

Giorgio Dal Canto: a brilliant artist

Accompanied Dal Canto on many of his journeys: each time, his creations opened the door to the realm of fantasy, introduced us to secrets and mysteries, and worlds imagined by the artist's sensitivity. His first passions were graphics and engravings. He started painting at the age of forty. His etchings include *Cinque incisioni*, *Le Carte*, *Pontedera ricordo degli anni '30*, *Viaggio immaginario*, *I vasi di Pandora*, *Un saluto da...*, *Nostalgia*, *Incantamenti*, *Controfiaba*. He organised numerous thematic exhibitions, including: *I giochi e le scommesse dell'uomo*, *Disgrazie di un paese*, *La storia finita*, *26 dipinti per la Torre*, *Una storia (contro)*.

His paintings have been presented in exhibitions in Pisa, Pontedera, San Gimignano, Empoli, Venice and Ponte de Sor in Portugal. His latest production developed around the theme of the world's most famous puppet, Pinocchio, which enabled him, following the example of Carlo Collodi, to paint a portrait of contemporary Italy, highlighting its merits and flaws. He won a place of honour in the International Art Exhibition in Venice for the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy in 2011, with compositions on the theme of The Lie, produced in collaboration with the artist Renato Meneghetti and directed by Alberto Bartalini. From 2011 to 2013, the installation dedicated to Pinocchio, created by the Pontedera artist, remained on public display at Pisa Airport. In his works, Giorgio Dal Canto represented power and laid it bare, revealing using bitter irony, the contradictions of today's society. Dal Canto remains one of the major protagonists of contemporary Tuscan art. The exhibition *Una storia (contro)*, presented in 2009 in the Piaggio Museum, selected a rich series of paintings by the artist, collected by his friend and collector Giuseppe Diomelli, an art-loving entrepreneur. In the exhibition, through a vast cycle of works, one could grasp the artistic greatness of a man who was able to create a tragic and ironic fresco of humanity, divided into two large human categories: the bowler men in black who hold power and the striped coloured men who suffer the arrogance of the powerful.

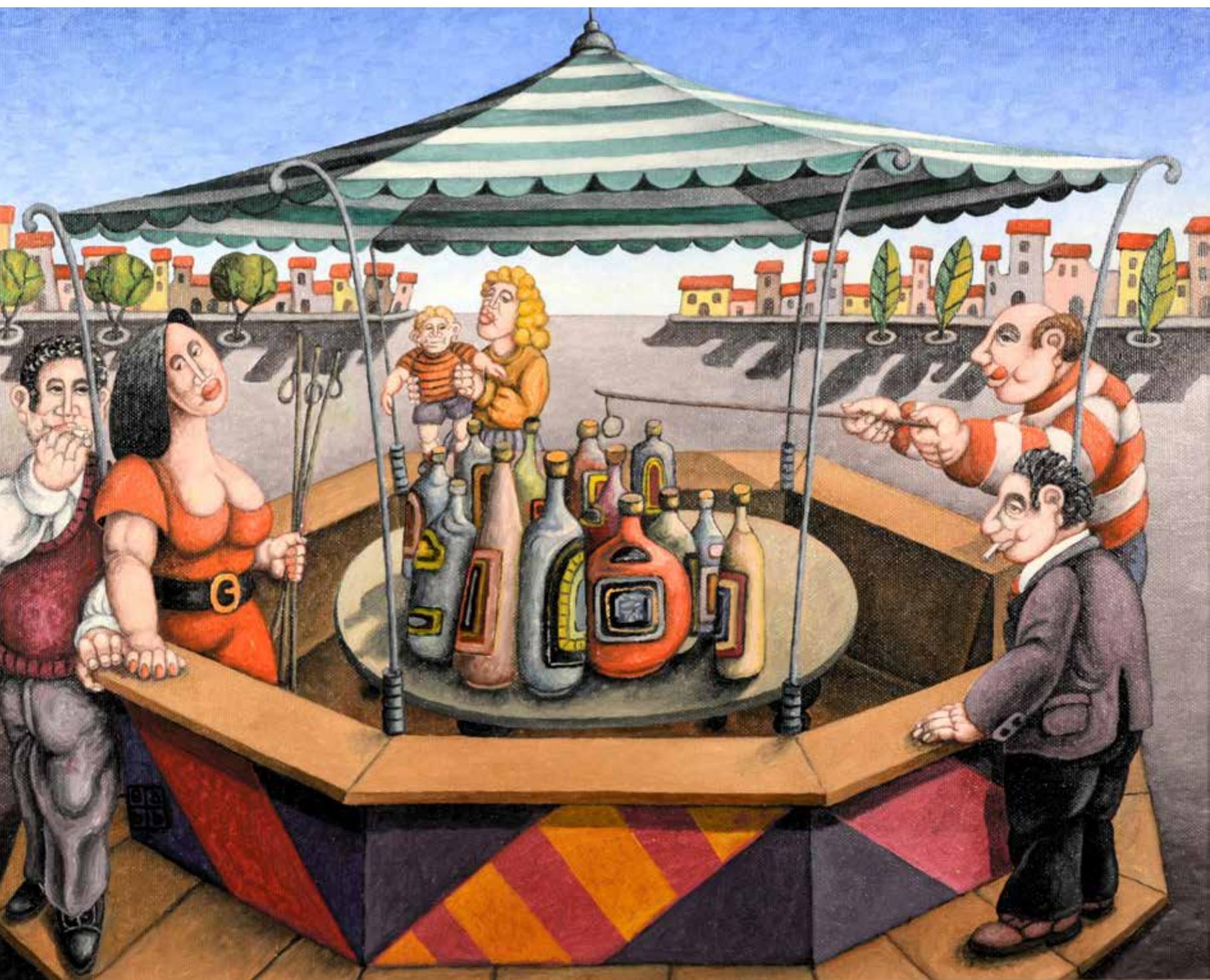
It was natural for Dal Canto to take the side of the weak, the simple, and the people who passively suffer the march of history and whose rights and legitimate aspirations are frequently trampled upon. The characteristic and originality of Dal Canto's painting is that of being able to describe the existing relations of force and the ever-increasing progress towards a cold and technological civilisation, but recounting it all in surreal ways that are always different. One of his last cycles of paintings, *Burattini* demonstrates, once again, Dal Canto's rare inventive ability to create



Nascosti (Hidden), 1989
oil on canvas 22×30 cm
(Piero Frassi)

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Prete e sacrestano
(Priest and Sacristan), 1989
oil on canvas 30×40 cm



Fiera di Pontedera (Pontedera Fair), 1986
oil on canvas 40×50 cm

a vast tragicomic fresco from the universally known story of Pinocchio. The artist's idea is not merely to tell and describe the stories of the Collodian character, but to traverse these familiar symbols with his own poetic and stylistic stamp, narrating a new contemporary tragedy that looks back to the past and illuminates the present.

The images of the fable already contain within them a strong social criticism and the idea of a power mechanism that nullifies aspirations to freedom and individual choices: at the bottom of the poetic path is the idea of a humanity reduced to slavery and deprived of direct instruments of knowledge. Television, computers and mobile phones are symbols of a fragile modernity, but for this Tuscan artist they become depictions of contemporary unease, tools for manipulating consciences and creating a mediated reality that is only virtual.

The painting of the puppets, which end up in the rubbish bin, is an exemplary story of our civilisation destroying our feelings and natural human aspirations. The tone of the story is dramatic, authentic, tragic, but continually elevated by the poetic timbre of invention and narration that finds new original ways to express, with imagination, the anxieties of our time.

In Dal Canto we find the authentic and popular language of another great Tuscan artist, Giuseppe Viviani, who managed to illuminate, with poetry and humanity, a world crowded with humble and marginalised characters. Dal Canto's striped men are an ideal continuation of Viviani's figures, the protagonists of a game that they do not fully understand and in which they are forced to submit to rules written and established by others. For some elements, Dal Canto's stories remind us, in their depth and harmony, of the poetic worlds created by the Lucca artist Antonio Possenti, one who, behind a feast of signs and colours, hides deep restlessness and uncertainties. Thanks to his cohesiveness and ethical commitment, Dal Canto magically succeeded in finding that fragile point of balance between harmony and colour, between narration and song, which enabled him to build an admirable universe of stories and illusions, of lights and colours that simply become poetry. For these reasons, his art is always topical, his world, imagined and described on canvas, continues to evoke strong emotions, to make us see reality with the different eyes of poetry, with the brilliance of a gesture that creates a fantasy world – profound and poignant – as only true artists are able to compose and give us.

Riccardo Ferrucci



Ignoto (Unknown), 1977
black and white watercolor 38x56 cm

Watercolor that Dal Canto had in his home in Pontedera, Viale Italia. It is not known who was represented in the image.