

# Everyone asks me, everyone wants me...

*Everyone asks me, everyone wants me (...)  
Here the wig, soon the beard, soon the ticket Figaro, Figaro Figaro, Figaro Figaro (...)  
Alas, alas what fury  
Alas, what a crowd One at a time  
For pity's sake! For pity's sake! For pity's sake! (...)  
Hey, Figaro! I am am here.  
Figaro here, Figaro there, Figaro there Figaro up, Figaro down, Figaro up, Figaro down  
I am the factotum of the city*

Gioachino Rossini, *Largo al factotum (Barber of Seville)*

Giorgio had a special character and everyone in the town was aware of it. Especially those who know him were aware that it was necessary to 'tiptoe' into his studio, or at least ask for permission. Yet, Babb was generous with everyone, and many people turned to him to create works for special occasions, or to be used in posters, flyers and invitations for events of all kinds.



Among the first to knock on his door was the 'La Rondinella' Sports Group of Pontedera, which in October for the San Luca Fair, (where he once exhibited and one of his paintings literally 'sold like hot cakes'), used to organise the Valdera March, and asked him to produce a poster for the event.

The first edition was held in 1972, and Dal Canto went on to illustrate for the competition for many years. His 'run' would not stop there.

On the occasion of the 20th Trofeo delle Tre Provincie (Three Provinces Trophy), an award was made for the runners using 'one of his works embossed in silver by the Fratelli Staccioli Company of Pontedera'.

The award ceremony took place at the Politeama in Cascina on 24 October 1993.

In 1981, Babb was called upon by the 'Circolo Filatelico' (stamp collectors' club) of Florence

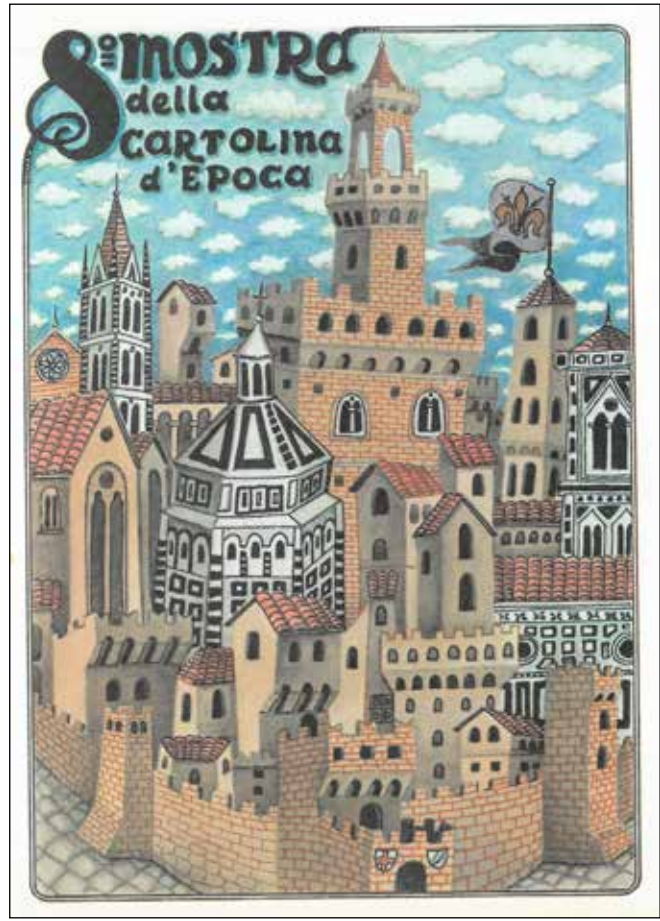
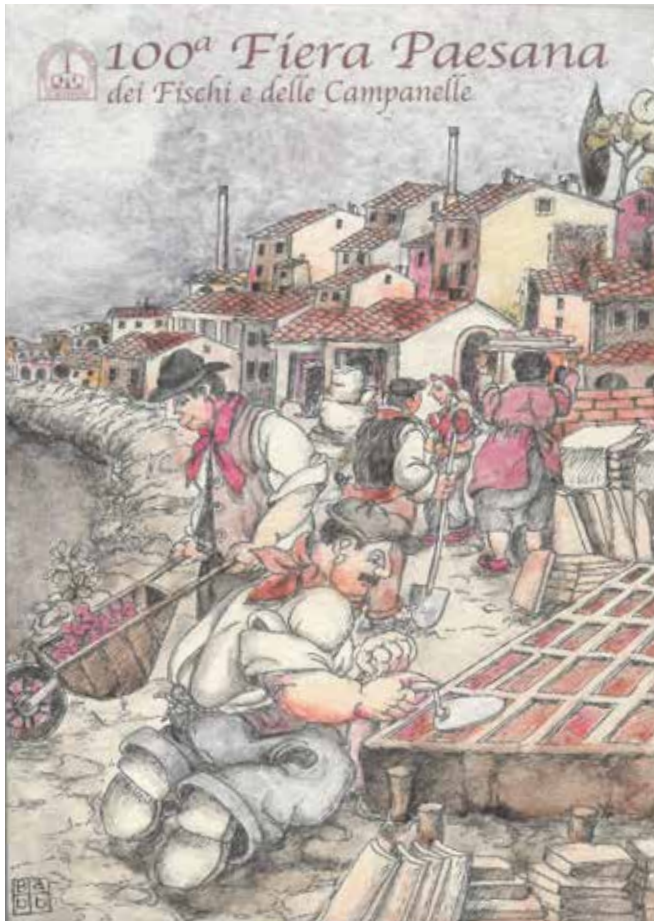
to put his art at the service of a great event, which was organised annually in the Tuscan capital: the Exhibition of Vintage Postcards. Dal Canto illustrated for the 4th and the 8th editions (1985). Dal Canto also illustrated the invitation card of the Twenty-sixth Philatelic Convention (1981) held under the patronage of the Committee for the Pinocchio centenary events.

Requests to Babb were continuous, so famous was his stroke and recognisable was his style, and the artist tried to accommodate the all, keeping well away from those he did not get on with.

Babb also collaborated for a long time with the daily newspaper 'Il Tirreno' 'through a series of drawings in a satirical vein'.

Since 2001, the Palio della Balestra (Crossbow Palio) has been organised in Pontedera to commemorate the Peace of Pescia that took place here on 28 August 1364.

The agreement between the Pisans and the Florentines after the defeat of the former at the Battle of Cascina included the return of control Pontedera to Pisa. Babb produced a sketch for the banner of the Palio della balestra, which is now kept in the Town Hall.



Four postcards from Babb

In 2006, the Association 'Il Mattone' of La Rotta asked Giorgio Dal Canto to produce the commemorative postcard for the centenary edition of the town fair, the 'Fiera Paesana dei Fischi e delle Campanelle' (The Whistles and Bells Fair). The artist depicted the bricklayers at work with their village and the Arno River.

In the original sketch, Dal Canto wrote, incorrectly, '10th Centenary of the Bricklayers Association', so in the postcard that was printed, this annotation was omitted and the anniversary is indicated correctly.

It would be worth dedicating a separate chapter to all those oil on canvas paintings through which Babb paid homage to Pontedera's commercial and industrial activities. Even today, if you happen to enter the Lapucci Pharmacy or the Pizzicheria Dal Canto on Corso Matteotti, or the Bandecchi&Vivaldi printing house, you will find extraordinary works immortalising these historic businesses on display. Here, Dal Canto succeeds with one 'snapshot' in capturing the essence of the people, the environment and work that goes on on a daily basis.

Then, if you look closely, you almost seem to hear the noises made by those people at work and smell the odours released by the products or processes they used.

Characters come to life and the observer, having understood the game, begins to enjoy looking at the details and objects with which the painting overflows; continuous references to Dal Canto's poetry or simple tributes to friends who are part of his life.

The tribute to his patron and mentor Giuseppe Diomelli was exceptional, celebrated in the 1994 work 'The Diomelli Story', where Babb paints *'in a nutshell the story of the "Pon-*

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### **Compagnia dei Balestrieri di Pisa**

(Crossbowmen Company of Pisa)

10° Palio città di Pontedera, 2010

oil on canvas 30×40 cm (Municipality of Pontedera)



*taderese" Diomelli, who began on the Era Bridge, wearing a poor jumper, but with many ideas tied like balloons to his bicycle. Then he plays the guitar at the foot of the Palazzo Pretorio, is a wedding photographer, meets some people who matter more (a fat priest) and people who matter less (a skinny, smaller priest). Then comes the rise towards the world of computers that cut people's brains out and attract the 'bowler hats' of power, to which the flying anarchist plays a nice little violin refrain'.*

So many people wanted one of Dal Canto's works, an oil painting or a drawing, and so many asked for his art and soon everyone discovered that his brushstroke was a perfect way to illustrate covers and magazines. So many came forward that today it has become impossible to reconstruct his entire output in this field.

Giorgio tried to please everyone, but at his own pace and dictating his own rules.





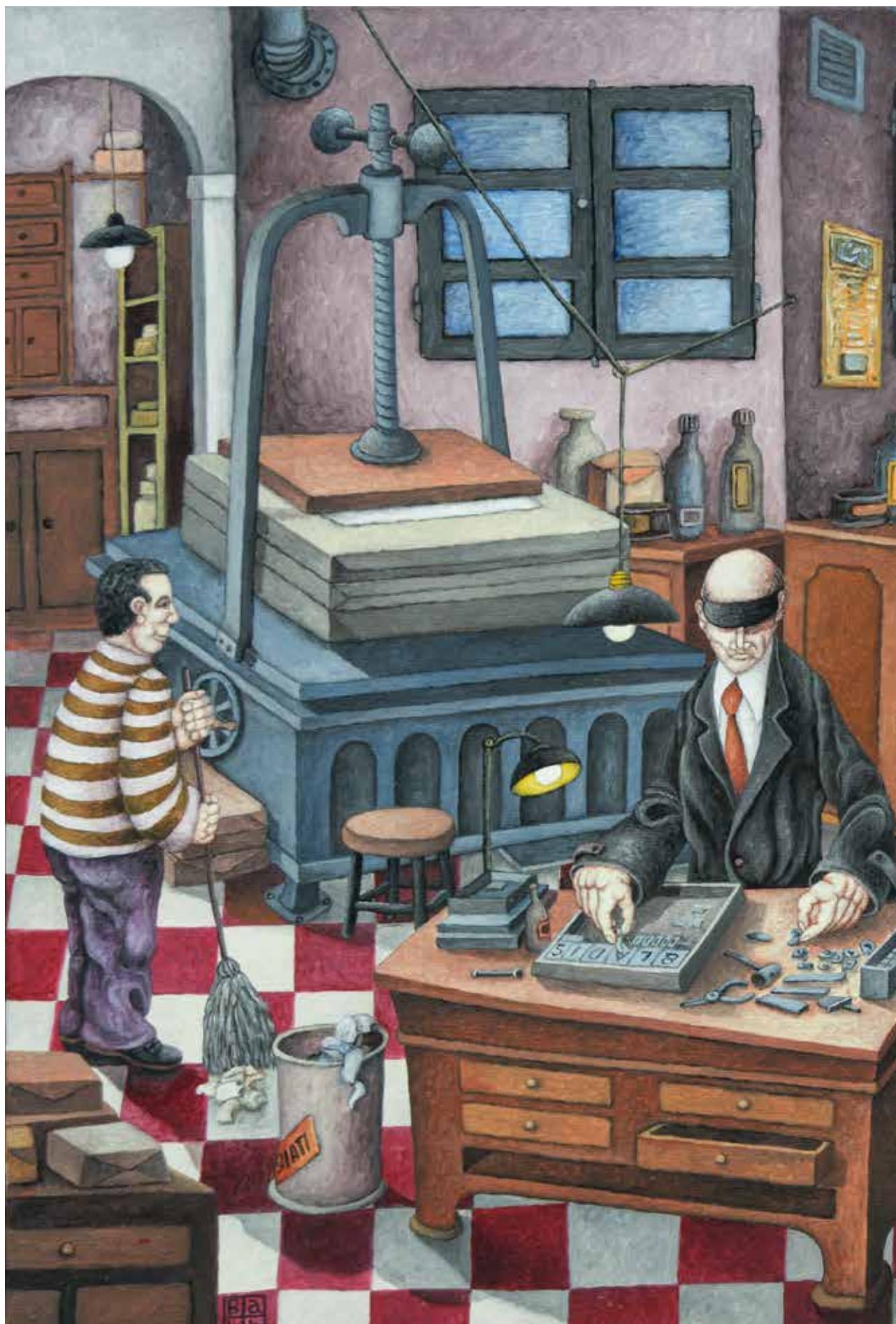
Giannino Giuntini, 1990, oil on canvas 40x30 cm (Rodolfo Giuntini)



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**Il benzinaio**  
(The Gas Station attendant), 1989  
oil on canvas  
35x30 cm

*Mario Marianelli was a political player in Pontedera since his youth. Sent to the Soviet Union, he returned and was the deputy of his cousin Mayor Maccheroni. Once his political career was over, he devoted himself to the business of a petrol and gas station on the Tosco Romagnola road.*



**Tipografia  
Bandecchi&Vivaldi**  
Bandecchi&Vivaldi  
Printing Works) 1990  
oil on canvas 80x60 cm  
(Bandecchi&Vivaldi)





Alberto Simoneschi "Il Maestro" (Alberto the Master), 2006, oil on canvas 35x50 cm

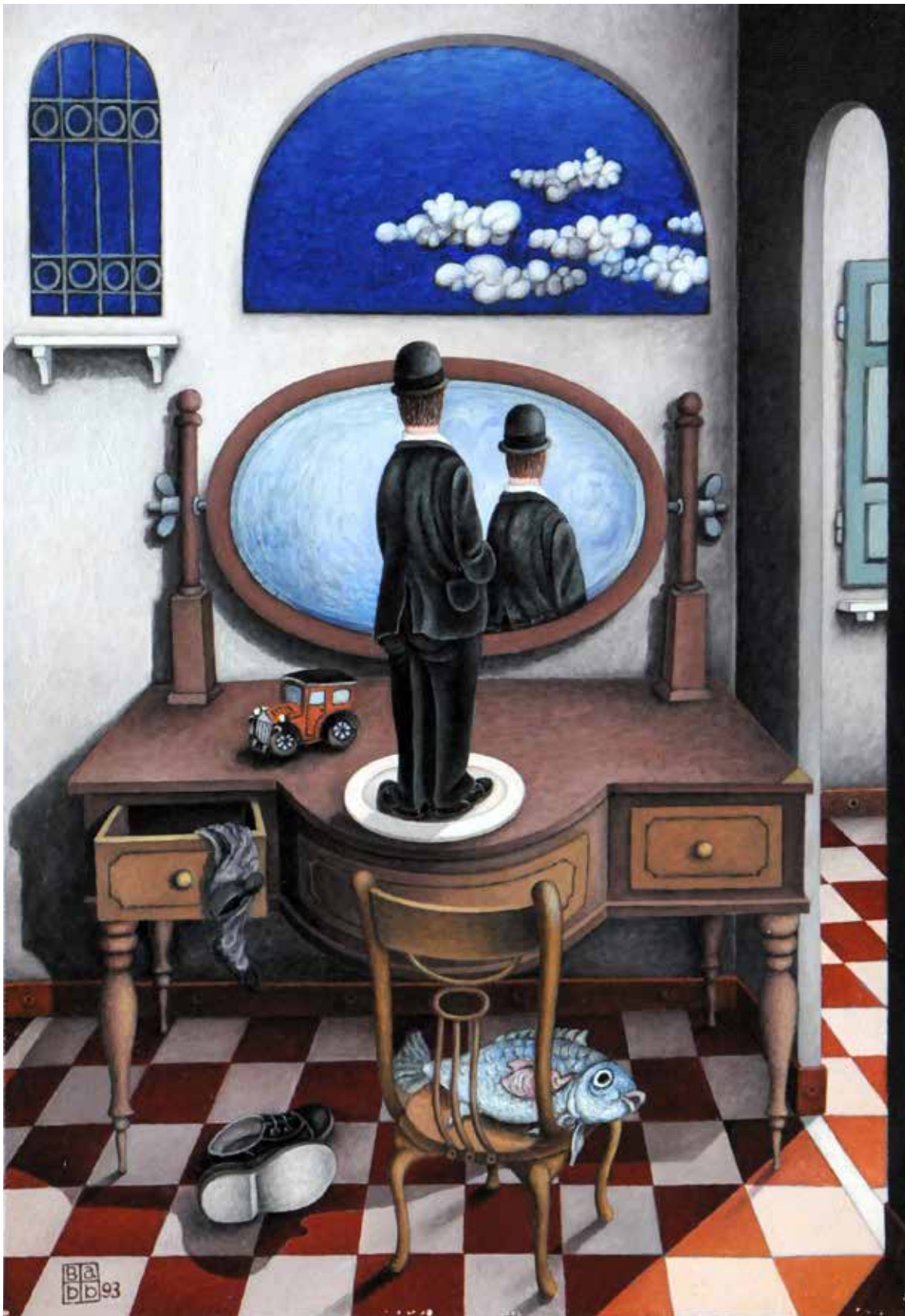




**Farmacia Lapucci**, 1990, oil on canvas 70×50 cm (Lapucci Pharmacy)



**Pizzicheria Dal Canto**, 1991, oil on canvas 70×50 cm (Pizzicheria Dal Canto)



**Il Potere allo specchio** ( Power in the Mirror) 1993  
oil on canvas 35x50 cm

*Power never looks at itself because if it did it would shudder and therefore its image reflected in the mirror is always the image of its shoulders.*

*The fish on the chair means that the seats of power stink, the rest has only a choreographic meaning. .*



**Orafo** (Goldsmith), 1991, oil on canvas 40x50 cm

**The Diomelli Story**

1994

oil on canvas  
150×100 cm

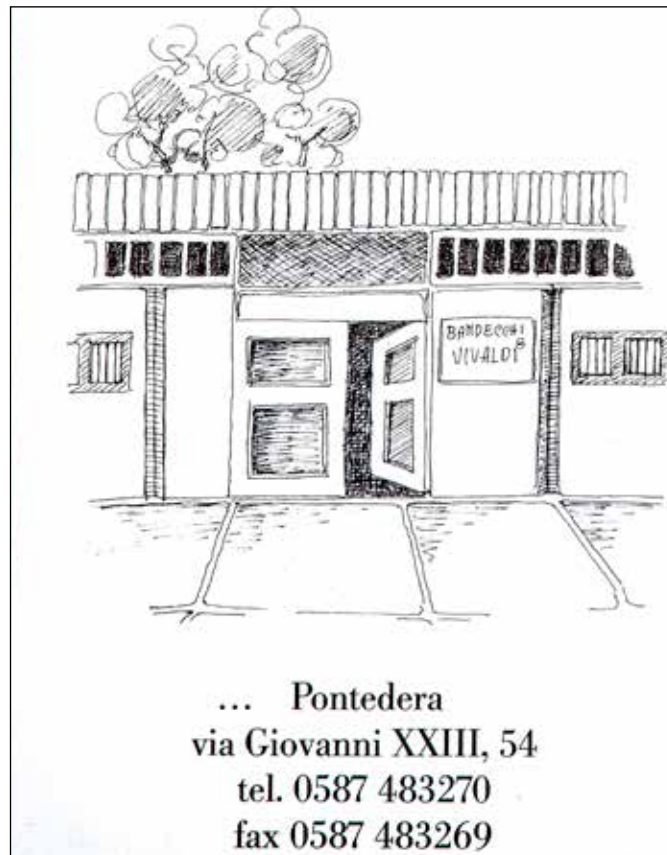
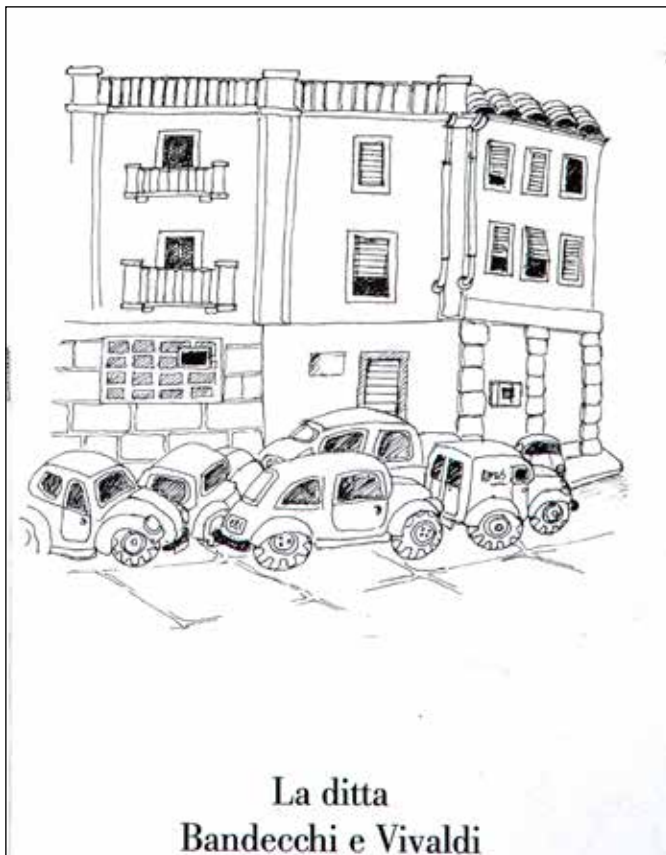
*This was a painting commissioned by Diomelli to Dal Canto asking him to interpret his story of Pontedera man.*

*The beginning on the Era bridge with a bike, a poor sweater but with many ideas (balloons tied to the bike).*

*Then he plays the guitar at the foot of the Palazzo Pretorio in Pontedera, he is a wedding photographer and meets people who matter (fat priest) and who matter less (thin priest, smaller) then the ascent towards the world of computers (which cuts people's brains) which attracts power (people with bowler hats) to whom the flying anarchist plays a nice violin.*







Work realised on when the printing shop moved premises, 1993 drawing on paper, cm 22×16 (Bandecchi&Vivaldi)