

RICCARDO SCHWEIZER



A European artist
in the name of total art



Texts Chiara Lucian
Graphics Erman Bancher
Drawings Nicola Degiampietro
Photos Arch. Eredi Schweizer
Translation Colette Trigg
Print Tipolito Leonardi - Imèr
Ed. 2022



*“Art is freedom and research.
Freedom from molds
Research in unexplored worlds.
In art everything has been done.
In art, everything still has to be done.
Everything in an image interests me
everything in the history of art,
also, art not considered history.
Nothing is devoid of interest except things done out of interest.”*

Casez, 1995

R. Schweizer

These words resonate in our mind, almost as if they were a spiritual testament. Riccardo Schweizer brilliantly focuses on what goads him, what moves him continuously towards new horizons: it is the intoxicating **pleasure of Research**. At the same time, he feels the need for Freedom from the predictable patterns of the academic world.

The turning point is represented by a first encounter with Picasso's work at the Venice Biennale towards the end of the 1940s (1948), which lays the foundations for the imminent break from the old models of an autarchic regime. The most significant exponents of the novelties of the **international art scene** are found in **Provence**. It is here, that his destination becomes clear to him. The instinctiveness and determination that distinguishes him, pushes him to move to that microcosm, embarking on a journey that, not surprisingly, the art historian Scudiero compares to that of Renaissance painters towards Florence. He is not new to challenges, it seems - in a

certain sense - he almost feels the need for them. In particular, he wants to know the places of Cézanne. He manages to contact many artists, **Picasso, Chagall, Léger, Braque**, establishing with them a relationship above all human, which will eventually have implications also on an artistic level. A great deal has been said about him. He has written a lot about himself.

It is precisely in the daring and **hypnotic narration** which he puts pen to paper his memories, emotions and dreams, in which we find again that same communicative urgency that characterizes his works. For this reason, it will be his words that lead us to the intricate events of a life that was anything but conventional.

SUMMARY

| | |
|--|---|
| Introduction..... | 02 |
| A short biography..... | 04 |
| The journey..... | 05 |
| The relationship with Cubism and critical fortune..... | 06 |
| Total art..... | 10 |
| His life..... | 14 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Schweizer tales of Primiero • 20 Schweizer tales of Venice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 The French Riviera |
| Public works of art..... | 24 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 Regina Pacis e S.Lorenzo in gloria • 27 Apoteosi della salute • 28 Il ritrovamento dei corpi nel Piave • 29 Il disastro del Vajont • 30 Monumenti ai caduti di Pieve d'Alpago • 30 Storia Istituto Agrario S.Michele all'Adige • 31 La giustizia • 32 Civiltà contadina • 33 L'uva e il vino • 34 L'armonica di Pascal • 35 Palais des Festival et des Congres • 38 Storia dell'Istituto Trentino di Cultura • 40 L'alba e il tramonto • 41 San Donato – La Iòntena • 42 I sogni della Bancalunga | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 Map of higher Primiero • 46 La Iontra e la valle • 47 San Martino e il povero • 48 Monumento ai caduti • 49 La miniera di Schweizer • 49 Luce, colore e allegria • 50 Madonna con bambino • 50 S.Giorgio e S.Battista con l'agnello • 51 Map of Mezzano • 52 Bruto uccide Cesare • 52 Papà Francesco va a caccia • 54 Decorazione muro cimitero Mezzano • 55 Scarian pastry shop – Christ on the Cross • 56 Decorazione murale – Quattro Stagioni • 58 L'albero racconta |
| Time line..... | 62 |
| Recommended reading..... | 66 |

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Riccardo Schweizer, painter, sculptor, photographer and designer, was born in Mezzano in Primiero on 31 August 1925. His technical-artistic studies are first linked to Belluno and then to Venice at the State Institute of Art dei Carmini, governed by Giorgio Wenter Marini from Rovereto. Here in the role of a teacher is also Carlo Scarpa. He graduated and then went on to the Academy of Fine Arts of Venice, it is here he teaches painting as assistant of Bruno Saetti.

In 1950 he is in France, in Villaurus on the French Riviera, where he meets and frequents Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Fernand Léger, Jean Cocteau, Massimo Campigli and Le Corbusier. In 1958, at the event for the tenth anniversary of the Foundation, the Picasso Museum in Antibes dedicates an important exhibition to him. Starting in 1960 he also became involved in the art of pottery by frequently attending the atelier of his friend Roger Capron still in Vallauris. His first major mural pieces for the Italian Publishing Institute in Milan, plus two hotels in San Martino di Castrozza date back to the

following year.

In 1963 he married Dina Ravene. Bound by a strong friendship with Giulio Pagnossin, owner of a Treviso-based company of the



same name, he designed a ceramic panel for the new thermal baths in Levico (1965). This is the start of a professional bond that will last until the death of his friend Giulio, which occurred prematurely in 1979. It is from this partnership important objects of applied art will be born. In 1966 he dedicated a significant piece work in Ponte delle Alpi to the disaster of Vajont. One of his larger interventions of interior decoration at the Da Silvio restaurant in San Miche-

le all'Adige dates back to 1978, it then became a rare example of a listed building among protected heritage sites in Trentino. In the same period, he produces frescoes, objects of design and interior decorations for both public and private buildings, in Italy and France, amongst those the prestigious 1982 project for the Cannes Cinema and Congress Palace. In 1980 he fine tunes a technique based on oxides and cement for an external bas-relief, covering three facades of the Town Hall of Carros (Nice), a building designed by François Druet. In 1986 he painted a large fresco for the

new headquarters of the Trentino Cultural Institute in Trento, now the Bruno Kessler Foundation. In the same year as a designer, he wins the First Murano Award. In the nineties he conceives and creates numerous pieces of work on public and private commission, many of which are in Trentino. In 2001 he is bestowed *motu proprio* by Carlo Azeglio Ciampi the title of Knight of the Italian Republic in 2001. He dies in Casez in Val di Non on 20 September 2004.

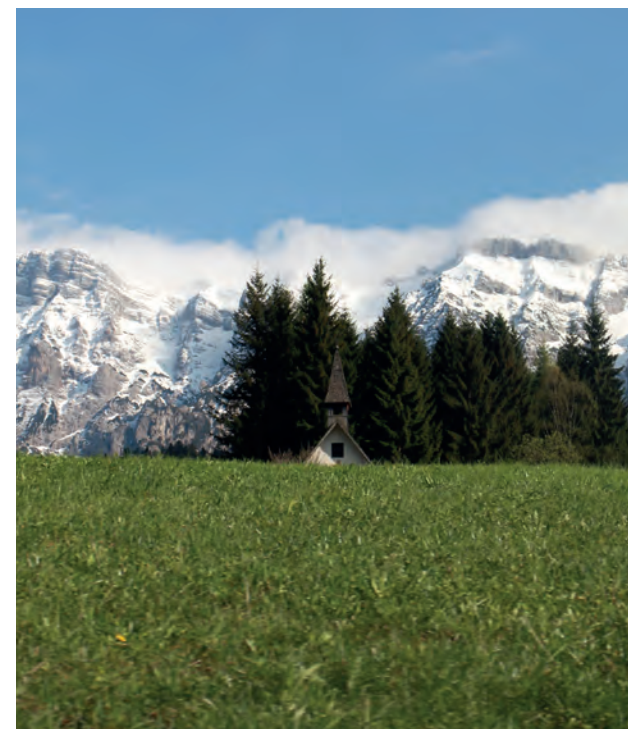
THE JOURNEY

It is significant that Schweizer's long artistic path - characterized by a continuous **experimentation of techniques and materials** that made him a **homo faber**, as well as a momentum towards **new geographical contexts - begins and ends right in his homeland, Mezzano**, where he creates one of his last great murals: *L'albero racconta* (*The tree tells*). His attachment to the territory of his origin and at the same time his need for evasion are elements apparently at odds, yet they are both decisive in defining the complexity of the man and artist that is Riccardo Schweizer. On the ideal journey from the *Madonna with child* on the ancient facade of the church of San Giovanni ai Prati Liendri to the mature narrative flair of *L'albero racconta*. Schweizer confirms his fondness for murals on which he bet, and without taking for granted, his entire career. Stimulated also by a lucky encounter with Saetti, one of the last Italian fresco artists of the twentieth century. Beyond the obvious difference in terms of situations and results, the combination is interesting because of what both works of art share, in the most immature version and ma-



ture version, the desire to tell and to progress into the world of art. The artist that returns to his Mezzano to create *L'albero rac-*

conta does so proudly: by now he has managed to gain **international fame**.



THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBISM AND CRITICAL FORTUNE

Along his journey Schweizer succeeded in taking shape as a "European artist", according to a happy definition coined by the art critic **Maurizio Scudiero**, who is one of his most passionate admirers. Precisely the latter underlined the early recovery of experiences of historical avant-gardes in Italy, in unsuspecting times, long before the "vast ranks of slavish imitators of the Spanish master who arose in Italy especially towards the sixties".

If the Biennale dates to '48, Picasso's first real tour of the peninsula takes place in fact only in 1953: three years have already passed since his decision, to say in the least stubborn, to settle on the French Riviera to get to know the great master directly.

"Picasso taught me how to plant a bomb in everything with the aim of it blowing up and then reassemble it elsewhere on the path of freedom and autonomy".

These are his most significant words. Taking the cue from his teaching, Schweizer however, came up with a **style all his own**: the **Picassian lesson** which he himself feels in debt to, is combined with a **powerful narrative-folkloric** thre-

ad, the whimsical use of Mediterranean colours and the surrealist dreamlike component. All of this, in regards to the mural works of art, on large, enormous surfaces. To those who attributed to him an excessive reliance on post-Cubism, he responds with an awareness of himself and his own value, given by his strong personality:

"Maybe I'm less Picassian than those who believe they are not"

Most critics on the other hand recognized the uniqueness of his work. With regards to this **Gabriel-la Belli** – already Director of the MART and since 2011 the Civic Museums Foundation of Venice – sees in his Picassianism "a kind of powerful lesson



Schweizer with Picasso and Jacqueline Roche, Cannes 1971

of formal and conceptual freedom that Schweizer still revives today with every step of his painting" [...] With regards to European Picassianism, she also adds that Schweizer "Inherits its internal motion, those that no longer belong to the style, but by now are processed data from consciousness, expressive virtuality in expansion and continuous creative acceleration of a past, **which is not heritage but origin.** In this direction, which is a journey of freedom and creation above and beyond fixed schemes of a style, that also elaborates a very **personal and original** one, today it is necessary to interpret Schweizer's work and place it, in that of an international dimension which is where it really belongs".

ENGAGED ART

In the beautiful essay by **Elisabetta Barisoni** found in the catalogue **Riccardo Schweizer, painter and designer**, the curator highlights the influence of Picasso's Guernica in some works of the Primiero artist. These are precisely the most committed ones, in which Schweizer wants to remember events undoubtedly different from the geopolitical dynamics of the bombing of the Basque city, but nevertheless traumatic for the people



Alluvionati del Polesine (flood victims of Polesine) 1952

who suffered them.

Through an expressionistic painting full of pain and violence, the scene is set "some of the **dramas of the community**: from the Polesine flood victims to those from the birthplace of Mezzano up to the Vajont tragedy [...] Beyond the chronicle aspect, the monumental and twisted bodies of the flood victims, like the compositional li-

nes that cross the large fresco of Vajont, transmit the sense of a **tragedy truly shared, denounced, lived with a collective sadness**, as in a Greek drama"

Significant in this sense, is **the documentary he shot** shortly before and immediately after the terrible flood of 1966 in his homeland, "Mezzano, 4 Dec. 1966".

THE ONEIRIC DIMENSION

Schweizer manages to give an innovative character to the avant-garde of **cubism** and **surrealism**, coming – as **Antonella Alban** says – to **give them new meaning**. To do this, the artist **draws on his roots, on his experience and his dreamlike dimension**.

The elements of tradition forcefully become part of a creative act, amidst echoes and allusions: legends, architecture, ethnography, childhood places that reveal themselves in their warm and Mediterranean tones, in often chaotic and visionary compositions. The volumes are powerful and marked, almost sculptural, and often the erotic element becomes predominant.

THE BODY BECOMES A LANDSCAPE

Especially in the impressive **pictorial production** is evident the influence of places on the monumentality of human figures that distinguishes his work. It is the artist himself that clarifies the role of this essential source of inspiration: *"I have always thought the human shape to be very close to that of the great stones of the Noana Valley, a wild valley that climbs towards the Vette Feltrine and that is now half buried by a dam (in protest I made a painting that is in the Picasso Museum of Antibes). It is accessible by a steep and dangerous path. Here are these centuries old, rounded stones in which*

I have always seen human figures. I imagined mountainous landscapes that become figures, stones that turn into clouds". The female body - for Schweizer the most beautiful shape that nature has created - thus merges with the landscape theme and represents the common thread of his production: "It is thousands of years that man paints the woman and still has not been able to reveal this mystery. And so, it will always be".



Noana Valley 1991



Ballerina, 1954

TOTAL ART

Riccardo is therefore an eclectic: he is a painter, sculptor, architect, potter and designer all at the same time, he has acquired skills of 360 degrees, according to a concept of **total art**. In this propensity Picasso has an important role, that influences him **towards experimentation with majolica**: the Spanish artist had moved to Vallauris precisely because of the numerous artisan shops of the area. It is **the first real step of creative vocation for Schweizer**, of which he will find full realization in the seventies and eighties. Fascinating is the lucid analysis by **Vittorio Sgarbi**: *"Only for a few artists more than Schweizer an appropriate expression would be "To become worldwide", because his art has deliberately been united with the life of mankind, becoming not just painting, graphics or sculpture, but architecture, furniture, ceramic, glass, design of all kinds. In this too, Schweizer proved to be consistent with a precise idea of modernity, the same as Picasso, Ballo, Depero, Mirò, Gropius, Moholy-Nagy, Le Corbusier, to name just a few striking examples: to be in step with its time, an era that has developed and*

perfected like no other the production of objects, art must come out of the galleries and museums and become one with its applications."

THE RESTAURANT "DA SILVIO" AND THE COLLABORATION WITH PAGNOSSIN CERAMICS

The design planning and furnishings of the famous restaurant Da Silvio in San Michele all'Adige (1978), which has remained intact up to the present day are of significant importance. The **ambiance** is expertly orchestrated in its every aspect in a continuous **dialogue between the arts**. It is his, the exterior fresco *ecological suite* - man's denunciation that pursues progress - the tables and in general **the entire design of the interior**: from the ceramic floors made in Vallauris to the ornamental panels on the walls, up to the coffered, coloured fabric ceiling. Every choice of furnishing is his: some of the chairs are Scarpa's, the cutlery and even the tiles embossed with aromatic herbs are made by his friend Roger Capron. Finally, of his conception a vertical grilling spit used for cooking and a stone for the accumulation of heat that



Giuletta e Romeo plate set, polished gold

he renames *Altamira*, designed for cooking dishes directly at the table of each diner. The futuristic door handle at the entrance has some strong similarities to some of his **products in the field of advertising**, like the wine labels from the South Tyrolean winery Franz Haas or those for Pisoni grappa. Barisoni highlights how the type of research evident in this important commission - to which he devotes two years of work - also emerges in **the artist's fruitful collaboration with the Treviso ceramic company Pagnossin** "according to a perspective of rigour and constructive essentiality, in which the functional and practical aspects balance with that of the aesthetic".



Vaso (Vase)



Ph. Claudio Brugnolo



Da Silvio restaurant

Another great example, according to him is his work Vaso, for which he was awarded the First Prize Murano (1986).

The various tableware created for Pagnossin is of significant importance, above all perhaps the **Giuletta e Romeo** (*Juliet and Romeo*), recently protagonist at the Palazzo Scopoli along with the set of **Cubo Bibita** glasses and jugs, of an exhibition curated by Barbara Schweizer and Dora Tavernaro.

All of these works of art are highly appreciated inter-

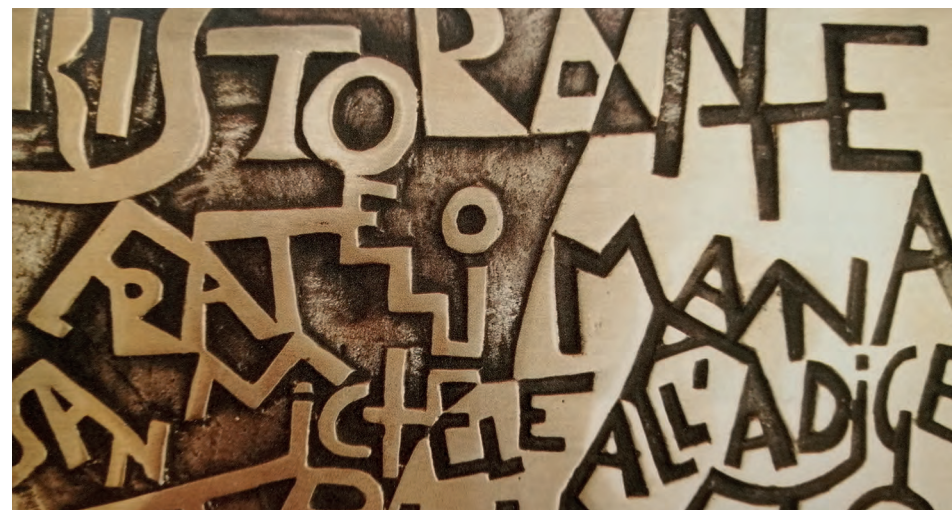
nationally. Both Maurizio Scudiero and Luigi Lamberini have emphasized its **lesson of the Bauhaus**, evident in the synergy between aesthetics and functionality.

To truly understand Schweizer's creative inclination, once again, we go back to his words: *"When I was in Venice sometimes, I went around the shop windows to look at objects and then I would try to re-invent them in a different way. For example, a watch: I thought about how I could build it differently.*

The same goes for clothes, hats, etc. [...] It is a fact that instinctively still happens to me today. In fact, I always look for everyday objects with structures and forms different from the usual".

THE GAUDENZI JEWELERS

The same goes for the design of the now historic **Gaudenzi jewellery shop in the centre of Fiera di Primiero**, with its rough texture of the facade in blocks of Chiampo limestone, geometrically squa-



red, it contains a detail difficult to notice without looking carefully: the clock displays in fact **the exact hour of Picasso's death**. Giuseppe Gaudenzi, a goldsmith and at the same time a refined patron and collector whose business dates back to 1951, decided in the seventies (1973)

to entrust the task to his now established friend Riccardo Schweizer. The designed space is divided into a display area, a small laboratory for purchases and - once inside - it is difficult not to be struck by the sophisticated **elegance of all the elements in dialogue**: from the **African**

granite and steel floors, to the shiny display cylinders of different heights, from the wooden inserts of the ceiling, to the **curious porthole** that allows one to glimpse to the laboratory. The pinnacle of this approach and his entire artistic career however remains the **collaboration for the**

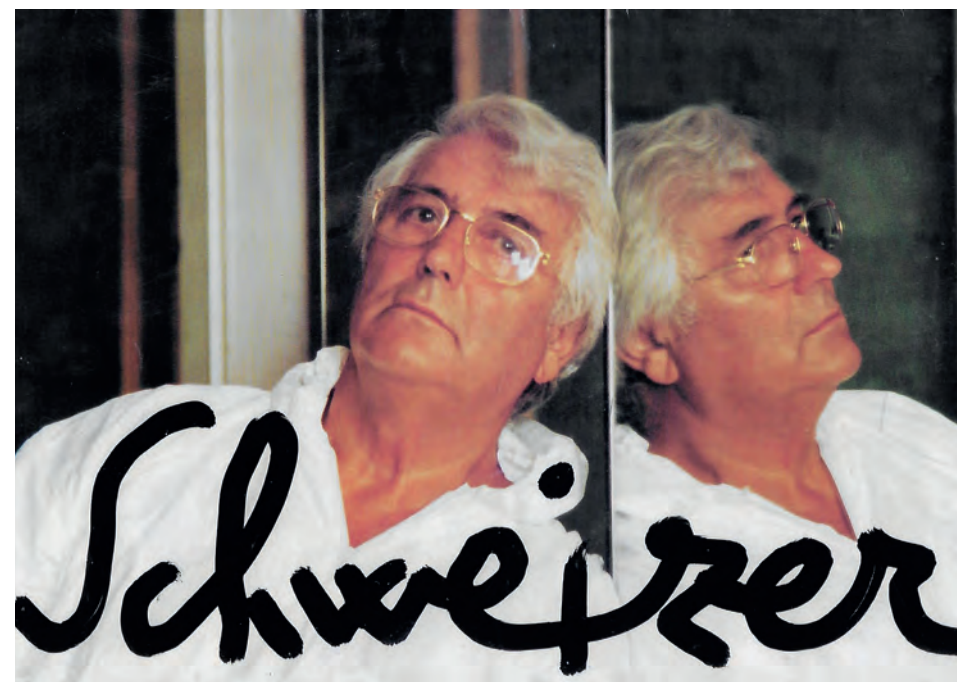


Cannes Cinema and Congress Palace (1982) with his friend and architect Druet, in which the architectural elements and furnishings merge in a kaleidoscopic and joyful vision of the world. **The book Riccardo Schweizer Palais des Festivals et des Congrès Cannes 1980-1984** (curated by Guido Bartorelli) reconstructs in detail the enormous creative effort, both in the works that then found effective realisation, and in the very rich series of notes and pencil drawings, defined precisely as a "sample of wonders".

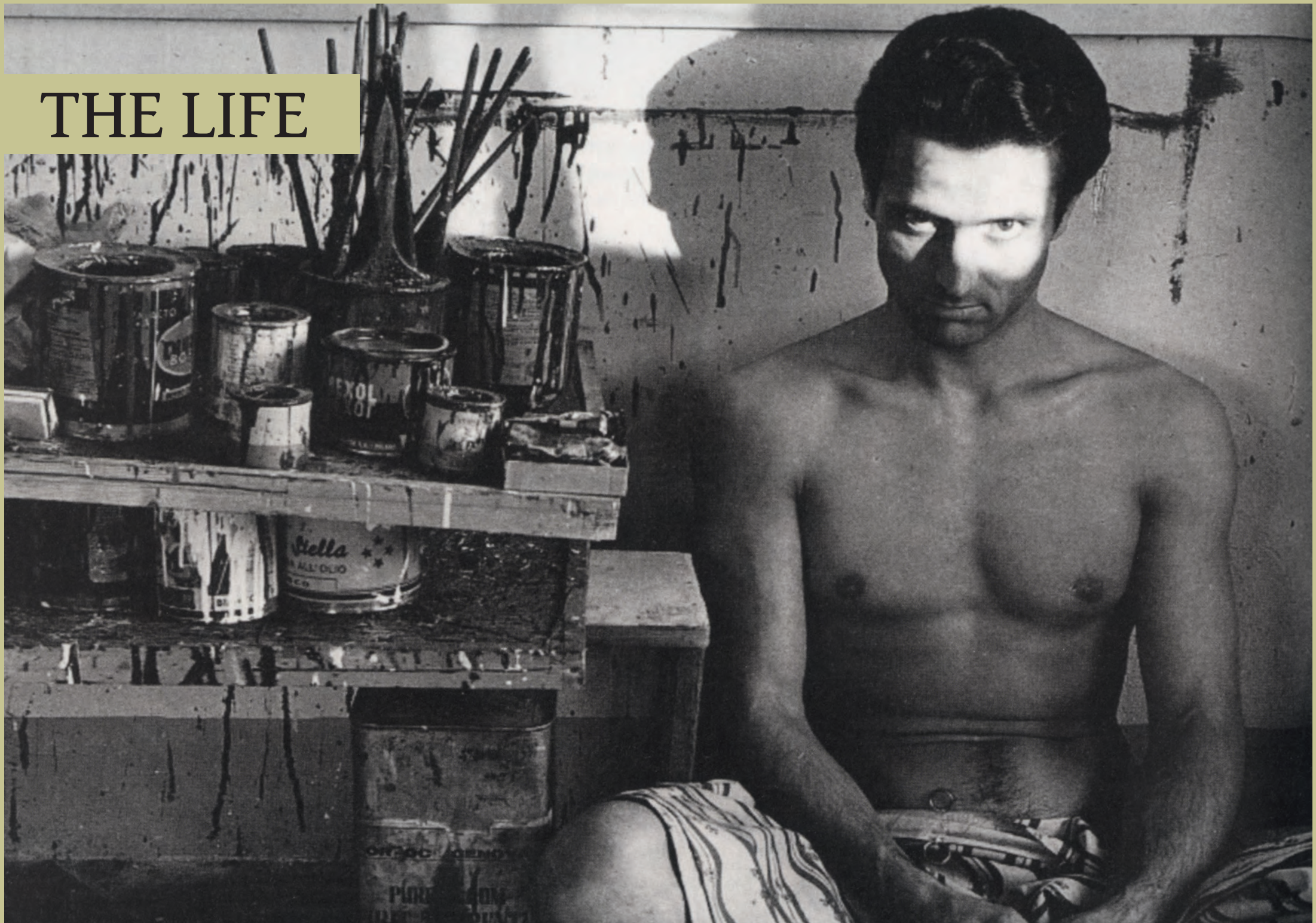
Scudiero reiterates that here the artist "in tune with the extreme design



rationalism, has avoided any, easy, narrative intent, that would have been more congenial" preferring "non-figurative interventions, pure chromatic morphologies, pure geometric, linear or curvilinear sequences".



THE LIFE



SCHWEIZER TALKS ABOUT PRIMIERO

"I was six years old when I realised I was a painter!"

For Schweizer the Primiero Valley represented **the land of his youth, made of experiences, memories, traditions and legends**; which led him to leave in the search of a more international dimension; and to which he always returned, attracted by the uniqueness of those places of timeless beauty, source of eternal inspiration. Childhood places at the foot of the Pale di San Martino, like Mezzano (3), his native village. Very precocious, whilst his mother embroidered on the stairs of his father's house, he

built all kinds of creative inventions in the adjacent barn

(3) *Then on those stairs I built carts and "pinwheels", maybe a whole workshop of small objects: I had hammers, saws, nails; an infinite number of tools with which I continuously hurt myself. [...] I chose the barn, since my very first steps, as my workshop and refuge ... I spent whole days there hammering and then believing to make perfect and mysterious machines.*

Or at **San Giovanni ai Prati Liendri** (4), right above the town, halfway up the

mountain, which was one of his first workplaces. Right there at the age of eleven he paints his **first fresco**: a Madonna with Child on the facade of the sixteenth-century church that his father was restoring.

(4) *I was six when my father bought the property of San Giovanni, with the mountain hut of Bortoloi, to send us up there to breathe the fresh air during summer, when in the village it is too hot, and you lose your appetite ... But we didn't live in the hut. The laste * (stones) were too cold, the teda *(rooms) too narrow to sleep so, he rented*

(my father) from the parish priest Don Giovanni Rattin the rectory, a building next to the church.

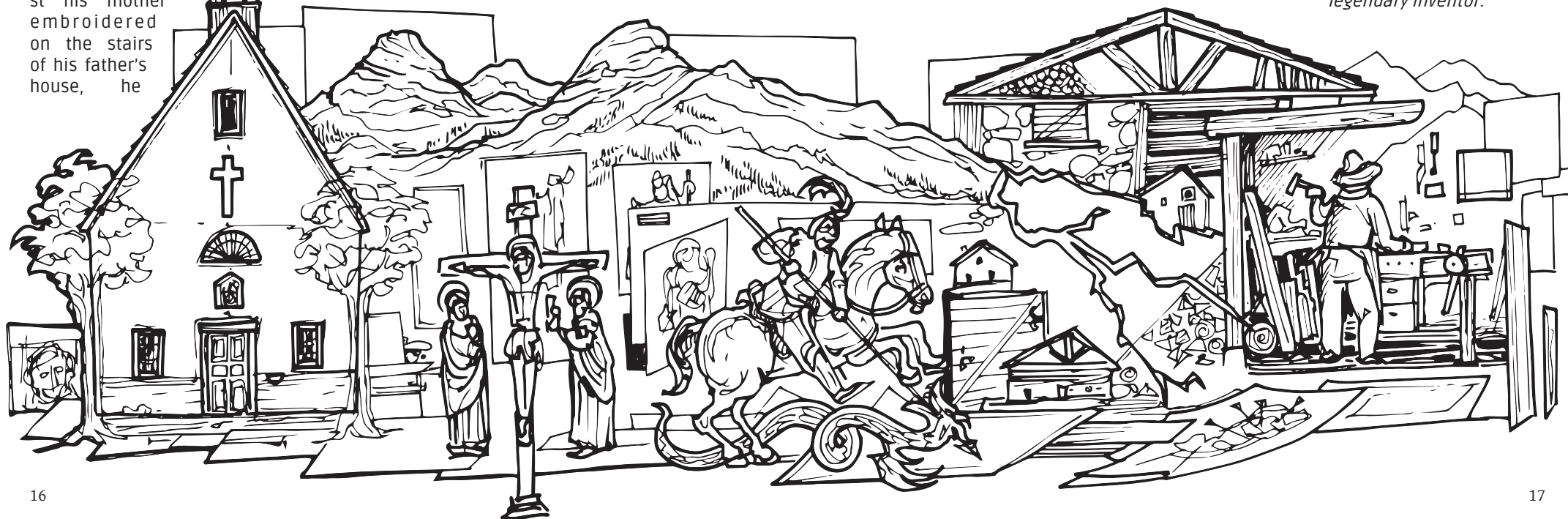
Places, but also and above all, people. Rooted here are the memories dearest to him that helped shape his personality: from his great-grandfather Domenico, a bricklayer who after work painted sacred images on the houses he built - from which Schweizer believes to have inherited the "disease" of painting and drawing, to his father Francesco, a building contractor - that according to a strict education normal for those times, wanted a path for him less out of the ordinary. From his mother, described by him as "the poetic component" of the

family, to his stern teacher (1) from his earliest school years, who appreciated his artistic skills so much so that he allowed him to paint mountainous landscapes that would be copied by all of his classmates and more - up to Piero Balech (4), a modest craftsman and sculptor who enters at this point into Schweizer's imagination to bestow on him an almost expressionistic connotation.

(1) *But most of my work took place at school: the teacher Giovanni Corona who taught us with hobnailed shoes to be careful during the lesson (with powerful kicks), he appointed me as the drawing teacher for all the primary school*

classes I had the task of spending hours behind the blackboard to prepare with coloured chalk the drawing lesson.

(2) *Piero Balech lived close to us, a little higher towards the "rive", in a black and dark mountain hut in a way indescribable. [...] He worked there day and night without going out, speaking very slowly, with a voice of a magician preaching curses and remembering ancient stories. He patiently worked on things for months, and he cared of nothing but perfection for what he did. He didn't care about living. He left us wonderful things invented by him, carvings and sculpted figures ... For me he was a genius ... the mysterious legendary inventor.*



His first approaches to real and true art can always be traced back to San Giovanni: an example of this is *San Sebastiano* (5). A self-portrait of an unknown subject painted on an old canvas discovered in the church to which Schweizer then gives new life.

"I painted it one stormy night, in the light of an oil lamp, under the influence of the energy from the thunder and lightning. Perhaps it was my first conscious, committed, mature painting..."

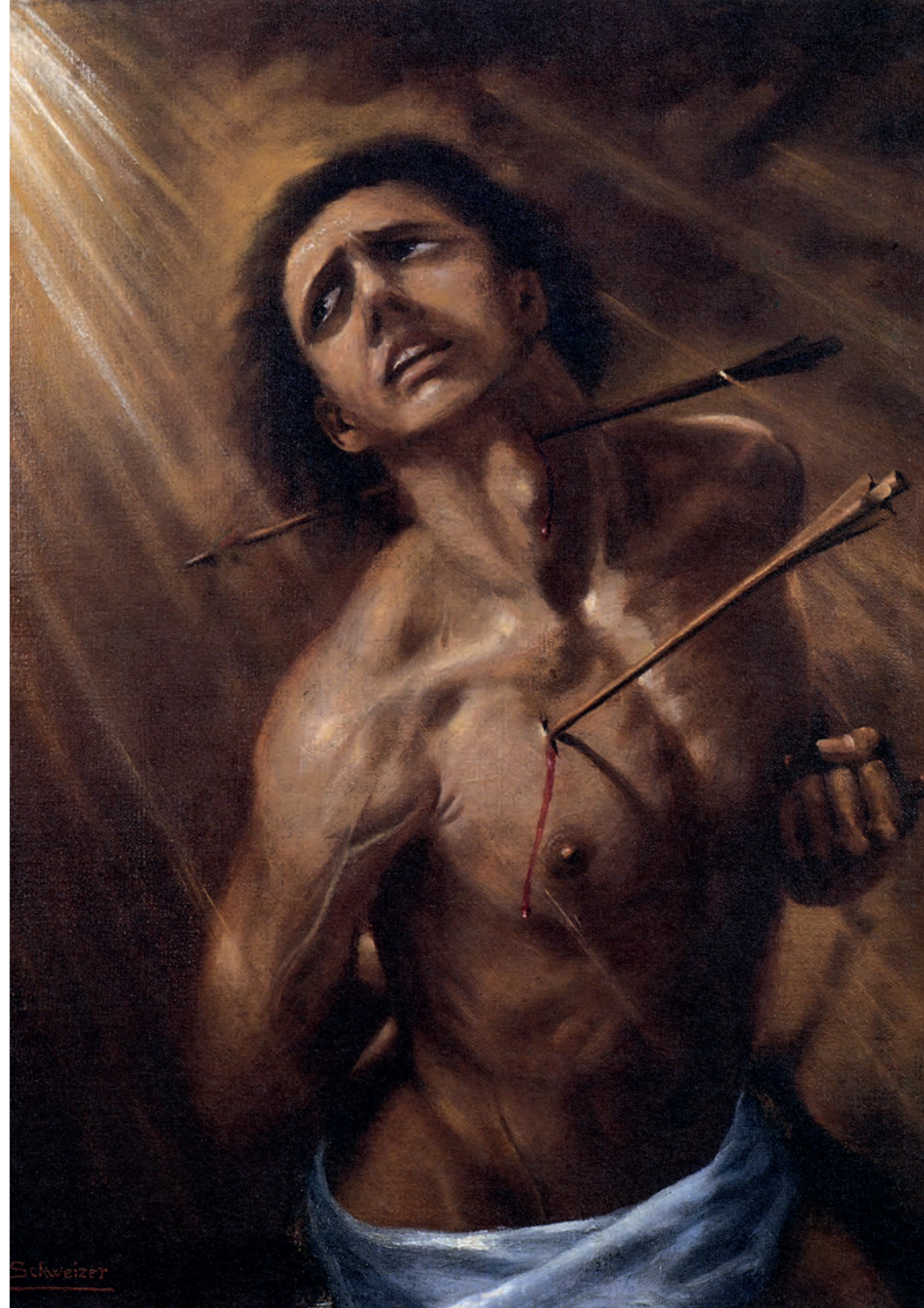


Mezzano

Then comes the age in which it is necessary to start taking a direction, in which one grows and finds oneself facing responsibility and choices. **Not an easy first separation from Primiero** before arriving in Venice, a place of studies and important collaborations with the academic world. His nature and his inclinations out of the ordinary, in fact, later take him to alternative vicissitudes, to pursue what really interests him: art.

"The time of conscription came, that is, of obedien-

ce to studies planned from above: industrial studies in Trento, boarding school, segregation, duty, homework, dark years of silence ... until my escape to Venice, in '45, closed in an attic to prepare in three months three years of exams to challenge my parents and prove that I was right. I had however, for three consecutive years already won the provincial drawing competition both for the Province of Trento and that of Belluno. And I was right. Passed"



Schweizer

SCHWEIZER TALKS ABOUT VENICE

"I spent 15 intense years in Venice, extremely active, brazen, revolutionary".

His talent got him recognized by insiders and this leads to Wenter Marini inviting him to join the **Carmini School of Art in Venice**.

"The director Wenter Marini took me under his protective wing like his flag bearer [...] the vacant place had to be assigned through a competition. Saetti skipped all the formalities and made sure I got in, drawing upon himself curses from other suitors and their legal offices that protected them"

Shortly after, however, **Bruno Saetti**, professor of de-

coration at the Accademia, **will want him as his own pupil and assistant.**

"Professor Bruno Saetti, at the Accademia was intrigued, and sent for me to see who I was, begging me to stay as his pupil: at the time there was a hard struggle between the two schools (the Accademia and the Carmini Art School). The elders fought hard in a question of honour to list among the disciples the best elements."

The Venetian years are **economically challenging** and force him into a **life** in certain ways **bohemian**, in which he will be able to get by thanks to the help of some friends. Money received at the Ac-

cademia isn't enough to provide for all his expenses in the lagoon city and then, there was always the insecurity of his position.

"I was without a studio to work in, but also of a bed to sleep in. I could no longer afford the various rented rooms used over the years to study. First you need to eat. From Rinaldo, in Calle della Mandola, the highest school of ideas that Venice had ever had. All those that mattered in the world of study, art, ideas met there [...] And then we slept in someone's corridor, in any house or place you happen to be in at end of daytime intellectual battles. A reciprocal high esteem ran among the best artists in their ongoing intellectual battles, they never left anyone on the floor: it was an honour to house someone in need."

"But how to remember all the places where I slept? [...] At male friends, at female friends, at male pupils, at female pupils; in the corridors on the floor, in the attics, in some painter's studio, for a few hours a day, to go around at night until dawn until breakfast at the fountain of Campo San Paolo with a sip of fresh water"

At a later time, again thanks to the **intervention of Saetti** he succeeds in **getting one of the studios at the Bevilacqua Foundation - La Masa a San Stae**. In addition to using it free of charge for five years, he also gets the chance - up until then denied to everyone - to be able to stay overnight.

"The rules stated that studios had to be used only from sunrise to sunset, because any model seen ... in artificial light would not have resulted in a good painting!"

He remembers these moments of very intense work in which he did not miss an opportunity to immerse himself in all **aspects of cultural life** at that time. He will then leave the place to his fellow-citizen **Davide Orler**, whose future would be in the trading of art. His words emphasised the degree of determination one must have, to make his way into that world he longed for:



1951, Venice, Accademia

"Many friends have given up, almost all of them: it is rare to have enough breath to swim across the ocean without stopping, among the waves of misunderstanding and hunger"

Before leaving, in **disagreement with Saetti** and with the necessity to obey **strict academic rules** without the chance of experimenting, he even attempts to create an unlawful scho-

ol - as he himself defines it - in the plaster cast collection, where two thirds of the students of the Accademia follow him. The experience lasts a year, but now is the right time for his journey to **France**.



THE FRENCH RIVIERA

In Provence he doesn't have a specific place to work and here he continues to experience the improvised lifestyle he already had known in Venice. It is the early fifties and on the French Riviera there is an **international atmosphere**: **Picasso, Matisse, Léger, Cocteau and Chagall** are all there. Riccardo Schweizer establishes with them a relationship of friendship and mutual respect. He also frequents **Tamayo, Camigli** and the well-known

architect **Le Corbusier**. *For me the French Riviera isn't thought of as a place to work [...] In fact I could not cite any valid work in France. [...] Also there - as in Venice - I "lived" temporarily in many different places and where work was not possible. [...] But the Riviera was above all museums, escapism, light, colour, contemplating, written notes, evolution ... meeting people.* Exemplary in this sense is his partnership with **Picasso**, who, luckily, at **that mo-**

ment lived in Vallauris, a few meters away from Mita's house, aunt, and godmother of Riccardo. In 1998 in an interview Schweizer openly declares what Picasso represents for him: *"I confess that I have been fascinated, and still am, by Picasso, as I have been by Michelangelo and Masaccio. Painting in its entirety must interest us, especially the closest to us, Cézanne and Picasso".*

This deep admiration leads him **to want to meet who today is still considered the symbolic artist of the twentieth century**. Like Schweizer himself says he appreciates his love for life, his free spirit, imagination, civil commitment, and amazing technique. He is willing to pursue him, to create any occasion to meet him, and does so by going to the Spanish master's smelter of items in gold alloy. On Picasso's arrival, he notes the admiration with which the stranger is scrutinizing his work, he offers him a cigarette and asks him for an opinion. Schweizer replies with a *"not bad"* and Picasso understanding the irony responds with a thunderous laugh. The ice is broken and thereafter their meetings will become

more and more frequent and meaningful.

Of him Schweizer leaves us a first-hand image and for this reason even more authentic: *"With Picasso we had a friendly relationship, humorous [...] I didn't show him any of my work, even though he knew that I was an artist and he called me pintór (instead I called him pitór). I never saw him work, he didn't want to be observed while working, except one time when I entered his study while he was drawing details of the faces of the Massacre in Korea (1951)".* Still remembering the words of the Spanish artist regarding the method of execution: *"See, I keep moving the lines by a few millimetres, until finding their exact position, inevitable. It's a maturing process!"*

He is also fascinated by the folkloric interest that **the Russian painter Marc Chagall** nurtures **towards his homeland** and, anyone who knows Schweizer's work well, knows how much this approach is felt by him. In fact, he transmits to his own works a personal touch, which makes them unique. The same goes for the **dreamlike and visionary character** of Chagall. Schweizer recalls their meeting as follows: *"One day [...] I decided to go to Marc Chagall's house in Venice,*

Pablo Ruiz y Picasso, simply known as Pablo Picasso (Málaga, 25 October 1881 - Mougins, 8 April 1973), was a Spanish painter and sculptor, amongst the most influential of the 20th century. A crucial link between the nineteenth-century tradition and contemporary art, Picasso was an innovative, multifaceted artist, who left an indelible mark in the history of art for being the founder, together with Georges Braque, of Cubism. Having spent a stormy youth, well expressed in the paintings of the so-called Blue and Rose periods, starting in the twenties of the twentieth century he had a very rapid rise to fame; among his universally known work is *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907) and *Guernica* (1937).

Marc Chagall whose Hebrew name was Moishe Segal and his Russian one Mark Zacharovic Sagal, later transcribed in French as Chagall (Lêzna, July 7, 1887 - Saint-Paul-de-Vence, 28 March 1985), was a Russian naturalized French painter, of Hasidic Jewish origin.

Jean Maurice Eugène Clément Cocteau (1889 - 1963) was a French poet, essayist, playwright, screenwriter, draftsman, writer, librettist, director and actor.

Le Corbusier, pseudonym of Charles-Édouard Jeanneret Gris (La Chaux-de-Fonds, 6 October 1887 - Roccabruna, 27 August 1965), was a Swiss naturalized French architect, urban planner, painter and designer. One of the most influential figures in the history of contemporary architecture, remembered together with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius and Alvar Aalto as a master of the Modern Movement.

the "Collinettes". With the courage of the shy I entered the house. Chagall had an Italian housekeeper from Friuli who showed me, disgusted, the sink where Marc threw all of his brushes."

"I went back to that house several times until I was able to talk to Chagall. He seemed a gesticulating madman. I greatly admired him for his visionary ability, for his constant referen-

ces to his native village, to his childhood"

He will return from this experience enriched, mature, now ready to give his best. Years of successes and prestigious collaborations finally await him.



Riccardo Schweizer with Marc Chagall, 1957

PUBLIC WORKS OF ART



REGINA PACIS e SAN LORENZO IN GLORIA

Regina Pacis and St. Lorenzo in Glory • 1947 • Altarpiece • Oil on canvas
Caoria (fraction of Canal San Bovo), parish church of San Giovanni Nepomuceno, by
the baptismal font • Inscriptions: below Schweizer 47

The painting by a very young Schweizer for the Chiesetta del Pront above the village of Caoria (called Regina Pacis), erected to thank Madonna for a narrow escape from war and, at the same time, to remember veterans and those fallen. The canvas was moved in 2001 to the parish church of Caoria for security reasons since it was linked to the name of an established artist. The painting consists of **three monumental figures** arranged in a triangular structure: **St. John kneeling, the Madonna and the child.** Particular is the small tree at the feet of the Madonna, which according to Finardi would represent the "*lignum vitae*", that is, the salvation brought by the wood of the cross, which will lead to man's redemption". All of it inserted in a gothic niche. The outlines are clear, and the colours characterized by cold tones of blue, green and purple. It seems that the painter's name was suggested by the Curia of Trento, taking into consideration a painting which had already

been done by him for the hospital Chapel of San Lorenzo in Borgo Valsugana shortly before (1945), following the victory in a competition in which Schweizer took part to contribute to the continuation of his studies in Venice. From this last painting there remains an **interesting anecdote**, which gives us further useful clues in reconstructing Schweizer's personality. He himself says he came down from San Giovanni - where he had painted it - "*with the painting on my back, tied with strings, since it was snowing the needles of the larches that had already abandoned their coniferous trees, glued themselves to the fresh paint. The parish priest, Don Dematté, who had lent me a room in the rectory to finish the painting, worked for days using a needle to remove the perfumed pine needles. In his opinion, this gave him the right to get involved in the painting, whilst I was working, he even came in stealthily and tried to pour out the virtues of San Lorenzo*

which, according to him, did not appear much in the work". He continues, describing his reaction: "*One day I was playing the violin to distract myself from a painting that did not want itself to be finished. The parish priest entered and gave his opinion: I took the lectern and - seeing that I felt I didn't have the right to hurl it at him, since he was kindly providing a studio - I hurled it at the picture hoping to break it and show him that his presence was detrimental. However, the painting did not tear, luckily. The canvas that was specifically woven for me by a woman of the village was very resistant. Anyway, I did not see the parish priest anymore and worked in peace up until the completion of the painting*".



APOTEOSI DELLA SALUTE

Apotheosis of health • 1964 + Ceramic bas-relief
Levico Terme (Trento), new thermal baths of Levico
Inscriptions: bottom right: Schweizer 1964

In 1964 he wins the selection process to make a **large ceramic panel for the new spa in Levico.** The title of which is clearly linked to its intended use. In fact, this work celebrates the beneficial and curative qualities of sulphurous waters. The panel, inspired

by **Cubist art**, shatters so to speak in a **dynamic and original way**, creating an image that is reconstructed through the gaze of the viewer. **The surface at times almost appears all round**, in a palette of bright and brilliant colours. The effect is very pleasant

and, as defined by Scudiero, is based "*on the contrast between the strong volumetric impact on one side, and the compositional lightness, on the other*".



IL RITROVAMENTO DEI CORPI NEL PIAVE

The discovery of bodies in the Piave • 1966 • Bas-relief in cement
Cadola, Ponte nelle Alpi (Belluno), State middle school

The law on figurative arts from 11.5.1942 n. 839, better known as "the law of 2%", foresees in the construction of public buildings a 2% share of the total expenses reserved for the artistic decoration. Schweizer is chosen. From the administration there is a desire to **remember the famous Vajont disaster**, which occurred a few kilometres away. The artist's intervention foresees on the outside a **long concrete bas-relief** - distinctly **expressionistic** - and within the frescoes that retrace the disaster, as well as its next stage, respectively titled *Il ritrovamento dei corpi nel Piave* (*The discovery of bodies in*

the Piave) and *Ritorno alla normalità* (*Return to normality*).

Schweizer adopts an original technique, modelling the plastic part in concrete using a **polystyrene formwork**, for a total of **twelve panels**. The different blocks represent a **narrative continuity**, and their different heights give the work an overall remarkable **dynamism**.

The most significant aspect is however represented by the **intense emotional involvement** of the observer, who sees the re-enacted **despair and pain** of that tragic moment. Obviously, these are **references to Guernica**, in the **desperate gesture of**

hands reaching upwards and of those whose lives are now close to the end. Those jutting bodies have been compared by Scudiero to "*those in Pompeii around two thousand years ago, where the space left by bodies submerged in Vesuvius's lava are filled with chalk*".

The **Vajont disaster** took place during the evening of October 9, 1963, in the new artificial hydroelectric basin of the Vajont torrent from which the valley takes its name (on the borders between Friuli and Veneto), when a landslide fell from the slopes of Monte Toc just above into the waters of the Vajont dam; consequently causing an overflow of water contained in the reservoir, with the effect of bursting the banks of the dam, involving first Erto and Casso, neighbouring lakeshore villages after the construction of the dam, while a wave generated an overspill causing the flooding and destruction of the inhabited areas at the bottom of the valley in Veneto, including Longarone, causing the death of 1,917 people, including 487 children under the age of 15.



IL DISASTRO DEL VAJONT e IL RITORNO ALLA NORMALITÀ

The Vajont disaster and The return to normality • 1966 • Fresco
Cadola, Ponte nelle Alpi (Belluno), State middle school

The fresco is located inside the building, in the entrance hall. Extremely remarkable is the **dramatic destructive force of nature**, linked to the flooding of the dam, represented almost in a monochrome, paying homage to the Spanish master. The comparison with Picasso's art is common by many critics, so much so that it

has been defined several times as the "*Guernica del Vajont*". Passamani defines it as "*one of the most highly dramatic compositions of modern Italian mural paintings*".

The other fresco completes - in a way an ideal diptych - representation. This time Schweizer symbolically wants to give space to life, with a perspective

therefore of hope: "*this [fresco] will represent, let's say, the opposite, that is, something totally serene, something which must take place after the disaster: the material and intellectual recovery of life, trust, study, application, progress. [...] Everything must make us think of joy*".



MONUMENTO AI CADUTI

Monument to the Fallen • 1968
Cement and iron filings • Pieve d'Alpago (BL)

The monument is commissioned to him directly by the Associazione Combattenti e Reduci. Here, as for the analogous work done in Fiera di Primiero, Schweizer recurs to the **innovative material** composed of concrete and iron powder used for dams, from which derives the particular reddish-brown colour that makes it similar to bronze. There is again a **play of contrast** between vertical and horizontal elements. **The fallen** is protagonist of the depiction and his

body is reminiscent of those of the casts from the eruption of Pompeii. It is represented in two different ways: as a symbol of death par excellence in the horizontal block, and as risen with hands soaring to the sky in the vertical one. Scudiero points out that in both Pieve d'Alpago and Fiera "it can be noted that *beyond plastic applications, [...] begin to emerge also the architectural or constructive ones as in not only of the "construction" of the image but also of a further constructive need*

for not only plastic but also functional. In short, these are signals that will briefly thereafter lead Schweizer in the direction of true design".



www.pietredimemoria.it

STORIA ISTITUTO AGRARIO

History of the Agricultural Institute • 1978 • Oil on canvas
San Michele all'Adige (Trento), Aula magna of the Agricultural Institute
Inscriptions: bottom right Schweizer 1978

The Agricultural Institute of San Michele all'Adige, in Trentino, was founded by the Diet of the Austro-Hungarian region of Tyrol based in Innsbruck on 12 January 1874, with the purpose to promote Tyrolean agriculture. Its first director, Edmund Mach. In 1919 the Agricultural Institute complex is transferred into the hands of the Province of Trento. Today The Education and Training

Centre represents a **complex teaching structure, unique in Italy**, which manages both training and education in the **agricultural, environmental and forestry** sector, provided in different levels of learning: from the level aimed directly at farmers, to the university and highly specialized one. The painting, an oil on canvas, is more than 6 meters long, in line with the predilection by

Schweizer for large surfaces. Through a sort of cinematic approach, the artist frees its narrative component in a succession of events that illustrate the evolution of the landscape and of the historical and sociological heritage of the institute. Intense colours and an accentuated graphic component outline landscapes, traditions linked to the wine world.

LA GIUSTIZIA

Justice • 1982 • Bas-relief of oxides and cement base, several panels for a total area of 80 square meters
Carros (Francia), Town Hall
Inscriptions: Schweizer C. B. 80

The work inserts itself in the fruitful synergy that exists since the 1960s **with the Parisian architect François Druet and the potter Roger Carron**. It's in fact Druet who wants him as a collaborator in the plastic decoration of the new **venue of the French town hall of Carros**, located in Provence, within a larger urban redevelopment project of the town. The peculiarity of his intervention consists precisely in that "**integrated design**" as defined by Bruno Passamani, according to which there is no reasoning in terms of pure decoration, but in a **perspective in which the representation merges with the architecture of the building**. Schweizer enhances the windowed pavilion of Druet, characterized by the succession of volumes, by using large panels of mixed grit concrete, only in parts painted. The solutions previously adopted, such as the concrete bas-relief or the use of ceramics, are not considered ideal for the intended purpose. The **warm tones** can be traced back to the **sunny and Me-**

diterranean dimension that Schweizer has by now made his own, so much so that it emerges in many of his own later works. The bas-relief - described as a **joyful meeting between plastic and figurative components** always by Passamani - has an ambitious task: **to tell the story of the French town from its origins to the present day**. In it, always to quote the critic's words: "*flow the chapters of a heritage of collective memory that has origins from afar, from the pre-Roman centuries and, passing through Romanization and the formation of Provençal identity in a climate of pastoral and peasant economy, arrives as*

far as today's industrialization and tourism". Schweizer would make use of a similar approach a few years after for the realization of the piece La Bancalunga. Concluding the panel series is a **large eye**, which overlooks the French town in its most recent dimension. An interesting aspect is **the artist's signature**, in a style that will be repeated in *La Bancalunga* (Siror, Trento): an outstretched hand that bears a deep red heart on which is indeed affixed his name.



L'UVA E IL VINO

Grapes and Wine • Fresco • Dozza Imolese (Bologna), Via De Amicis

Inscriptions: on the fresco in the lower centre Schweizer 81

On the plate at the bottom right Schweizer Riccardo Trento's Grapes and Wine 1981

Similarly to Mezzano, Dozza Imolese is one of the **"most beautiful hamlets in Italy"** and stands out from the others for one very specific feature: **the original murals painted on the houses in its historic centre.** For this reason, it is also known as *"Dozza town of murals"* or *"Dozza village of murals"*. The murals have transformed Dozza into an actual **open air museum.** A free museum in constant evolution: as time goes by, in fact, the old paintings are replaced by new pieces. It's a sort of **biennial of modern art**, in which **internationally renowned artists** participate. The first edition is held in 1960 and Schweizer takes part in it twice, in 1981 and 1983. The theme assigned that year is *"viticulture - viniculture - enology"*, specifically promoted by the Emilia-Romagna Regional Enoteca, in homage to the local agricultural vocation; many artists are invited among which, in addition to Riccardo Schweizer, Paolo Meneghesso, Paolo Scarpa, Virgilio Mazzetti, Fernando Masi, Carmelo Zotti, Riccardo Licata and Bruno Saetti. The artist



Ph. Cinzia Sartoni

himself chooses the surface destined to be frescoed, opting for a very large space of 22 square metres. **The piece is among the most popular and large, enough to be still to this day a symbolic image of the event.** The presence of some windows is not an obstacle, as they are harmoniously inserted into the representation. The sun and the moon are depicted, respectively symbolizing the male and female component, bountiful in those bunches of grapes, the vineyard

through the work of men is transformed into the joy of living of the wine, and of the human figures in the act of savouring it. Here we find an element typical of Schweizer, that **narrative vein** which, Faggioli argues in the dedicated volume Dozza and the Painted Wall, *"translates into Picasso's neo-figuration reminiscent of the abstract season"*.

CIVILTÀ CONTADINA

Farming civilization • Fresco • Dozza Imolese (Bologna), Via De Amicis

Inscriptions: on the plate at the bottom right farming civilization

1983 by Schweizer Riccardo Trento

Riccardo Schweizer participates a second time in the **Biennale of the "Painted Wall"**, choosing the wall on the same street, once again above the arch, in perfect dialogue with the previous one. This time Aldo Galgano, Riccardo Licata, Francesco Tabusso, Paolo Valle, Tono Zancanaro and Carmelo Zotti also participate. The theme is akin to the previous one and Schweizer **dedicates it to the work of farming civilization.** A personified cloud in the sky overhangs two characters: a farmer with a scythe and a child, strongly stylized according to Picasso's stylistic features. He modifies the original work compared to the various preliminary sketches: an example is the cart that was supposed to be present in the lower register, as an element of connection with human presence. In its place, a smaller **basket of apples and grapes**, that in the summer, merges with the flowery balcony of the window above, in this way – once again – transforming pre-existing elements (the window) from obstacle to compositional opportunity.



Ph. Cinzia Sartoni

The fresco is also mentioned in "The New York Times" of 1994, in a cultural slot dedicated to traveling: *"An archway nearby, in a multitude of colors, depicts a cubist idyll, Farm Life (1983), by Riccardo Schweizer, a painter from Trent. As I walked underneath it, I considered the blue sky of the fresco and the blue sky above me [...] Since Dozza is wine country, grapes figure in countless works: birds fly by, trailing bunches from their beaks. Round, blue grapes spill from farmers' ba-*

skets, bursting with juice, or adorn their hair, twisted in with curls; or they sit on white tablecloths swollen and ready to be devoured". The author of the review mentions the painting calling it a cubist idyll, expressing their own emotions in front of the piece, in which the frescoed sky and the painted one merge, in an atmosphere of rural work overflowing with wine scents and conviviality.

L'ARMONICA DI PASCAL

Pascal's harmonica • 1983 • Acrylic tempera on plaster
Cibiana di Cadore (Belluno), Contrada Masarié

Cibiana di Cadore is a small town in the province of Belluno, which over the years has known emigration and therefore depopulation. Starting from 1980 precisely to give the town fresh tourism opportunities the decision was made to focus on art and thus valorising the traditional town, renamed precisely **Cibiana village of murals**, through an **open-air contest** in which artists of international fame also participated. Locally there still exists a school of mural wall decoration and **the icono-**

graphy of the paintings relates local subjects and traditions: Pasquale, in Cadore dialect **Pascal**, is an example of this. He is the **blacksmith intent on forging keys** that Schweizer has chosen as **protagonist of his representation**. Not only work though ... Pascal also dedicates himself to music through his accordion and he performs, this time dressed up, in front of a group of young people dancing. From a stylistic point of view, we find bright colours and an engraved stroke. The piece has inspired a

poem by the poet Cecilia Barbato: *"To the sound of the harmonica / young people in joy / glimpses brim of woods / and of hopes. / Scented by flowers were the breasts / guessed under neat garments, / the eyes gleamed / cheeks of redness / and loves blossomed. / Pascal swelled his accordion / notes poured out among the houses: / a tremor in the heart / and thoughts veiled in modesty".*



PALAIS DES FESTIVAL ET DES CONGRÈS (CANNES)

Cannes Cinema and Congress Palace
1980-1984 • Different types of intervention
Cannes (French Riviera, France)

The Palais des Festivals et des Congrès is today **Cannes' multifunctional congress centre** which annually hosts the venue for the **Cannes Film Festival, the Cannes Lions International Creativity Festival and the NRJ Music Award**. The building of imposing size was **inaugurated in 1982**. To earn the victory of the **international competition**, in 1978, was the **french architect François Druet and his staff**. Druet remembers that moment like this: *"On the evening of the proclamation of the results of the International competition of the Cannes Palace of Festivals and Congresses, which saw the victory of the team that I was directing, I immediately called my friend Schweizer. It was December 28, 1978. He then said to me: 'If you get the chance to let me hang a 'little thing' no bigger than a postage stamp inside your Palace, you would do me the greatest of pleasures'. 'Si tu as la possibilità de me laisser accrocher una 'Bêtise' pas plus grande qu'un timbre postal dans ton Palais, tu*

me feras le plus grand des plaisir" Subsequently, in **1980 a new contest** for the design of a sculpture that had the task of **concealing an air vent of the palace's ventilation system** is announced: the winner is Schweizer, whose inventive fervour translates into **two hundred and four sketches**. A bump in the road is however lurking when it's time for the administrative handover. The projects therefore remain on paper, but fortunately today we can admire them in a dedicated volume, which also illustrates works then actually realized. Despite these events, Schweizer still sees his dream of leaving his mark in this colossal constructive and decorative endeavour, creating floors, false ceilings, walls and panels. The large majority of these interventions are unfortunately no longer visible, because of the change of materials due to the physiological wear of the latter, plexiglass and carpet for example. This fate though, is not reserved to the wonderful **bas-relief Il Viaggio**,

in wood, plexiglass and gold leaf, which represents the creative vein and the warm chromatism of the master, acquired precisely on the Cote d'Azur. Among the outcomes of major stenographic impact **PG36** - the so-called **Corolles**, twenty-six **slender and elegant crystal and steel corollas**, whose veins light up sky blue at dusk, in a sophisticated game of mirrors, that Bruno Passamani has defined



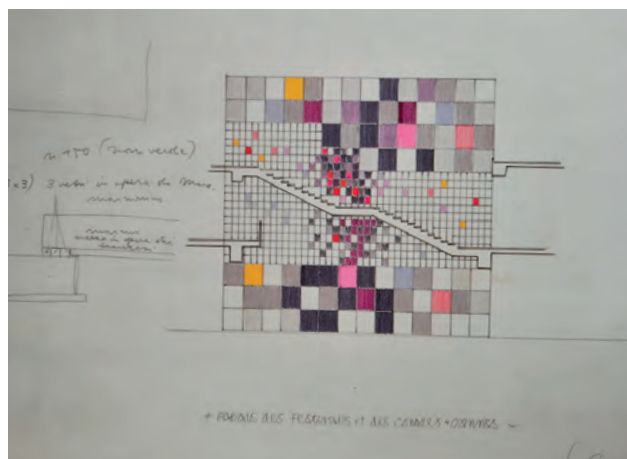
Il Viaggio (The Journey)



an expression of Schweizer's **"Lighting technology fantasy"**. With their seven meters in height, these structures open in a floral corolla, seven meters wide. For their realization Schweizer turns directly to Italian craftsmanship, leaning on the Officine Marini-Carraro in Padua, only after having scrupulously verified the feasibility and stability of the project. To this piece is attributed an anecdote told by the artist himself in an article in 2001, in which is evident the pride and enthusiasm for what is unanimously still considered today as the pinnacle of his artistic experience: *"I had finished the work at the Palace of cinema in Cannes, exteriors and interiors, I had taken care of all the embellishments, the image design and execution. Two years of work. The night the lights of the corollas, steel and crystal structures that cover the bar were turned*

*on, the mayor was with me and on the street a great crowd. I then heard a grand applause from the whole crowd. At my side was the material executor of my project, the Paduan Antonio Marini: "Ostia, you will be happy now!". His contribution to the Palace of Cinema and Congresses fits well into his being **homo faber**, a multifaceted artist who knows how to wander in artistic creation: an example of **total art**, from which he gains a lot of po-*

pularity. In his exemplary words: "I consider it the most serious and demanding work of my life, the one that has me given greater satisfaction".



STORIA DELL'ISTITUTO TRENTINO DI CULTURA

History of the Trentino Institute of Culture • 1986 • Fresco
Trento, Trentino Institute of Culture
(now the Bruno Kessler Foundation), "ex Santa Chiara area"

In 1986, the **Trentino Institute of Culture** (ITC) on the anniversary of its foundation, moves to the former Santa Croce convent, known today as the "ex area Santa Chiara". The **founding president of ITC Bruno Kessler** decides then to commission Riccardo Schweizer - of whom he is a friend and admirer - **a large fresco dedicated to the humanistic-scientific research centre** and more in general to Trentino, thus enhancing a long wall of an inner courtyard onto which overlooks the library.

There realization of the piece requires two months of work, preceded by a long design phase with several preparatory sketches and an experimental phase dedicated to the execution materials.

Schweizer throws himself into the work, **without preparatory cartons**, so as to let flow the **instinct of the creative act**: "this time I wanted to invent on the spot to obtain a greater expressive intensity. I confess that this has given me great tension. In other words, fatigue (sometimes

frightening) came during meditation in front of the white plaster".

The representation unfolds from left to right, and in this complexity can be found three different moments that express the **different souls of the research centre: the history of Trentino**, borderland between Italian-ness and the German world, (Centre for Italian-German Studies); the scene of **Adam and Eve** (Institute for Religious Sciences); **geometric figures**, symbolic of scientific-technological research. What gets the ball rolling, *is the score of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the lyrics of the hymn to Joy of Friedrich von Schiller, "Freude, schöner, Götterfunken ...*

", a clear reference to fraternity among people. The musical component slowly transfigures into a drawing by the great **Leonardo**, a master loved by Schweizer starting from his youth: in the way that the first part represents the **German world**, the second is a clear homage to **Italy**.

At the centre of the composition Adam and Eve stand out, overlooked by three circles. Schweizer himself clarifies their meaning, inspired by the **last canto of the Divine Comedy** (VV 115-119):

"Ne la profonda e chiara sussistenza de l'alto lume parvemi tre giri di tre colori e d'una contenenza;



*e l'un da l'altro
come iri da iri
parea riflesso,
e l' terzo pareo foco"*

In the last part, characterized by a nuance brightness, **the arrival in the future**: "some vortexes and forces leave to bring work to the world, intelligence; to build tomorrow. This intelligence that turns a point into a line, a triangle, a square ... Simple elements in complex forms. From before the invention of the wheel to the computer. From here the future takes flight, a blank page to fill in ... The exploding core ... The girl who collects flowers (radioactive or not)". And again, the artist himself adds: "Further to the right we see the explosion of a nucleus that fades towards the flare of light, therefore towards knowledge. A large eye watches from above, human intelligence or divine intelligence that observes all".

Between one subject and another, the **elements that are expression of rural civilization return**: mountain landscapes, rural dwellings, natural elements and objects of everyday life. In conclusion of this narrative sequence, again a quote from Dante: "E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle".



IL CIELO E GLI ALBERI
(THE SKY AND THE TREES)
Acrylic

For the ITC Schweizer also creates an **acrylic in the small room of the Administration council**, titled "Il Cielo e gli alberi". Noteworthy is the **Picasso like style of the piece**, in which the Sky element - represented by the Moon and the Sun - harmoniously interpenetrates with the Earth. As pointed out by Daniela Finardi in her monography on the artist, the human profile that stands out under the sun resem-

bles from up close the famous face of the woman holding up a lumen in the masterpiece of the Spanish master, Guernica.

L'ALBA E IL TRAMONTO

Dawn and sunset • 1987 • Fresco
Cap d'Ail (French Riviera, France), external facade of the Town Hall

Beginning with the Carros bas-relief and continuing with the works for the Cannes Film and Congress Palace, the special **collaboration with the architect François Druet** repeats itself in **Chap d'Ail (France)**, on the occasion of the **planning of the City Hall**. The **external facade** is exemplary, where in the symmetry of the two vertical and curvilinear structures of the façade can be found Schweizer's chromatic flair. The subject is twofold: dawn and sunset depict in fact the **landscapes of the Côte d'Azur** captured precisely in the-



L'alba e il tramonto,
(Dawn and Sunset), 1987



La Repubblica, fresco in the mayor's office

se **two different lighting conditions**, creating a dialogic relationship in terms of comparison, from the glow of the first sunrays in the morning, to the scalding and enveloping tones of the sunset.

In this approach Finardi finds some similarities with Monet's colour experimentations, of which a famous example is *Rouen Cathedral*.

Schweizer also works on the decoration of the **City Council Hall** – creating some sliding doors in coloured glass that allude to the etymology of the town – and on a large fresco for the Mayor's Office, which contains the founding principles of the French

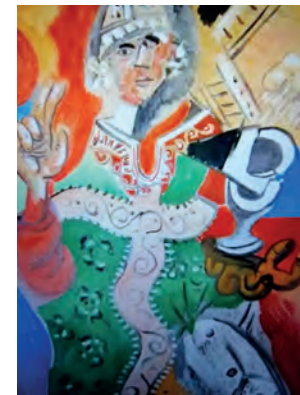
Republic: *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*.

"*This Leonardo of the Dolomites*" – expression with which he is honoured in the official speeches during the inauguration of the piece – thus returns home greatly enriched by these rewarding professional experiences, and he's now well known by the general public.

SAN DONATO

St. Donato • 1995 Fresco, 150 x 100 cm
Lentiai (Belluno) trail between Lentiai and Colderù

Ten of the twelve shrines winding through the towns of Lentiai and Colderù are commissioned to the best-known contemporary artists of Triveneto, in a sort of painting symposium. A con-



temporary style grafts into the tradition of this type of votive work, the themes and the technique of realization itself. It is no coincidence that the art historian Antonella Alban, in Lentiai a trail through art and history, says that we are in the presence of a "*deconstruction of reality through cubists pieces of decomposition and synthesis of objects*". The subject, **San Donato**, is represented frontally, in the act of blessing and with the classic iconography that sees him holding a **split goblet** in his hand. According to tradition, despite the goblet being damaged

from a pagan raid, as the saint poured wine into it, no spill would follow. A miraculous episode therefore, of which the saint is the protagonist.

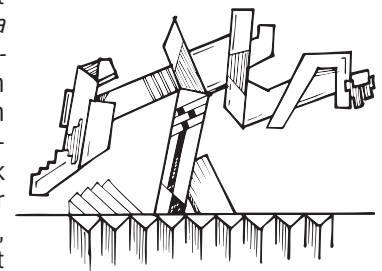
LA LÒNTENA

The Lòntena • 1990-1991 • Concrete sculpture
Trento, former office of the Chamber of Commerce Industry Crafts and Agriculture, between via Vannetti and Via Petrarca.

The piece has the "task to merge and represent the memory and sense of the past with the signs of the present" and complement a pre-existing fountain. Schweizer chooses to represent the **Lòntena, an instrument used in the alpine valleys in the past to draw rainwater from wells** and

that here Schweizer transforms – to use the words of the architect and art historian Scudiero – in "*a pseudo-form of fantastical machinery*" in which the volumes alternate in almost abstract forms. Unfortunately, today the work no longer retains either its original bright colours, nor the water games that

made it so particular.



I SOGNI DELLA BANCALONGA

The dreams of Bancalonga • 1992 • Fresco • Siror (TN)
Inscriptions: Schweizer 92 bottom right

It is a broad frescoed wall of over 130 square metres. The piece is named after the **Bancalonga, a portion of pasture of elongated shape immediately below the boulders of the Vette Feltrine** and clearly visible from the location of San Giovanni ai prati Liendri, above Mezzano, where Schweizer spends a large part of his childhood and that - like he says himself - has been the place of listening to a fascinating heritage of legends. The long sequence of images represents

a kind of timeline and as such should be read from left to right: from the past to modernity and from the latter to the future.

From the slow and progressive formation of agricultural society, gradually passing to the most abstract forms of tomorrow's society, illustrated by almost anthropomorphic rocks that are volumes full of uncertainty and mystery, but also at the same time evoking the materiality of Noana Valley. For this reason the first character depicted is Attila, the infa-

mous leader of the Huns. To better understand what he intends to depict the words of a paper written by Schweizer in 1992 will come in handy:

"Attila, the scourge of God, devastating with his hordes the Venetian plain, forces those people to take refuge in the north and south: in the Cison valley and in the lagoon. They founded Primieracum and Venice. I imagine a half carriage (Primiero), half gondola (Venice) Minotaur. In the Cison valley a dog meets the mazarol, guane

and smare. A farmer and lumberjack nation is formed that builds its own towns. In modern times is born with the expansion of spiritual borders... with industry... tourism".

According to popular tradition, in fact, the invasion of nearby Feltre in 452 A.D. would have favoured the settlement of part of the fleeing population in the Primiero Valley. Schweizer's somewhat imaginative carriage-gondola would therefore represent **a metaphor of the different fates bestowed upon the people, fleeing respectively to the mountain and to the Venetian lagoon.**

AN INTERNATIONAL STYLE THE INFLUENCE OF PICASSO AND CHAGALL

The mural from a formal point of view is influenced by **Picasso's style and Chagall's bright colours**. Artists that Schweizer personally knows and frequents in the French Riviera. The narration traces some salient moments of the story of Primiero, but also highlights some simple objects of day-to-day life, like the plough, the cauldron, the weaving tools and characteristic details such as the so-called "Milèsimi" of the ancient houses of Mezza-

no. The figures are outlined by brightly coloured backgrounds with clear outlines and become part of a rhythmic and dynamic narrative. The extemporaneous character of the fresco is also due to the fact that the artist uses neither sketches nor preparatory cartons, according to an **instinctive approach** that here links to the **dream dimension**.

THE FORCE OF ONEIRIC TRANSFIGURATION

Schweizer manages to create a game between international style and his oneiric transfiguration of





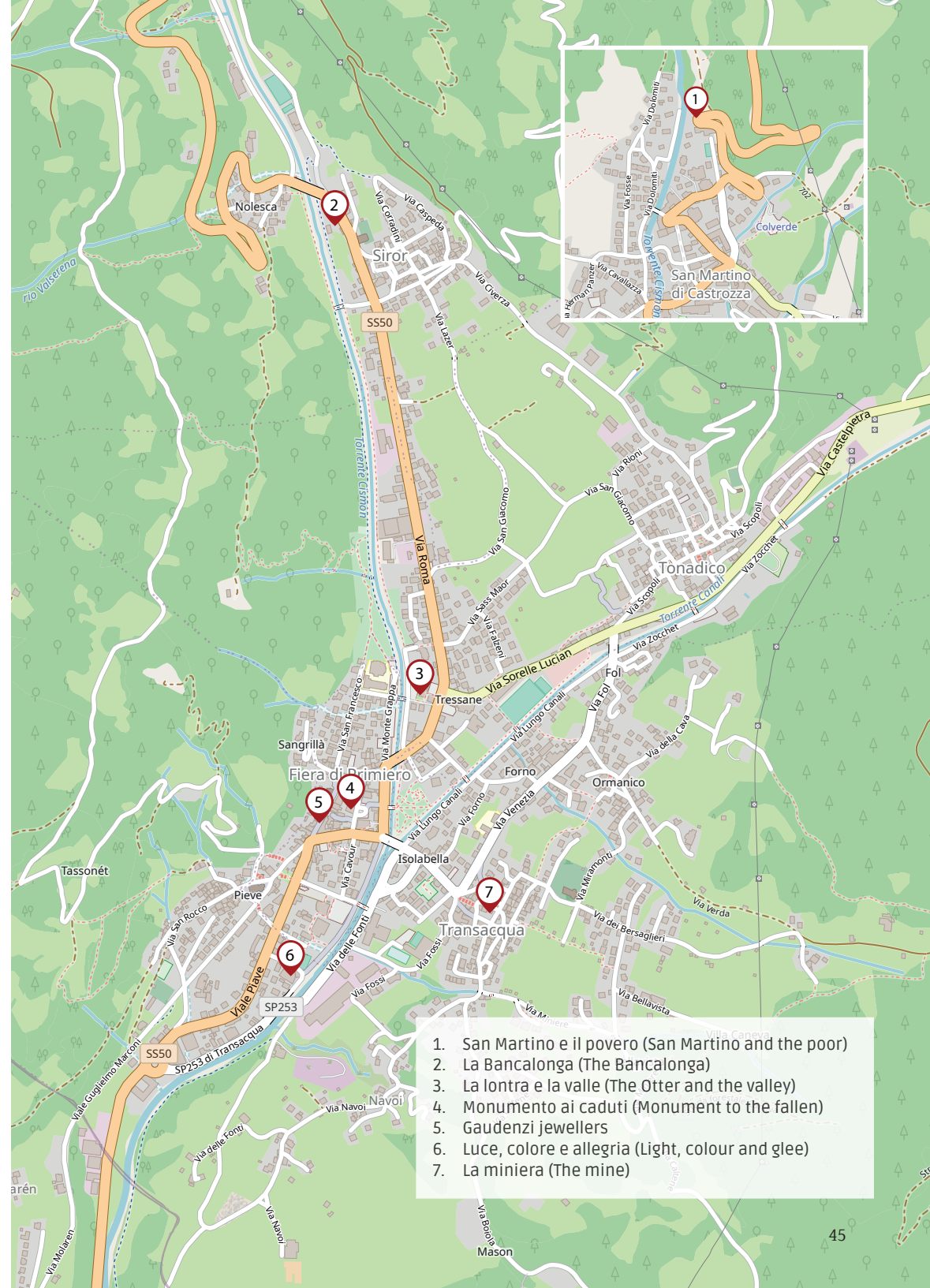
history and legends (the so-called *Sciòne* in Primiero dialect). We meet in fact **Beatrik** (probably derived from Beatrico / Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths) accompanied by the disturbing noise of chains and his six-legged dogs: it is the so-called “Caza *Beatrik*”, which is Theodoric's hunting party, ready to bite whoever it meets after midnight. The **Guane**, water gods with twisted feet and the Smare, that make people lose their minds with their song, are

also present. These female characters in particular possess an explosive sensuality, which manifests itself through masculine and overflowing bodies.

AMOR CHE NELLA MENTE MI RAGIONA

Schweizer ends the fresco with a Dante-like **verse taken from the Convivio**, *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*, which is at the same time the title of a song within the work. The reading is made a little

difficult by the **spatial de-composition** of the verse and the fact that today it's slightly faded in the lower portion.



1. San Martino e il povero (San Martino and the poor)
2. La Bancalunga (The Bancalunga)
3. La lontra e la valle (The Otter and the valley)
4. Monumento ai caduti (Monument to the fallen)
5. Gaudenzi jewellers
6. Luce, colore e allegria (Light, colour and glee)
7. La miniera (The mine)



LA LONTRA E LA VALLE

The Otter and the valley • 1993 • Acrylic on wall, about 60 square meters
Tonadico (TN) • Tiles and emblems in ceramic and polycarbonate, 120 x 120 cm
each • Inscriptions: Schweizer 93 bottom right

The artist wanted to metaphorically represent the Primiero valley: the bipartite decoration is enriched by eight ceramic tiles, which are a creative reinterpretation of the municipal emblems prior to the administrative merge: in 2016 the municipalities of Fiera di Primiero, Tonadico, Transacqua and Siror merged into a new administrative configuration named Primiero San Martino di Castrozza. The original project envisioned the creation of a larger frescoed surface,

but they opted for an acrylic painting of more moderate size because of its grafting on a thermal coat insulation.

THE OTTER

Legend has it that once upon a time it had been this mammal that opened the hole from which drained the waters from the great lake that originally covered the valley, thus laying the foundations for future human settlement. The otter furthermore - as it emerges in a testimony

of one local historian from 1723 - "*Denotes the integrity and purity of people, that dwelling with pervers, do not remain stained by their wickedness*". The reference to the character of mountain people is evident, particularly of the people of Primiero.

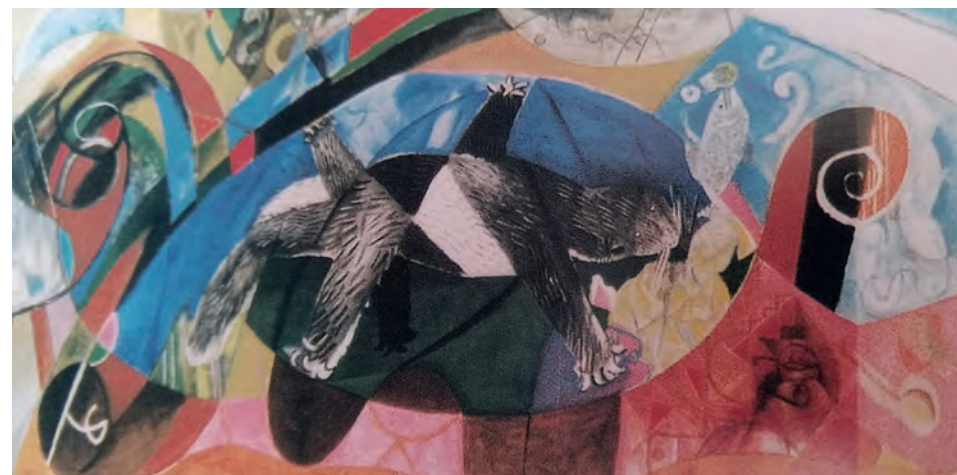
THE ONEIRIC DIMENSION AND THE INFLUENCE OF PICASSO

Schweizer's characteristic elements are both vivid and bright colours applied in large colour fields, and

dynamic and lively figuration. Scudiero in a catalogue dedicated to him in this regard speaks of **oneiric reinvention** and this is precisely the more apt term: in the creative bundle of subjects and

objects tied to a largely rural world, the artist reinterprets the essence of life in Primiero just like it was a dream, full of charm and mystery. A **Picasso-like heritage is represented by the use of ceramics,**

under the banner of total art, which invests different representation techniques.



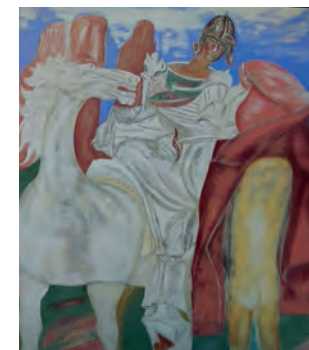
SAN MARTINO E IL POVERO

St.Martin and the poor • 1962 • Fresco, about 18 square metres
San Martino di Castrozza (TN)

Almost on the edge of the town, on the road towards Passo Rolle, we find San Martino and the Poor. Though it is not actually part of the municipal collections - as property of the Hotel San Martino - we quote it to further complete the overview on his pieces in the Valley of Primiero: it is a **fresco** that represents an iconographic motif well documented here for obvious reasons. It's present in its

older versions, for example, both in the Church of San Vittore in Tonadico and in the Archpriest Church of Fiera di Primiero. The artist **cancels perspective** and creates a complex succession of characters. To an almost ethereal saint caught in the well known gesture of cutting the cloak corresponds the accentuated physicality of the poor and the powerful musculature of the **horse, whose nervous bite inevitably re-**

minds us of that of Guernica.



MONUMENTO AI CADUTI

Monument of the Fallen • 1968 • Fiera di Primiero (TN)
Steel, stone, concrete, and iron filings
Inscriptions at the base Schweizer 68

Initially commissioned to **commemorate the victims of the first world war**, it becomes then also a monument **in memory of the fallen during the flood of 1966**. In that year in fact this terrible event ravages the Valley. If the war had been a dividing line from a political point of view, marking the transition from Austro-Hungarian domination to the Kingdom of Italy, the flood had favoured major changes from an urban point of view. After the design stage follows a specific fundraiser via the pages of the historical newspaper Voci di Primie-

ro. An important piece, which by no coincidence is entrusted to the Primiero native artist that obtained major success in the international scene. One of the main features is the use of a new material, which is described by Schweizer himself as follows: *"Talking to a technician of a power station I found that there is an American material that is half concrete and half iron dust. Once it sets it is extremely hard and for this reason used for water overflows in dams"*. The high percentage of iron and its oxidation creates this very particular reddish-brown shade,

which strongly resembles works in bronze. Its realization differs from the initial project, in that the elements characterized by clean and rational shapes that soar upwards should have rested on a mirror of water that was never created. However, of the initial sketch remains intact the structure, entirely built on the **intersection of vertical and horizontal elements**. The narrative element is entrusted to some panels and, as underlined by Scudiero, *"the major result lies in the contrast between the cold linearity of the supporting structure and the rough, wrinkled surface of the bas-reliefs"*. The horizontal panel depicts the destructive force of the waters (4-IX66), while the vertical ones in the centre of the structure represent respectively a man crushed by the fury of a cart wheel and struck by arrows - symbols of the battles of the past - an aerial bombing scene and the zenith perspective of a warship.



LA MINIERA DI SCHWEIZER

Schweizer's Mine • 1989 • Bas-relief in painted wood • Transacqua (TN)

In the concert hall of the music school can be found La miniera. It is a **composite piece** that combines **paint, wood bas-relief and more contemporary materials such as plexiglass**, used in this case to make a stylized tree. Among all the

gaudy elements depicted – for example a crescent moon, the sun, a basket of fruit and a chisel - one stands out, sinuous and elegant: it is a clear reference to the gable typical of some ancient houses in Primiero.



LUCE, COLORE E ALLEGRIA

Light, colour and glee • 1996 • Painted ceramic with enamels and stoneware, 150 m1 • Fiera di Primiero (TN)), inside wall of the swimming pool
Inscriptions: Schweizer 96 bottom right

The swimming pool houses another large piece of his. In the second half of the nineties (1996) Schweizer wins the selection for a large 150 square metre wall, **decorating it with painted ceramic, enamels and stoneware**. The choice of this particular technique and its displacement are linked to constraints placed prior to the selection, practical for facing the conservation difficulties inherent in the

nature of the environment itself: the decorated portion is in fact very much raised from the flooring and requires a technique resistant to the stresses of a very humid environment. Even **his friend Picasso** - vital point of reference and continuous comparison for Riccardo Schweizer - **had grappled with this material**. As in fact underlined by the title of the work itself - *"Light, colour and glee"* - **colour is pro-**

tagonist. The uniform coats of paint in wide swirls follow one another with a pressing rhythm, while the **brilliant hues** contribute to shape an **imaginative and creative vision**. Finally the smooth and shiny surfaces are calling to be touched. From an artistic point of view **the reference to the surrealism and abstraction of the famous Catalan artist Miró** is evident.



MADONNA CON BAMBINO

Madonna with child • 1936 • Fresco • Mezzano (Trento)
Church of San Giovanni Battista ai Prati Liëndri, niche on the external façade

The church **had been built at the end of the fifteenth century by the Scopoli**, a well known family of notaries, and **extended at the end of the nineteenth century by Schweizer's great-grandfather**, Domenico. It was then restored in 1936 by the Superintendence of fine arts in Trento, on behalf of the painter from Rovereto Giuseppe Balata, assisted in the masonry works by Francesco, Riccardo's father. "Near Mezzano there is the fifteenth-century church of S. Giovanni with interior fre-

scoes by Giovanni Naurizio (1519), itinerant painter. [...] On an external wall of the church there was one empty niche. My father had said to me: I'll prepare the mortar and the colours and you have to paint me a Madonna with child [...] I painted it, using the memories of Madonnas that I had seen so many times in churches and shrines. That fresco is still there, and I published it in a catalogue of mine." On official occasions Schweizer often mentions his **debut** and does not forget to remember the particular atmo-

sphere during the creative act: "The silence of the meadows around applauded with colourful dots of grass flowers... On the fir tree nearby magpies laughed loudly".



S.GIORGIO E S.GIOVANNI BATTISTA CON L'AGNELLO (CAPITÈL DE PAUS)

St. George and St. John Baptist with lamb • 1951 • Fresco • Mezzano (Trento)
Capitel de Paus on the road that leads to the Church of San Giovanni ai Prati Liëndri

On the eve of his departure for the cote d'azur, Schweizer creates the decoration of this shrine, without however, receiving the hoped-for consent from his clients, some local farmers who don't forgive him for **having deviated from the canonical representation** and using a

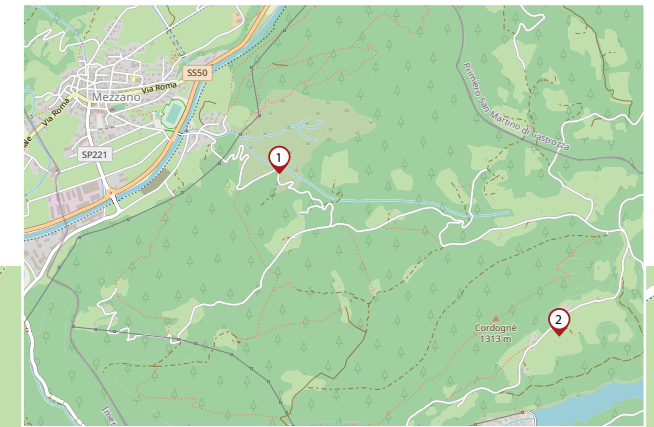
modern style. In place of **St. George** caught in the act of clashing with the dragon, the artist prefers a saint of calm and meditative attitude. Witness of this is the spear, that instead of being brandished to be thrown is depicted with the sharp part towards the ground. Not even the halo is painted. The saint,

with its statuary position recalls the San Giorgio del Mantegna conserved in the galleries of the Academy of Venice, at that time certainly known to Schweizer. St. John Baptist today is in a poor state of conservation, due to an **intervention of defacement by unknown persons**. It presents the canonical attributes: the

lamb and the walking stick surmounted by a cross with the inscription "Ecce agnus Dei" (Here is the Lamb of God). Schweizer uses the fresco and for the first time, **encaustic painting**, a technique used in ancient times, which used colours dissolved in melted wax, which were then warmed up when they had to be used. The bodies are monumental, and the upper parts are accentuated at the expense of the

lower ones. In describing these images, Scudiero writes: "The figurations while referring to tradition already show evident signs of the now acquired Picasian lesson, according to

both compositional and marking methods that immediately distance him, light years, from the latest Venetian works".



1. Capitèl de Paus
2. Madonna con bambino (Madonna with Child)
3. Le quattro stagioni (The Four Seasons)
4. Cemetery walls
5. Scarian pastry shop
6. Wall decoration
7. Cristo in croce (Christ on the Cross)
8. L'albero racconta (The tree tells)

BRUTO UCCIDE CESARE

Brutus kills Caesar • 1944 • Affresco
Mezzano (Trento), Rectory of the Church of San Giovanni Battista
ai Prati Liëndri, internal wall

The piece is in very bad condition, but we can still admire it in an archive photo in which it was well preserved. What is worthy of interest is the realism and naturalness

of the **anatomical rendering of the musculature** of the protagonist **Bruto**, caught in the act of unleashing a blow with the dagger. All almost monochrome. The execution is

very interesting: Schweizer reports of having used his **image in the mirror as a model**, without the aid of any preparatory drawing.

PAPÀ FRANCESCO VA A CACCIA

Papà Francesco goes hunting • 1945 • Tempera su muro
Mezzano (Trento), Rectory of the Church of San Giovanni Battista
ai Prati Liëndri, external wall
Inscriptions: below R. Schweizer

The piece has deteriorated, given the attempt by the artist himself to remove it, because it was judged to be "not very valid": for this reason, he had covered it with limestone and afterwards cleaned off the plaster. The father is caught in the act of going hunting, with a rifle and backpack on his shoulder; in the background the classic mountain landscape. Of particular significance is the **signature "R. Schweizer"**, which appears here for the first time with this spelling, **different from the Italianized one, Svai-zer**, placed on the Madonna with child on the church (1936). He himself described that this signature

had caused him many problems, so much so that his father was called to the po-

lice station: "*any autarchic product was forbidden by the fascist regime*".



Ph. Luigi valline

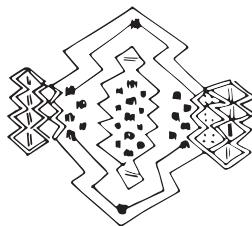


DECORATION OF THE CEMETERY SURROUNDING WALL IN MEZZANO

1967 • Mezzano (Trento) • Fresco and graffiti on mortar

On November 4, 1966, Trentino is hit hard by what is sadly known as the **flood of 1966**. The areas that were most devastated included Valsugana, the Valleys of Avisio and indeed, Primiero. The traumatic event deeply marks the collective consciousness: the water escaped from the riverbed swept away much of the town causing extensive damage. Everyone actively takes part in the reconstruction, each with their own contribution. Schweizer translates the entire drama of that moment in various works. An example of this is the painting

Alluvione a Mezzano, from which emerges an **almost expressionistic sense of despair**. Schweizer documents also the event through a **short film** and various photos. His hometown results devastated. Emblematic, the cemetery completely buried in mud, where incidentally is located the family tomb. Schweizer gives his personal contribution with the **mural decoration of the new walls**, using a previously tested technique, that is fresco and graffiti on mortar (see page 56). The **monochrome motif** runs along the walls in their entirety and is a clear



homage to Primiero's tradition. **Inspired by a detail of a fabric** produced in Mezzano in the 1920s, reported by the artist in a publication in 1975 dedicated to his hometown, it strongly recalls ornamental details that are still carried out today by the well-known artisan workshop *Artéler*.



Ph. Luigi valline

SCARIAN PASTRY SHOP

The all-geometric flair of the entrance facade of the Scarian pastry shop in Mezzano (1973) is very particular, in which we find - as described by Scudiero - *"a series of stained glass windows of various size, placed on different levels of depth and equipped with a complex design of the corresponding profiles which create a continuous play of surfaces that recede or protrude"*.



CRISTO IN CROCE

Christ on the cross • Fresco by Domenico Schweizer (1820-1898). Mezzano

The fresco is interesting for two reasons. First it was **made by Riccardo's great-grandfather**, a bricklayer with the habit of painting sacred images on the houses he built: Schweizer believes he **inherited from him his passion for drawing and more generally for painting**. Second, it's an example of that popular art so dear to him, enough to have written himself the essay *L'arte popolare è la nostra madre* (Popular Art is Our Mother) inside of the small volume *I dipinti murali popolari delle Valli del Vanoi Cisson e Mis* (The popular wall paintings

of the Valleys of Vanoi, Cisson and Mis) (Broch-Alpago Novello, 1978). Here Schweizer strenuously defends the work of fresco painters: *"in the indecision of various scholars on giving to art far from the source a value that is not that of the incapable stammering of a poorly educated pupil, I assure you that in this stammering begins its value in that from being free, like schoolchildren escaped from school from suggestions imposed by the teacher, from this being free peeks out that personal flair and those spelling mistakes that render the story ali-*

ve"[...] **Popular art isn't art? It does not matter. It is the mother of art. It is our mother.** " In his opinion it's precisely that stillness and absence of volume that gives strength to contemporary artists.



MURAL DECORATION

1956 – 1960 • Graffiti on mortar

Mezzano (Trento), facade of the former fire brigade station

The piece was originally commissioned by the then mayor to Schweizer, with the purpose of decorating the facade of the fire station. The intended use of the building has changed over time and now the ground floor is used for commercial activities. **The two-tone motif characterized by a geometric pattern** sees a regular succession of rhomboid shapes in which whites and greys alternate harmoniously. It is interesting that a similar decoration can be **found on the gables of other older houses**, probably giving a **sense of continuity** - as already pointed out by Daniela Finardi - who also reminds us that Schweizer



Foto scattata da Schweizer nel 1953

had already catalogued both graphically and photographically **these particular urban-building aspects of Mezzano**, publishing them in a volume of the same name. From a stylistic point of view, Maurizio Scudiero defined this geometric style reminiscent of Op Art (Optical

Art) "*of vague secessionist inspiration, meaning on the decorative themes of the Wiener Werkstätte, a certainly not risky cultural reference for a borderland like Primiero*".

QUATTRO STAGIONI

Four season • 1952

Mezzano (Trento), fresco on a private house

This is not a public work, but a fresco on a private house, of which only two out of four original paintings are well preserved today, due to subsequent interventions on the building. Significant is the style, which again in the opinion of Scudie-

ro **betrays in an evident way his move to France** and therefore the influences of the great masters he met there. The Four Seasons "*show a happy fusion of Picasso's stylistic elements blended with a chromatic lightness and with certain compositional*

methods that at best refer to Chagall". The representation stands out particularly because of the soft and rounded lines and the monumentality of the characters. The colours are soft and nuanced.



L'ALBERO RACCONTA (I SOGNI DELL'ALBERO)

The tree tells; the dreams of the tree • 1999 Fresco with ceramic inserts,
Primary school of Mezzano (Trento)

Inscriptions: - top right *The wind that passes through my branches tells me your stories* - Bottom centre Schweizer 12 x 80

Riccardo Schweizer wins the selection process organized for the decoration of the building in 1998. Significant are his words in a letter attached to the sketch he sent for the evaluation: "*The tree: the structure, fertility, the fruit, growth, colour, evolution, light ... all that is a young person who is facing life. I saw it in layers of colours according to the periods of life, events and misadventures. Only the peak is full of colour, there where the results of a lifetime of*

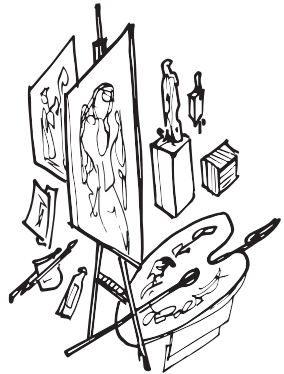
research converge in flowers and fruits". The work dialogues with the unique architectural structure, characterized by a large, glazed surface at the top of the gable. In the lower register, in response to the possible issues with the sealing of the plaster on bare stone Schweizer proposes the use of ceramics – a technique so dear to Picasso – thus creating a very pleasant dialogue with the fresco above. **The inauguration takes place in 2000.** The brightly coloured composition

represents the tree, which is par excellence **symbol of recursion** and therefore of **changing seasons, of nature and life.** Among its branches, ideally moved by the wind – as the phrase inserted in the piece reminds us – the stories, dreams and hopes typical of childhood can be heard.



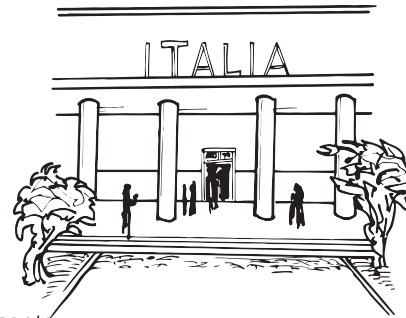


TIMELINE



He enrolled at the Istituto d'arte dei Carmeni in Venice. Two years later he is called by Bruno Saetti at the Academy of Fine Arts

1945



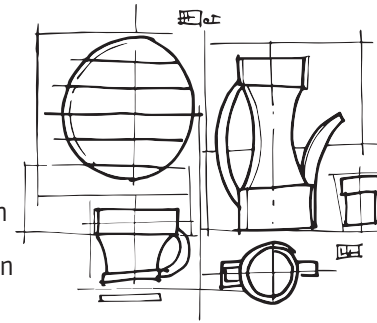
He returns to Italy and accepts the role at the middle school in Ceniga and Dro. After a month following the invitation of Saetti he moves to Venice and becomes an assistant at the Accademia. He frequents the stimulating Venetian cultural environment: Luigi Nono, Vittorio Basaglia, Stravinskji, Quasimodo De Pisis and Zotti

1954

He moves to the French Riviera

1960

Interior design collaboration with the Pagnossin ceramics factory in Treviso



1970
1978

He experiments with his "Total art" in the restaurant Da Silvio in San Michele all'Adige

Bancalunga
Fresco for the headquarters of the ITC in Trento

1978
1986

Frescoes for the facade of the District building of Primiero

He retires to live and work in Casez in Val di Non

1993
1996

The tree tells

He receives the Aquila d'oro della Provincia and publishes the book on Cannes. He dies in Casez on 20 September

1999

2004

1925

1948

1950

1958

1963

Born in Mezzano on August 31. Starts painting at 11 years old. After studying in Primiero he moves to Trento and Belluno to enroll at the Construction Institute

He visits the XXIV Venice Biennale

He leaves for the French Riviera, moving to Vallauris. He frequents Picasso, Chagall, Cocteau, Campigli, Tamayo and others

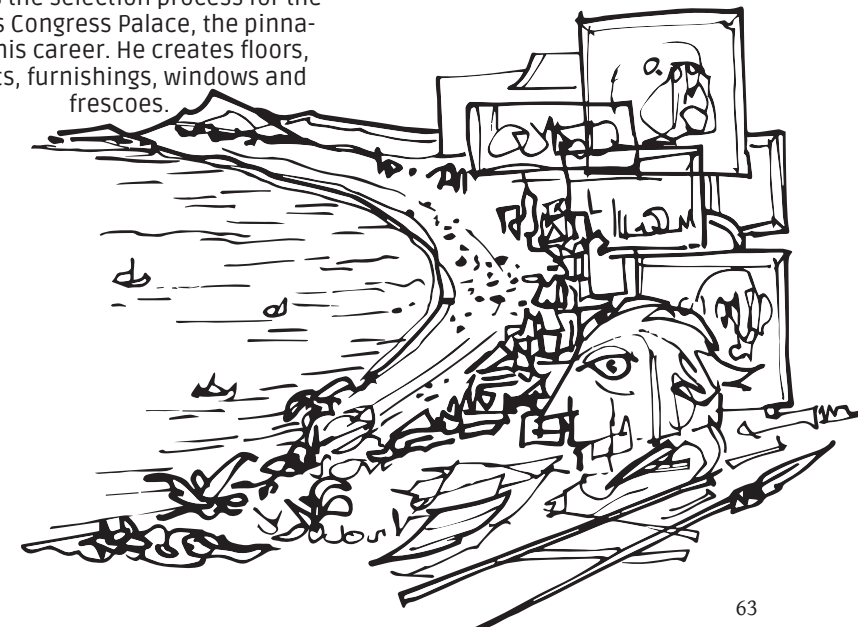
A solo exhibition is dedicated to him at the Picasso Foundation Museum of Antibes

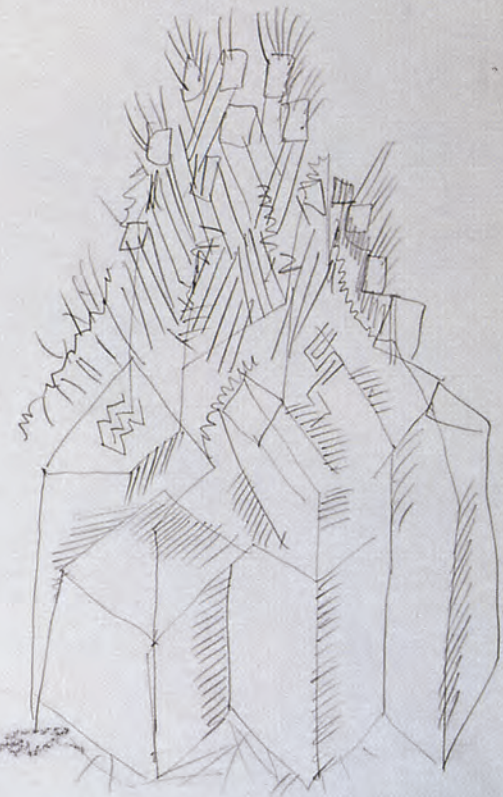
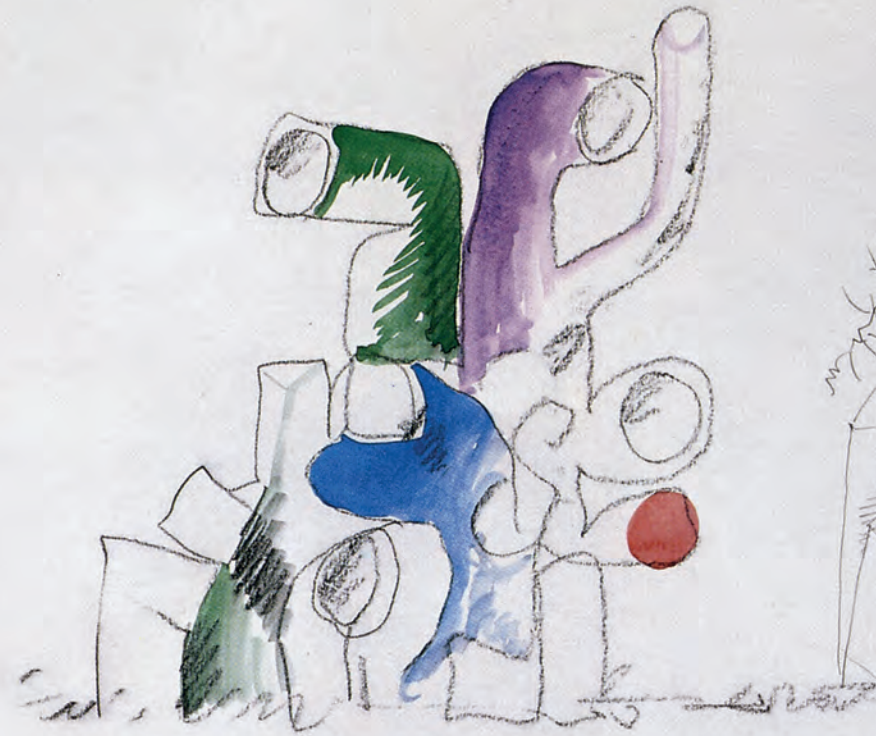
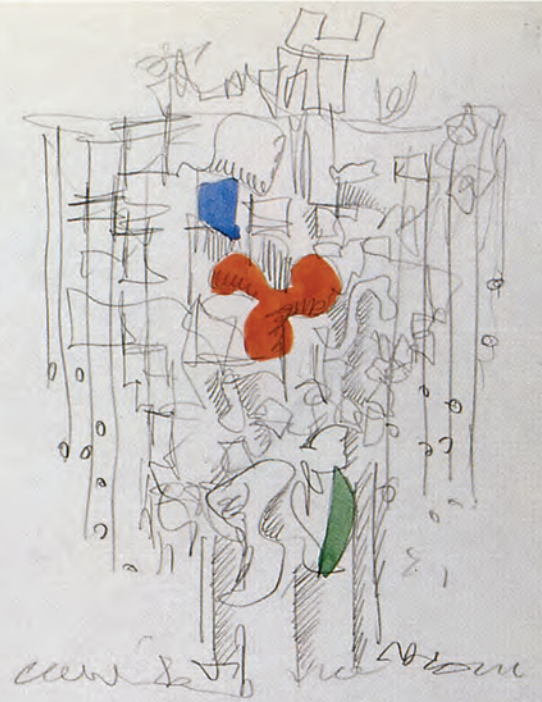
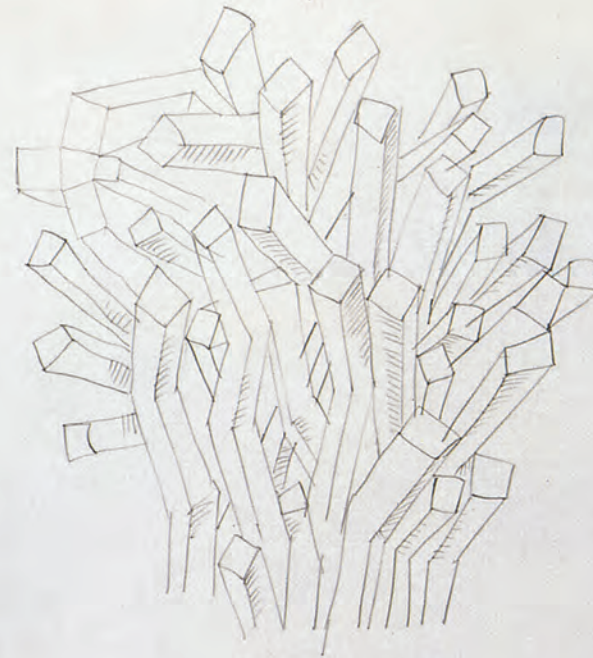
He marries Dina Ravene, leading to the birth of Monica and Barbara.



1982

He wins the selection process for the Cannes Congress Palace, the pinnacle of his career. He creates floors, carpets, furnishings, windows and frescoes.





Schweizer ©

RECOMMENDED READING...

The bibliography related to the artist is very substantial, which is why we will limit ourselves to giving only a few suggestions.

To get a complete and well-illustrated overview of his vast production: *Memo-ria e progetto* by L. Lambertini; *Schweizer. Opere 1936-2000* by Maurizio Scudiero. Still by the same author *Riccardo Schweizer. Artista europeo*.

To discover the more personal dimension of the artist through autobiographical texts and non-institutional images: *Il labirinto dei ricordi. Settant'anni di immagini su Riccardo Schweizer*, curated by himself and by Milena Gervasi. Similarly, we suggest Riccardo Schweizer. *La Geografia dei sogni* by Bepi Pellegrinon.

For an in-depth analysis of his public works with punctual references to critical analysis and therefore to many other specialist texts, the thesis by Daniela Finardi, *Le opere pubbliche nella ricerca artistica di Riccardo Schweizer* (2006-2007).

Regarding the prestigious venetian exhibition at the Querini Stampali Foundation, very interesting turns out to be the MART's catalogue *Riccardo Schweizer (1925-2004) pittore e designer*, curated by Elisabetta Barisoni.

To appreciate the creative planning of his most famous work Riccardo Schweizer *Palais des Festival et des Congres Cannes 1980-1984*, curated by Guido Bartorelli.

Many books deepen the huge pictorial production. for example the volume *Riccardo Schweizer*, created on the occasion of the exhibition at the Orler Art Galleries in Venice in 2004, with the presentation by

Vittorio Sgarbi and texts by Scudiero. The volume *Riccardo Schweizer. Antologica*, curated by Antonella Alban and Franca Visentin is also interesting.

To explore the interest in the protection of the landscape in its anthropological and urban aspects: *Medàn - Mezzano* by Riccardo Schweizer. In *I dipinti murali popolari delle Valli del Vanoi, Cismon e Mis* we find instead an essay on popular art.

Finally, the articles *E guardo il mondo da un oblò* and *L'arte a dimora* by Manuela Crepaz on Aquile magazine (2019), useful to learn more about the commitment of Giuseppe Gaudenzi towards the artist.

Not only through writing can we reconstruct his artistic experience. In this sense the vision of some short but significant video clips on the internet will also result useful:

- Alluvione 1966 in Trentino: il reportage dell'artista Schweizer a Mezzano
- Nello studio di Riccardo Schweizer a Mezzano. Gian D. Ceccato (youtube)
- TRENTINO TV. Le opere di Riccardo Schweizer in mostra a Borgo
- "Riccardo Schweizer. Tempesta sul Lago" MAG Museo Alto Garda (2020)
- Lentiai-Un sentiero nell'arte e nella storia



Ph. GianAngelo Pistoia

"Fortunately I have not understood anything about life so far,
so everything is still possible.
Everything may have been right or wrong;
perhaps nothing exists, perhaps everything.
It may be important to know that something exists,
it may not matter at all.
What is evident, is, what we imagine,
is additional or a gap in the obvious.
Fortunately I don't know anything: so, like a child,
I can start walking again with slippers on my feet,
a bundle on my shoulders, heart in hands and let it rain;
let it rain on the heart for a long time and will fill with other shadows.
Shadows again of screams, fragile collapsed statues,
bridges demolished, lights out.
I know nothing and then the difficult thoughts will rest in me
and they will leave me alone.
I will be able to lie down and the scream will not call me
of the apology for some embalmed conviction.
I will be able to stretch out by a window and look again
the meadows until sunset, next to the air that runs away
to gather the centuries in memory.
I am nothing, fortunately,
so I will go undisturbed among things."

Casez, 2000

R. Schweizer