

# WORDS LEAD TO ART IN LAKE LUGANO

Anna Maria Benedetti

I was walking along Lake Lugano when two words on a sign caught my attention: Venice and Mušič. One reminds me of a magical city, the other intrigues me. I enter the doorway underneath these words and find myself in the rooms of a Foundation where a number of small paintings are on display: some portray stunning views of Venice, while others are synthetic works that recall the Byzantine tradition. The gouaches are bright, while the watercolours are in muted colours using few brush strokes.

Giacomo Guardi's gouaches of Venetian landscapes (Venice 1764 - Venice 1835) are compared with Zoran Mušič's watercolours (Gorizia 1909 - Venice 2005). Guardi's works strive to give those who return from the 'grand tour' a memory of the beautiful city, Venice; while Mušič's watercolours are in search of a moment of joy. Almost two centuries of history separate these works.

The exhibition gives us much more than the beauty of the paintings: it juxtaposes a time when the grand tour expressed the desire to get to know Italy, the bel paese, and the time when a man wants to return to life after his experience at Dachau concentration camp. Beauty becomes re-found joy found after profound pain.

Venice, a city that has known how to survive over the centuries, is a unique subject for artworks conveying totally different feelings. The gouaches of Guardi are the result of his search for a life, those of Mušič the recognition due to an artist of international standing, but little known in Italy. Born in Habsburg Gorizia, Mušič traveled extensively and experienced first-hand the geopolitical and cultural changes

in his land, the places of his childhood; Venice is one of them, and appears often in his works. As he said, "I capture" - not the landscape but the "deeply rooted origins", a sweet remedy for the traumas of existence. The theme of remembrance is perhaps the guiding thread of this exhibition. What would our lives be without memory?

Golden angels and cherubs peer out from the polygonal pillars of the room, joyful custodians, presences, messengers between the earthly and spiritual worlds, objects of the soul, an affectionate tribute to Anna Braglia. An oil by Bernardo Canal, a Madonna and child by Antonio Guardi and a very rare gouache by Joseph Baudin complete an exhibition that gives us serenity and hope in our innermost depths.

*Angeli a Venezia. Guardi e Mušič nell'universo di Anna Braglia, Fondazione Braglia, Lugano, Switzerland, September 19 - December 21, 2019*

We would like to wish all our Italian writers in Milan and elsewhere, well in these worrying times.



View of the Ponte di Rialto by Giacomo Guardi



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