolineati da parole sussurrate quasi con segretezza.

Modellare, disegnare, creare spazi emozionali è qualcosa che mi appartiene; credo sia il vissuto – i momenti di sofferenza e di gioia – il motore di questa espressione: sono il racconto dell'anima e in me prevale il territorio del dolore, della tragedia.

*Graziano Gregori*

*Secret Bathing.* Installation with fourteen plaster panels created with the *stacciato* technique which investigates the passion of Christ.

Secrets, because secrets are what we discover through the journey of the installation and the body levitated when it reaches the light, the white space.

Secrets, because the gestures that women fulfil when faced with death, that of Christ as the one in everybody's story, are underlined by words whispered almost with secrecy.

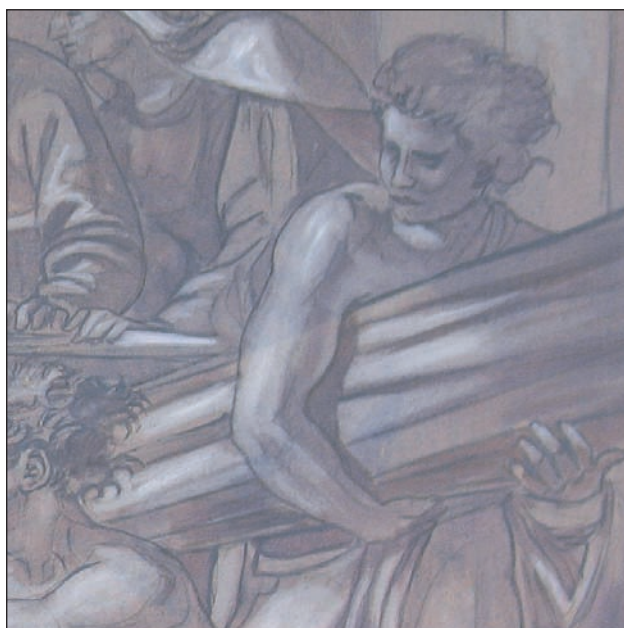
To model, to draw, to create emotional spaces is something that belongs to me; I think what I have lived—the moments of sufferance and joy—is the engine of this expression: they are the tale of the soul and in me prevails the territory of the pain and tragedy.

*Graziano Gregori*



ALI HASSOUN

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**A**li Hassoun è nato a Sidone, in Libano, nel 1964. Nel 1982 si trasferisce in Italia per proseguire gli studi all'Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze. Nel 1992 si laurea in architettura all'università della stessa città. Oggi vive e lavora a Milano. Alla nazionalità libanese Hassoun ha aggiunto quella italiana, integrando la dimensione originaria arabo-mediterranea della propria identità con una dimensione diversa – europea e occidentale.

Il tema più evidente fra quelli che emergono nella sua ricerca pittorica è relativo al viaggio, strumento per esplorare esperienze e visioni eterogenee. Invece del concetto di “scontro di civiltà”, semplificazione pericolosa e tuttavia molto diffusa oggi in Occidente, Hassoun propone un'idea di umanità come qualità universale e comune fra tutti i popoli, fondata su una spiritualità originaria che precede le diversificazioni religiose e politiche.

Così l'artista si fa interprete di culture diverse ma confrontabili, che convivono nello spazio perfettamente orchestrato delle sue tele coloratissime. I personaggi di un Islam o di un'Africa tanto vissuta quanto favolosa e immaginata, nelle sue composizioni, sono tutti catturati in un gioco di citazioni colte e di rimandi indiretti tra figura e sfondo.

Hanno parlato di lui Fayasal Sultan, Omar Calabrese, Gianni Jean Noel Schifano, Alberto Fiz, Silvia Guastalla, Luca Beatrice, Alessandro Riva, Aldo Mondino, Chiara Guidi, Maurizio Sciacaluga, Manuela Brevi, Ivan Quaroni, Marina Moiana, Gianluca Marziani, Beatrice Buscaroli, Antonio d'Avossa, Murteza Fedan, Melih Gorgun, Chiara Canali, Mimmo di Marzio, Saleh Barakat e Martina Corgnati e Vittorio Sgarbi.

**A**li Hassoun was born in Saida (Lebanon) in 1964. In 1982 he moved to Italy to continue his studies at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence. In 1992 he graduated from the city's university with a degree in Architecture. He now lives and works in Milan. He has added Italian nationality to his Lebanese nationality, and has thus been able to fill in areas that were lacking in his own individual experience.

The most easily identifiable theme of his painting is travel, contributing different experiences and visions. Ali Hassoun's works seem to act as a pole that attracts various cultures, which merge to create a new, richer culture. In opposition to the clash of civilizations, Hassoun wants to highlight the idea of “humanity”; a universal and spiritual feature that is common to all peoples, and that always come first, before any political or religious division.

The artist becomes a sort of cultural translator, and different traditions can coexist in the perfectly balanced space of his colourful paintings. Islamic and African characters are all caught in a game of smart quotations and indirect exchanges between the main action and the background.

His work has been written about by critics of the calibre of Fayasal Sultan, Omar Calabrese, Gianni Jean Noel Schifano, Alberto Fiz, Silvia Guastalla, Luca Beatrice, Alessandro Riva, Aldo Mondino, Chiara Guidi, Maurizio Sciacaluga, Manuela Brevi, Ivan Quaroni, Marina Moiana, Gianluca Marziani, Beatrice Buscaroli, Antonio d'Avossa, Murteza Fedan, Melih Gorgun, Chiara Canali, Mimmo di Marzio, Saleh Barakat, Martina Corgnati and Vittorio Sgarbi.





*Maternità*, olio su tela, 100 × 100 cm, 2004

*Maternità [Mother and Child]*, oil on canvas, 39.4 × 39.4 in, 2004



*Senza titolo*, olio su tela, 120 × 150 cm, 2011  
*Senza titolo [Without Title]*, oil on canvas, 47.28 × 59.1 in, 2011



*Senza titolo*, olio su tela, 120 × 150 cm, 2004  
*Senza titolo [Without Title]*, oil on canvas, 39.4 × 39.4 in, 2004



*Senza titolo*, olio su tela, 120 × 150 cm, 2004  
*Senza titolo [Without Title]*, oil on canvas, 47.28 × 59.1 in, 2004

In tutto il suo itinerario pittorico, Ali Hassoun si è servito dell'opera di altri artisti, rivisitata e spesso ricontestualizzata o meglio "ri-attribuita" a pittori e decoratori africani, oppure apprezzata, studiata e posta a confronto con figure e personaggi in rappresentanza del mondo islamico contemporaneo. Nella fase degli *Omaggi* (1999-2000) troviamo Picasso, Guttuso, Delacroix; poi, più tardi, compaiono Michelangelo con gli affreschi della Sistina, i Lorenzetti con il *Buon Governo*, le *Stanze* di Raffaello; e poi ancora Boccioni, Penck, Haring, la *Venere degli Stracci* di Pistoletto, De Chirico e Piero della Francesca e, indirettamente, Caravaggio.

In quest'uso calibrato e tuttavia eclettico, Ali Hassoun si dimostra un pittore postmoderno, un "nomade" della cultura visiva, in base all'accezione attribuita a questa parola da Achille Bonito Oliva ormai tanti anni fa e poi continuamente aggiornata. La storia è lì; pensare di superarla in forza del progetto modernista appare ormai velleitario e inutile, meglio riappropriarsene, riviverla, persino forzarla, persino tradirla. «La casa dell'arte è un luogo fluttuante e nomade; [...] l'artista è nomade, il suo linguaggio dà segni di sradicamento culturale: è la sintesi di memorie stratificate in senso verticale e ampliate in senso orizzontale. Attraverso il linguaggio, materiali smaterializzati, vaporizzati, impalpabili, ecco che l'artista abita il suo territorio» (A. BONITO OLIVA, *Eurasia. Dissolvenze geografiche dell'arte*, Skira, Milano 2008, p. 21).

La memoria sottratta all'idealismo preconconcetto diventa il luogo della collisione e dell'incrocio di frammenti diversi e imprevedibili. Per Ali Hassoun l'arte del Rinascimento, la grande cultura di un passato illustre, la *summa theologica* del neoplatonico Michelangelo, il canone della bellezza posto e fissato in Italia nel Quattro e nel Cinquecento e poi adottato dall'Occidente, sono tutte forme di vera sorpresa, vero amore, anzi vera riconoscenza. L'incontro che c'è stato, però, non è quello di un filologo con il suo materiale ma quello di un artista portatore di forme altre che porta tradizione occidentale e orientale a una convergenza fantasiosa ma spesso efficace e stimolante, propositiva di una nuova, possibile articolazione del senso. Non per nulla sembrano sempre stati lì i mistici sufi, fra i caotici e stratificati palazzi variopinti della Siena medievale, e così i devoti musulmani inginocchiati nella preghiera, sei come gli apostoli di Cristo inquieti e polemici nella discussione dell'*Ultima cena*.

L'antico acquista così un altro senso e un altro possibile spazio di relazione, a somiglianza di quanto accade, per esempio, nella recente immagine del giovane fotografo egiziano Youssef Nabil, che ha ritratto se stesso nei panni umili di un giovane arabo avvolto in una semplice coperta bianca e addormentato sulla panchina di fronte alla *Primavera* di Botticelli (*Self Portrait with Botticelli*, Firenze, 2009). Perché il discorso dell'arte continua: ha cambiato pubblico, ha introdotto un altro sguardo, magari, anche, si è lasciato sorprendere da un modo diverso di parlare, di ragionare, di apparire, di manifestarsi, ma non ha perduto la sua fondamentale ragion d'essere, antica quanto l'uomo e condivisa, *mutatis mutandis*, da tutte le civiltà. È che il mondo cambia e, forse, diventa più grande.

*Martina Corgnati*



Throughout his artistic career, Ali Hassoun has made use of the work of other artists, revisited and often re—contextualized or, rather, “re—attributed” to African decorators and painters, or else appreciated, studied, and contrasted with figures and characters representing the contemporary Islamic world. In the *Omaggi* period (1999–2000) we find Picasso, Guttuso, Delacroix and, later on, Michelangelo and the Sistine frescoes, Lorenzetti’s *Buon Governo*, Raphael’s *Stanze*, and then Boccioni, Penck, Haring, Pistoletto’s *Venere degli Stracci*, De Chirico, Piero della Francesca and, indirectly, Caravaggio.

In this calibrated yet eclectic use, Ali Hassoun shows himself to be a post—modern artist, a visual—culture “nomad”, in the sense Achille Bonito Oliva attributed to this word some years ago and which he has continued to update. History is there, and to think of superseding it within the frame of Modernism might now seem unrealistic and useless: it is better to re—appropriate it, re—experience it, even put it under strain or betray it. “The house of art is a fluctuating and nomadic place”, the critic has written. “The artist is a nomad, his language shows signs of being cultural uprooted: it is the synthesis of vertically stratified memories amplified horizontally. It is through language and dematerialized, vaporized, and impalpable material that the artist inhabits his territory.”

Memories derived from preconceived idealism become an area for collisions and the crossing point for different and unpredictable fragments. For Ali Hassoun, Renaissance art, the great culture of an illustrious past, the *summa theologica* of the neo—Platonist Michelangelo, the canons of beauty laid down and established in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and then adopted by the West, are all forms of real surprise, real love or, rather, real gratitude. The encounter that has come about, however, is not that of a philologist with his material, but that of an artist bearing others’ forms and who leads western and eastern traditions towards an imaginative but often efficacious and stimulating convergence, one that suggests a new possible reordering of meaning. Not for nothing do Sufi mystics seem to have always been among the chaotic and stratified brightly coloured buildings of medieval Siena, just as have the devout Moslems kneeling in prayer or Christ’s apostles discussing uneasily and argumentatively in the *Last Supper*.

In this way antiquity gains another sense and another possible space for relationships as, for example, can be seen in the recent images by the young Egyptian photographer Youssef Nabil, who has portrayed himself in the humble guise of a young Arab wrapped in a simple white blanket and asleep on a bench in front of Botticelli’s *Primavera*. Because art’s subject continues: it has a different public, it has created a new way of looking and, perhaps, it has even been surprised by a different way of speaking, of reasoning, of appearing, and of manifesting itself—but it has not lost its basic reason for being, one that is as old as mankind and shared, *mutatis mutandis*, by all civilizations. It is that the world changes and, perhaps, becomes bigger.

*Martina Corgnati*

## LENA LIV

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Lena Liv, nata a Leningrado nel 1952, vive tra l'Italia, gli Stati Uniti e Israele.

1968-70: Scuola di Belle Arti, Leningrado.

1971-76: Accademia di Stato d'Arte e Design Industriale Muchina, Leningrado.

1974: studia Arte del vetro colorato all'Opificio del Vetro Artistico di Leningrado. Partecipa al movimento *Arte Non Conformista*.

1976: arriva in Israele; vive per un anno a Tel Aviv.

1977: si sposta al villaggio artistico Ein-Hod e inizia a realizzare lavori sperimentali con la carta.

1978: progetta e realizza grandi vetrate a Tel Aviv e Haifa.

1979: primo soggiorno in Italia. Studia la fabbricazione della carta.

1980: prima mostra di opere su carta, Galleria Goldman, Haifa, Israele.

1981-82: inizia in Italia un progetto con la carta da lei direttamente prodotta. È invitata a partecipare alla Biennale d'Arte Anti-apartheid *Living Arts* a Johannesburg.

1983: *Paper as a Space Phenomenon*, installazione presso la Fiera d'Arte Internazionale *Art Basel*. Inizia a studiare il concetto di *Labirinto*.

1984: *The Horizon*, trittico monumentale per il Tiberias Club Hotel, in collaborazione con lo studio di architetti Blumenfeld-Pinchuk. Continua a lavorare sul progetto *The Labyrinth. Paper as a Space Phenomenon*.

1986: *Concentration*, installazione permanente all'Open Museum, Industrial Park, Tefen, Israele. Installazione *Blue Echo* alla 1ª Biennale Internazionale di *Art Paper*, Leopold-Hoesch Museum, Duren, Germania. Progetto Ambientale per lo Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germania.

1987-88: installazione permanente per Iscar Hartmetall GmbH, Karlsruhe, Germania. Dal 1988 lavora al progetto *...E Se Non Fossero Ombre Le Ombre...*

1990: premiata con il secondo Premio alla 3ª Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Carta, Leopold-Hoesch Museum, Duren, Germania. Primo ritorno in Russia.

1992: lavora al progetto *Memoria e Oblio*.

1993-94: inizia le ricerche per il progetto *Things*.

1995: borsa di studio del Ministero della Cultura dello Schleswig-Holstein per continuare la ricerca sul progetto *Things*. Svolge ricerche per lo sviluppo delle immagine fotografiche direttamente sul vetro.

1996: espone grandi installazioni al Landeskulturzentrum di Salzbau, in Germania.

1997: realizza grandi lavori con il vetro e la luce per il progetto *Things*, presentato in vari musei con mostre personali: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Stadtgalerie di Kiel, The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg. Nel 1998 inizia la ricerca per un nuovo progetto sulla *Follia*.

2000-05: realizza il gruppo centrale dei lavori per il progetto *Oltre* sul tema della *Follia*. Comincia realizzare vetri di grande formato nei quali riemerge il colore.

2006: ritorna in Russia per un nuovo progetto sulla Metropolitana di Mosca. Realizza una complessa documentazione fotografica all'interno della metropolitana nella quale individua, su vari livelli di significato poetico, testimonianze antropologiche ed esistenziali in cui si compendiano memoria, bellezza e tragica solitudine del popolo russo e dell'individuo contemporaneo, in una chiave di universalità. Si concentra sulla ricerca e sulla sperimentazione con immagini in cui la policromia della luce è trattata come una materia pittorica.

2009: *Hekhalot*: una grande mostra retrospettiva al Museo Pecci di Prato, che include lavori realizzati in un arco di più di venti anni. Successivamente prepara lavori con grandi vetri per la mostra personale *Chatedrali per le Masse. Metro di Mosca* al Tel Aviv Museum of Art. La mostra, curata da M. Omer, si apre nel luglio del 2010.

2012-2013: è sempre più coinvolta nella sperimentazione esaustiva della funzione "orfica" della propria creatività. Sta realizzando una grande opera di geometria variabile, una sorta di immenso caleidoscopio di immagini oracolari della natura in cui si compone e scompone un sistema di nuova poetica esistenziale che lascia aperte nuove ipotesi.



Lena Liv was born in Leningrad. She lives in Italy, United States and Israel.

1968-70: School of Fine Arts, Leningrad.

1971-76: Muchina Higher Institute of Arts and Design, Leningrad.

1974: studied the art of stained glass at the Experimental Factory of Artistic Glass, Leningrad. Took part in the *Non—Conformist Art* movement.

1976: settled in Israel; lived for a year in Tel Aviv.

1977: moved to the *Ein—Hod* Artist Village. Began experimental paper works.

1978: projected and executed stained—glass windows in Tel Aviv and Haifa.

1979: first stay in Italy. Studied papermaking.

1980: first exhibition of paper works, Goldman Art Gallery, Haifa.

1981-82: worked on *Space—Paper* projects, Italy. Invited to participate in the *Anti—apartheid Living Arts*, Johannesburg.

1983: *Paper as a Space Phenomenon*, installation, International Art Fair, Basel. Began investigating the concept of the *Labyrinth*.

1984: *The Horizon*, monumental paper triptych, Tiberias Club Hotel, in collaboration with the architects Blumenfeld—Pinchuk. Began work on the project *The Labyrinth—Paper as a Space Phenomenon*.

1986: *Concentration*, permanent installation at The Open Museum, Industrial Park, Tefen, Israel. *Blue Echo*, installation, 1<sup>st</sup> International Biennale of Paper Art, Leopold—Hoesh Museum, Duren. Environmental project for Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart.

1987-88: permanent installation for Iscar Hartmetall GmbH, Karlsruhe. Since 1988 has been working on the project *...And If Shades Were Not Shades...*

1990: awarded Second Prize at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Biennale of Paper Art, Leopold—Hoesh Museum, Duren. First return to Russia.

1992: worked on the project *Memoria e Oblío*.

1993-94: began research for the project *Things*.

1995: scholarship from the Ministry of Culture of Land Schleswig-Holstein to continue research for *Things*.

1995: research into developing the photographic image directly on glass.

1996: exhibited at the Landeskulturzentrum Salzbau, Germany.

1997: realization of large works on glass, for the project *Things* exhibited in 1997-98 in Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Stadtgalerie Kiel and The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg. Started research for a new project about *Folly*.

2000-05: realized main body of works for the project *Beyond* about *Folly*. At the same time she made large format colour portraits in glass.

2006: returned to Russia. Started work on a new project with photo material taken in Moscow Subway. Focuses on research and experimentation on images in which polychromy of light is treated as pictorial materials.

2009: project *Hekhalót*—large scale retrospective solo exhibition including works undertaken during more than twenty years at the Pecci Museum, Prato, Italy.

2009-10: preparing large glass works for solo exhibition *Cathedrals for the Masses. Moscow Metro* at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

2010: solo exhibition of the project *Cathedrals for the Masses*, curated by M. Omer at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

2012-13: getting more and more involved with the experimentation of “orphic” functions of her creativity, she is currently producing a large “variable—geometry work”, a sort of immense kaleidoscope of oracular images of the *Nature*, in which new poetics is composed and decomposed, and opens new hypotheses.



*Suora con bambole*, 200 × 125 × 115 cm, 1992  
*Suora con bambole* [*Nun with Dolls*], 78.8 × 49.25 × 45.31 in, 1992





*Un coup de dès jamais n'abolira le hasard*, pastello su carta, 77 x 13 cm, 2012

*Un coup de dès jamais n'abolira le hasard*, pastel drawing on paper, 30.34 x 5.12 in, 2012

Qui in mostra sono due lavori dell'artista di origine russa, che da molti anni vive nel nostro Paese, Lena Liv. Un'opera (si tratta di un lavoro realizzato a pastello) con dei dadi e un'installazione (l'installazione è costituita da un macroviluppo fotografico, ferro, carta fatta a mano, pigmento). Un lavoro recente, il primo, e un lavoro degli anni Novanta, il secondo. Due opere diverse tra loro, in cui, però, è possibile riuscire a cogliere un filo rosso, quella coerenza che è nella ricerca di Liv. Il suo è un lavoro che sarebbe sbagliato confinare in un luogo, in un tempo, in un frangente storico e sociale. A lei interessa cogliere l'essenza delle cose, la loro verità intrinseca, che si riconduce all'umanità. Umanità in senso archetipico, che va ben oltre le singole storie. Le sue opere, come lei stessa afferma, non offrono risposte, aprono piuttosto quesiti, domande che ci aiutano ad andare oltre l'apparenza, a giungere alla profondità dei fenomeni.

Dado, dal latino *datum*, con un rimando al gesto del lancio, che ci conduce alla casualità dell'esistenza stessa. Il gioco dei dadi è antico, esiste in diverse culture, ve ne sono riferimenti anche nella *Qabbaláh*.

*Alea iacta est*, attribuita da Svetonio a Giulio Cesare. Il dado è tratto. *Alea*, il rischio. Il rischio del vivere quotidiano, il rimando è all'universalità dell'esistenza.

Il pastello qui in mostra è di una perfezione realistica, ma pur sempre icona: nessuna traccia, testimonianza. In cui la luce è materia stessa di indagine plastica e non finalizzata a un ruolo di mera illuminazione.

Nei suoi lavori non c'è una partecipazione emotiva diretta, non c'è la volontà di entrare nello specifico. Le sue sono storie collettive – sempre che tali possano essere definite – varcano i confini del singolo evento per lambire i confini dell'universalità. Qui, come in altri lavori, è una sorta di mistero che non è neppure così importante riuscire a svelare. Sarebbe un'inutile forzatura.

In *Suora con bambole* del 1992 è l'immagine, il solo volto di una suora, della quale si presume l'esistenza di un corpo. È un'immagine già esistente, pescata probabilmente dalla bancarella di un mercatino, che è stata quindi elaborata, trasformata. Il volto esce dal suo contesto, da un riferimento particolare. Non ci sono rapporti con il passato, ma neppure con il presente, o il futuro.

La suora potrebbe essere un'educatrice. L'opera è composta anche da sedici sculture di carta, sedici bambolotti tutti uguali, tutti grigi, tutti seduti.

La carta che Liv fabbrica da sé è, secondo lei, molto più vitale rispetto alla tela, molto più duttile e plasmabile. La vive e la percepisce come una materia primordiale, che non è semplicemente una superficie su cui disegnare o scrivere, ma un'entità autosufficiente, che si colloca fra realtà e spazio mentale.

Guardando le bambole grigie mi tornano alla mente certe scene del teatro di Tadeusz Kantor: la classe morta? Forse.

È una serialità che costituisce una sorta di ritmo, una ripetizione in cui è la differenza, citando Deleuze. Vi è una sorta di rituale reiterato, un ordine silenzioso, che in un attimo potrebbe trasformarsi in caos. In tal senso mi piace leggere un legame con il lavoro dei dadi. Le bambole grigie sono come uno stormo di uccelli, un gruppo, un piccolo esercizio angosciante.

Ma non bisogna sforzarsi di trovare a tutti i costi una dimensione narrativa. Nei suoi lavori non esiste. Bisogna andare oltre. Le bambole hanno la testa e le braccia bucate, è possibile guardare al loro interno e tutto questo non è casuale. È chiara la volontà di superare quanto vediamo in una tensione verso una dimensione trascendentale.

Come ho già avuto modo di scrivere (*Lena Liv* in *Lena Liv Hekhlòt*, Edizioni Centro Sperimentale di Arte Contemporanea, Firenze 2009, p. 22): «Il suo non è un lavoro politico, sociale, di documentazione, è qualcosa di molto diverso e di molto più ampio. L'attualità in senso stretto, infatti, limita il valore dei fenomeni, confinandoli nel momento storico in cui sono stati creati e che in questo modo vengono facilmente superati. La sua è un'operazione – parafrasando Rosalind Krauss – di reinvezione del *medium*. Lena Liv utilizza, infatti, i mezzi della modernità, per toccare tematiche molto più ampie, che varcano il confine di una precisa dimensione spazio-temporale».

Così tutti i suoi lavori, sin dall'inizio, sono volutamente astratti dalle contingenze, dagli accadimenti per riuscire ad andare oltre all'apparenza dei fenomeni e giungere all'universalità delle cose, a quella rara dimensione del silenzio in cui ci è finalmente concesso pensare.

*Angela Madesani*

These are two works by the artist of Russian origin who has been living in our country for a long time, Lena Liv. A work with dice (realized in pastel) and an installation (set up by a photographic macro development, iron, hand—made paper, pigment). The first is a recent work, the second from the 1990s. Two works, one different from the other, where it is possible to catch a *fil rouge*, the coherence in Liv's research. It would be wrong to confine her work in a place, time, historical or social period. She is interested in catching the essence of things, their intrinsic truth which is possible to bring back to humanity. Humanity in the archetypal sense, which goes beyond single stories. Her masterpieces, as she says, do not offer answers, they open questions which help us go beyond appearance and reach the profundity of phenomena.

*Dado* (dice), from the Latin, *datum* remembers the gesture of throwing, which conducts us to the randomness of existence itself. This game is old, it exists in different cultures—also the *Qabbalàh* talks about it.

*Alea iacta est*, attributed by Svetonio to Julius Caesar. One can't go back. *Alea*, the risk. The risk of daily living, it reminds us about the universality of existence.

The pastel here exposed is of a realistic perfection, but remains an icon, without traces or evidence. Where the light is the material of plastic research and not finalized to a role of mere illumination.

In her works there is no direct emotive participation, no will to enter into the specific. Her collective stories, if it is possible to call them so, go beyond the borders of the single event to lap the borders of universality. Here, as in other works, there is a kind of mystery which it is not important to reveal. It would be a useless stretch. In *Sister with dolls*, 1992, the image only shows the sister's face, whose body is just assumed to exist. It is an image which already exists, maybe to be found in the stalls of a market, here elaborated and transformed. The face goes out of its context, it gives a special reference. There is no relationship with the past, nor the present or the future.

The sister could be a teacher. The work is also composed of sixteen paper sculptures, sixteen dolls all equal to each other, all grey, all sitting.

The paper Liv does on her own is, in her opinion, much more vital than the canvas, more malleable and adaptable. She lives and perceives it as a primordial material, which is not simply a surface on which to draw or write, but a self—sufficient entity, which collocates itself between reality and mental space. Looking at the grey dolls, it brings to my mind some scenes from Tadeusz Kantor's theatre, the dead class? Maybe.

It is a seriality, which constitutes a kind of rhythm, a repetition in which exists the difference, mentioning Deleuze. There is a kind of repeated ritual, a silent order, which in a second could be transformed into chaos. In this sense I like to read a connection with the work of the dice. The grey dolls are like a flock of birds, a group, a small anguishing army.

But there is no need to find a narrative dimension. In her works it does not exist. We need to go beyond. The dolls have their head and arms perforated, it is possible to look inside of them and this is not by chance. It is the clear will of surpassing what we see in a tension towards a transcendental dimension.

As I have already written: "Her work is not political, neither social nor documental, it is something so different and so vast. The topic in fact, in the strict sense of the word, limits the value of the phenomena, confining them in the historical moment in which they were created and so they are in this way easily surpassed. Her operation is—paraphrasing

Rosalind Krauss—the reinvention of the medium. Len Liv, infact, uses the instruments of modernity, to touch more vast themes which go beyond the limit of a precise spatial—temporal dimension.”

So all her works, from the very beginning, are abstract from the contingency, the events, managing to go beyond the appearance of the phenomena and to reach the universality of things, that rare dimension of silence, where it is finally allowed to think.

*Angela Madesani*



## ENRICO PULSONI

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*Creazione delle idee confuse, tecnica mista, 2009*  
*Creazione delle idee confuse [Creation of Confused Ideas], mixed technique, 2009*

**E**nrico Pulsoni è nato ad Avezzano nel 1956. È titolare della cattedra di Scenografia all'Accademia di Belle Arti di Macerata. Si laurea in Architettura all'Università "La Sapienza" di Roma con Filiberto Menna su Schwitters e il Merzbau di Hannover. Nei primi anni Settanta, collabora con il gruppo teatrale "Altro" di Roma, realizzando spettacoli, ambientazioni spaziali e mostre.

Al 1977-1978 risalgono le sue prime personali che si svolgono alla galleria "Ferro di Cavallo" di Roma e alla Galleria "Artecentro" di Milano.

Nel 1980 Nello Ponente lo invita alla mostra *1960/80. Linee della ricerca artistica in Italia*. Nel corso degli anni Ottanta espone più volte nelle gallerie "Il Segno" di Roma, "Spriano" di Omega, "Peccolo" di Livorno, "Tommaseo" di Trieste, "Emicla" di Gaeta.

Nel corso degli anni Novanta le sue mostre personali si svolgono alla Galleria "La Panchetta" di Bari, alla galleria "Michele Di Virgilio" di Roma, alla "Spriano" di Omegna, al Künstlerhaus Mousonturm di Frankfurt am Main. Collabora alla scenografia dello spettacolo *Anihccam* di Lucia Latour che viene presentato a Rovereto, Parigi e Francoforte.

Nel 1994 realizza i fondali di scena per lo spettacolo *Naturalmente tua* di Lucia Latour presentato a Villa Medici a Roma. Nel 1995 la sua prima importante esposizione di grafica, libri d'arte e *gouaches* che ha luogo al Leonhardi Museum di Dresda, con un testo in catalogo di Achille Perilli. Nel 1997 Jolanda Nigro Covre lo invita all'Università di Pescara nell'ambito di una ricognizione di artisti nati in Abruzzo. Collabora con le riviste d'arte «Arsenale», «Sottotraccia», «Opening» e realizza il video d'arte *Rebus* con Aldo Cimaglia, che viene presentato in diverse manifestazioni italiane ed estere. Nel 1998 presenta presso la galleria "Il Bulino" di Roma *Librido* insieme a Bruno Conte e successivamente, nella stessa galleria, presenta *Disegni e fusioni*, disegni a penna e fusioni in alluminio e in ottone.

Nel 2001 espone al Centro Mascarella di Bologna e la Banca Nazionale del Lavoro acquisisce una serie di sue sculture. Nello stesso anno Alessandro Gori di Prato gli commissiona il libro in tiratura limitata *Paesaggiornaliero* per i tipi di Morgana Edizioni di Firenze. Alla "Lift Gallery" di Roma realizza *Quarti per quattro e un quadrato*, libro-gravure in *double-face* con interventi di Vettor Pisani, Michele Marinaccio, Giuseppe Tabacco.

Dal 1991, affianca al suo interesse per la realizzazione di libri d'arte, sovente in copia unica, le *Edizioni Cinquantunosestanta* – libri calcografici o litografici che testimoniano, in maniera ironica su piani di linguaggio diversi, i suoi rapporti personali e artistici con un numero di volta in volta crescente di coautori – espone una prima volta nel 2000 presso l'Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna. L'ultimo di questa serie, dal titolo *Novena*, esce nel 2002. È curatore artistico della collana d'arte *Duale*, nata nel 1995, edita da Il Bulino di Sergio Pandolfini.

Nel 2002 tiene un corso sul *Libro d'arte* presso l'Accademia di Belle Arti de L'Aquila, dal quale scaturisce il poster-dispensa *Libro d'arte. Appunti scritti a mano per libri da realizzare manualmente*. Nello stesso anno realizza un grande pannello in ottone per l'Aula Magna del Nuovo Commissariato di Avezzano. Nel 2003 espone terre e disegni all'Accademia d'Egitto di Roma e gli ottoni all'ISA/Magazzini del porto Fluviale di Roma.

Nel 2004 il Centro dell'Incisione e della Grafica d'Arte di Formello presenta le sue *Edizioni Cinquantunosestanta*. A Castelli espone il suo lavoro in terracotta e in ottone dal titolo *Ritmo bianco e rosso*.

Nel 2005 presenta *Biancoeottone*, le sue opere recenti nello spazio romano *TRAlleVOLTE*. *Presepe Fiore*, opera in terra bianca e rossa di tre metri di diametro, viene presentato a Matera nella Chiesa rupestre della Madonna delle Virtù. In seguito *Presepe Fiore* è esposto nella basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme e nella cripta del Duomo di Orvieto. Di questa opera è stato realizzato un video da Aldo Cimaglia intitolato *Presepe*

*Fiore di Enrico Pulsoni*, selezionato e proiettato al Concorso Internazionale DOCFEST di Palazzo Venezia.

Da alcuni anni indaga il tema dell'identità attraverso *VOLTIttraVOLTII*, un migliaio di volti disegnati con la penna biro, custoditi in una scatola: a fianco di *VOLTIttraVOLTII* ha lavorato Gianmaria Nerli scrivendo 34 storie, e ne è uscito un libro edito dalla Galleria Michelangelo di Roma.

Negli ultimi anni espone alla galleria "Meeting" di Gianni Frezzato a Venezia, alla Fondazione Tito Balestra di Longiano e alla galleria "Biffi Arte" di Piacenza. Cura *Fogli di Formello* per il Centro dell'Incisione della Grafica d'Arte di Formello e gli incontri *TRAeditoriaEmusica* per l'associazione *TRAlaVOLTE* di Roma. Per l'editore Empiria pubblica *Nuole Barbare*, una trascrizione-illustrazione di testi inediti di Pietro Tripodo con una nota di Emanuele Trevi.

Il suo lavoro si concentra attualmente su *FINALE, DIPARTITA calcioperetta*, una visione melanconica dello sport più popolare d'Italia nelle zone più popolari delle nostre città. Da anni il suo studio è anche luogo di incontri culturali e musicali ed è conosciuto con il nome di *TerrazzoAlTerzo*.

Per i tipi di Aguaplano è uscito il libro *Mortis Humana Via*, nel quale si riproducono i disegni preparatori della sua *Via Crucis* con i testi di Carlo Pulsoni musicati da Matteo Sommacal. La forma plastica di *Mortis Humana Via*, realizzata in gesso e terracotta con la collaborazione di Orietta Rossi, viene esposta per la prima volta negli spazi della galleria "Biffi Arte".

**E**nrico Pulsoni was born in Avezzano in 1956. He is professor of set design at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Macerata. He graduated from the faculty of Architecture at the "La Sapienza" University in Rome with Filiberto Menna, with a thesis regarding Schwitters and the Merzbau of Hannover. In the early Seventies, he collaborated with the Altro theatre group in Rome, staging shows and spatial environments.

His first personal exhibitions were held in 1977-1978 at the Ferro di Cavallo gallery in Rome and the Artecentro gallery in Milan.

In 1980 Nello Ponente invited him to participate in the exhibition *1960/80. Lines of the Artistic Research in Italy*.

In the 1980s he exhibited many times in the galleries "Il Segno" of Rome, "Spriano" in Omegna, "Peccolo" in Livorno, "Tommaseo" in Trieste, "Emicla" in Gaeta.

In the 1990s his personal exhibitions took place at the gallery "La Panchetta" in Bari, Michele Di Virgilio in Rome, Spriano in Omegna, Kunsterhaus Mounsonturm in Frankfurt am Main. He collaborated in the stage design of Lucia Latour's performance *Anihecceam*, which was presented in Rovereto, Paris and Frankfurt.

In 1994 he created the backdrop for Lucia Latour's performance *Naturally Yours*, presented in Villa Medici, Rome. In 1995 his first important exhibition of graphics, art books and *gouaches* was held at the Leonhardi Museum in Dresden, with catalogue text by Achille Perilli. In 1997 Jolanda Nigro Covre invited him to the University of Pescara for a reunion of artists who were born in Abruzzo. He collaborated with art reviews «Arsenale», «Sottotraccia», «Opening» and created the art video *Rebus*, which was presented in Italy and abroad. In 1998 he presented *Librido* at the gallery "Il Bulino" in Rome with Bruno Conte and then, in the same gallery, he presented *Drawings and Fusions*, pen drawings and aluminium and brass fusions.

In 2001 he held exhibitions at the Centro Mascarella in Bologna and the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro acquired a series of his sculptures. In the same year Alessandro Gori from Prato commissioned a limited—edition book *Paesaggiorialiero* for Morgana Edizioni in Florence. At the “Lift Gallery” in Rome he presented *Quarti per quattro e un quadrato*, a gravure book in double—face with contributions by Vittor Pisani, Michele Marinaccio, Giuseppe Tabacco.

Since 1991, he has supported the publishing of art books, often in an edition of a single copy, the *Edizioni Cinquantunosestanta*—copper engraved or lithographic books which testify, ironically on different linguistic levels, his personal and artistic relationships with a continuously growing cast of co—authors—exhibited for the first time in 2000 at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna. The series ended with *Novena* in 2002.

He is the artistic curator of the *Collana d'arte Duale* published by Sergio Pandolfini's Il Bulino.

In 2002 he held a course on *Art Books* at the Accademia di Belle Arti in L'Aquila, from which the poster—handout *Art book—Notes Written by Hand for Books to be Realized Manually* was born. In the same year he created a huge panel in brass for the Aula Magna of the Police Headquarters in Avezzano.

In 2003 he exhibited grounds and drawings at the Accademia d'Egitto and brasses at the ISA/Magazzini in Rome.

In 2004 the Centro dell'Incisione e della Grafica d'Arte of Formello presented his *Edizioni Cinquantunosestanta*. In Castelli he presented his *terracotta* and brass works entitled *White and Red Rythm*.

2005 saw *Biancoeottone*, his recent works in the Roman space *TRAlaVOLTE*. *Presepe Fiore*, worked in white and red ground and more than three meters in diameter, was presented in Matera in the rocky church of Madonna delle Virtù. Then the *Presepe Fiore* was installed in the basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem and in the crypt of the Duomo in Orvieto. A film of this work by Aldo Cimaglia with the title *Presepe Fiore by Enrico Pulsoni* was selected and shown at the international DOCFEST competition in Palazzo Venezia.

In the last years he is working on the theme of identity: *VOLTItraVOLTI*—a thousand faces drawn with a biro pen and saved in a box. Gianmaria Nerli collaborated on the project writing 34 stories inspired by them, and the resulting book was published by the Galleria Michelangelo in Rome.

In 2007 his work was presented at Gianni Frezzato's “Galleria Meeting” in Venezia. He curated the *Formello Papers* for the Centro dell'Incisione e della Grafica d'Arte of Formello. He published *Nuvole Barbare* for Empiria—a transcription and illustration of the unpublished Pietro Tripodo texts with a *Note* by Emanuele Trevi.

He is currently focusing on two works: *Mortis Humana Via*—a revisitation of the Via Crucis—and the ‘football operetta’ entitled *FINALE, DIPARTITA calcioperetta*—a vision of the most popular Italian sport in the most working—class neighbourhoods of our cities.



*Creazione dei pensieri cupi*, tecnica mista, 2009  
*Creazione dei pensieri cupi* [*Creation of Gloomy Thoughts*], mixed technique, 2009



*Mortis Humana Via*, tecnica mista, 2010-2013  
*Mortis Humana Via*, mixed technique, 2010-2013



*VOLTItraVOLTÌ*, disegni a penna su carta, 2006-2007  
*VOLTItraVOLTÌ*, pen drawings on paper, 2006-2007

