

**Roberto Pagnani** was born in 1970 in Bologna and now lives in Ravenna. In this very town Roberto is undertaking his artistic activities. Roberto Pagnani has grown up in a particularly artistic family context. Indeed, for three generations his family has been in a tight contact with the foremost among Italian and European artists such as M. Moreni, G. Mathieu and many others. Roberto has terminated his education as Medieval historian at Bologna university. His professional career as a painter dates back to 1996 when he started to set numerous exhibitions in Italy and abroad. In these occasions he was also rewarded with awards and official approvals. At the present times, one can find his works exposed in prestigious public and private collections within and outside Italy. Roberto Pagnani, besides painting, is familiar with engraving. He learned this technique at the renowned workshop of Giuseppe Maestri. Roberto's engravings are collected in the archive of the *Gabinetto degli Incisori di Bagnacavallo* (Ra).

### **Exhibitions' places:**

**Italy:** Bologna, Catania, Cento, Cremona, Faenza, Ferrara, Modena, Mantova, Milano, Ravenna, Roma.

**Foreign countries:** Belgique (Gent) , Canada (Toronto), China (Beijing), Hungary (Veranka), Lithuania (Nida), U.S.A. (New York).

### **Most important exhibitions:**

#### *Solo exhibitions:*

San Cesario sul Panaro (Mo) - Villa Boschetti - 1996.

Mantova - Museo Virgiliano - 1998 (a cura di Davide Longfils). "SEGNALATO"

Vignola (Mo) - Salotto Muratori - 2000.

Ravenna - Galleria La Bottega (testo critico di Giulio Guberti) - 2002.

Fusignano (Ra) - Galleria del Credito - 2003 (a cura di Stefania Vecchi).

Ravenna - A.p.A.I. Casa dell'Arte - 2004.

Ferrara - Galleria La Carmelina - 2004.

Bologna - Istituto di Cultura Germanica, Gothe - 2005.

Faenza - Circolo degli Artisti - 2005 (a cura di Lamberto Fabbri, testo critico di Beatrice Buscaroli Fabbri).

Bologna - Galleria En Sof - 2006.

Ravenna - Openstudio 2006 - 2006.

Cervia (Ra) - Sala Artemedia - 2006.

Bologna - Libreria Il Portico - 2006/7.

Ozzano E. (Bo) - Spazio Arte - 2007 (a cura del Prof. Franchino Falsetti).

Bologna - Centro Culturale Nuovamente - 2007.

Roma -GLOSS- 2008.

Nida, Neringa, Lithuania - Amber Gallery, Museum - "Dievas\_Dio" - 2008.

Ravenna – Walking, Artificerie Almagià – 2008.

Ravenna – Casadicose, Nobodaddy 2008/9 Teatro Rasi – 2009 (a cura di Viola Giacometti).

#### *Collective exhibitions*

Bologna - Prima Biennale dei Giovani Artisti al Baraccano - 1998.

Catania - Studi Aperti (DARC) - 2002.

Gent (Belgio) - Lineart - 2002.

Bologna - Arena del Sole (Testo critico di Tania Giuga) - 2003.  
 Modena - Atelier 104 / Contrada Carteria - 2004.  
 Kecskemét (Ungheria) - Verànka - 2004. "SEGNALATO"  
 Vicopisano (Pi) - Rocca del Brunelleschi - 2004 ( a cura del Presidente Club Unesco di Lucca, Prof. Giovanni Ranieri Fascetti).  
 Lugo (Ra) - Galleria Artepìù - 2005 (a cura di Danilo Montanari).  
 Fratta P. (Ro) - Villa Badoer / Topoi - 2005.  
 Ferrara - Chiostro di San Paolo / Topoi - 2005.  
 Forlì - Contemporanea - 2005.  
 Bologna - Salara / DoppioDonna - 2005.  
 Bologna - Galleria En Sof - 2006.  
 Cremona - Estemporanea di pittura sulla città di Cremona, "Il cavalletto" - 2006. "PREMIO DELLA CRITICA".  
 Bentivoglio (Bo) - Officine d'Arte / tE:Ze - 2006 (a cura di Vladimiro Zocca).  
 Roma - Avant Gard Retro - Galleria AOC F58 - 2007 (a cura di Marina Zatta).  
 Pechino - "Colori e immagini dall'Italia" al Beijing World Art Museum - 2007 (a cura di Pamela Cento).  
 Lugo (RA) - "Domus con Vista", Casa Rossini - 2007 (a cura di Stefania Vecchi, testo critico di Maria Chiara Zarabini).  
 New York - I.10, Onishi Gallery - 2007.  
 Bologna - Festival delle Arti 2007 - 2007 (a cura di Andrea Mingardi). "FINALISTA e SEGNALATO".  
 Forlì - Punto Einaudi - "La collana bianca si colora" - 2008  
 Roma - Galleria Vista arte e comunicazione- "Colore"- 2008.  
 Toronto (Canada) - Camera di commercio - 2008.  
 Pieve di Cento (BO) - Museo MAGI '900, Concorso di pittura 2008 (SEGNALATO).  
 Bagnacavallo (RA) - Incisori italiani OGGI, Museo delle Cappuccine, Gabinetto delle Stampe - 2008.  
 Spinetoli (AP) - ELEKTA - "L'arte che illude e l'arte che disillude", Università di Scienze Politiche di Ascoli Piceno. 2008.  
 Bologna – Festival delle arti 2008 – 2008 (Finalista).  
 Dovadola/Ravenna - Dovadola e i giovani artisti Ravennati – 2008 (Testo critico di Marisa Zattini).  
 San Mauro P., La Torre (Villa Torlonia) Scarpe d'amare, V edizione – 2008 (Testo critico di Loredana Rea).  
 Milano, Villa Borromeo – "milledicuori" – 2008 (Catalogo a cura di N. Luciani e A. Morelli).  
 Cento (FE) – Ac' Cento sull'arte (Auditorium di San Lorenzo). – 2008.  
 Bologna – Galleria De Marchi – 2009.  
 Macerata – Antichi Forni, Segno d'inizio – 2009.

## **ROBERTO PAGNANI**

### **CV: Roberto Pagnani**

- born 1970 in Bologna, lived most of his life in Ravenna, where he works
- Studied art in Bologna. Auto-didact artist. Paints and make engravings.
- ca. 15 exhibitions in Italy and Belgium, Hungary
- assistant at lectures with Stefano Ferrari at Art psychology at DAMS (Bo)

### **Exhibitions:**

Bologna (inst. of germanic culture), Faenza (Circolo degli Artisti), Rastignano (Loggia della Fornace)  
(Bo)

### **The article :**

#### Exhibition room

- Faenza, CdA – important place for artist (accord. to Pagnani, therefore chosen for Rav.)
- 1980s: the exhibitions in Italy changes – now art management – or how to sell the exhibition is also put into focus.
- People wants to be entertained while they see the art. “Wanna see pictures – not museums” –  
therefore CdA a good combination to promote the artists
- Ravenna – area for his inspiration = better, also to do more for Contemp. art in Rav.
- CdA: Old stall, same materials, colors as the paintings – symbiosis with the pictures

#### Inspiration

Ravenna: home/ work place of the artist, combined with the psychological paint methode

- 1 Palafitte: the wood constructs under the houses on water that former used to be in the area of Ravenna – a flat area therefore a way of “rising” the houses.  
The family was the important. To remember the ancient. The past.
- 2 Platforms: The present = the opposite - from the 60s, came with the economic boom and the more modern industry. Oilfields out in the sea where they search for gas or oil in the ground, you can see them from land, still functioning,

Symbolics: as iconographics of Ravenna- in two ways, the platforms and palafittes a concrete symbol in the picture and the materials also as psysical symbols of the area

Colours: foggy colours – like on the sea, winter landscape – lots of fog in Ravenna.

The grey colours make room for a “spotcolour” as orange or red.

Contradictions: cold/ warm, dark/ bright

Burned colours (inspiration from the Italian painter Alberto Burri) who “burns” the paint

Materials: - Meeting between nature/ culture. Strange mix – rarely seen, industrial/ nature

Wood, canvas, cotton, fragments of steel > < iron, tar, plugs + the industrial polish-paint

Expression: - Commitment to nature, return to the roots, the deconstructing of industrial materials, symbiosis of the beauty in both nature/ industry

### **Artist and movements Pagnani is inspired of:**

### **Expressionism**

Two groups that are generally considered to be representative of E. in painting:

1. Die Brücke (the bridge) in Dresden, from 1905-10 (movement founded by four students (ex. Kirchner) as a revolt against refinement and rationalism in favour of the authentic expression of their strongest creative impulses). Not acad. Art school
2. The Blue Rider (der blaue Reiter) in Munich from 1911-13:  
(1911): Exhibition with Kandinsky and Franz Marc in Munich (also Klee)

The term Expressionism was “born” in Germany in reaction to the term Impressionism (MonÈt) and was widespread through the gallery “Der Sturm” - that summed up all the avant-garde movements from the 1910-20 as expressionism

Inspired by E. Munch's “The Cry” (1893) Difficulty of existence and a fascination of death.

The characteristic of Exp. was its Anti-naturalism: no longer was it imitating nature or copying it, but more the creating, and the artists role as a creator.

- 3 Outstanding expressionist were Nolde, Kirchner and Kokoschka in Vienna (same time as Freuds psychoanalysis)

Expressionism explores the most violent and intense aspects of the inner world:

Therefore it is best manifested in times of social crisis and spiritual disorder.

E. disorder, tearing things up – expression from the artist through destruction of color, and forms.

Theories says that the violence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the reason to expressionism which also explains

why Abstract Expressionism was being contemporary with concentration camps and the atom bomb.

### **Wassili Kandinsky:**

Russian-french painter born in Moscow 1866. The “base” of abstract art

- characteristic for his “pure painting” based on the “primary values of colour” and he was the creator of Abstractionism in 1910.

- In 1911 he founded the Blue Rider

- His work made use of the geometric forms

- Emigrated to Paris in 1933 where his international stature as a genius of 20<sup>th</sup> century art was confirmed

### **Ernst Ludwig Kirchner:**

German painter, from 1880

- drafted the program of Die Brücke with other artist calling on young artist to “unite to win freedom of action and life”

- had more than 100 paintings confiscated by the The nazi Government and therefore killed himself 5 months later

RP: the symbols in the painting

### **Paul Klee:**

German-Swiss painter, born 1879 – took part in the Blue Rider exhibition 1911

4 the geometricization of his subjects, search for perfection in substance and color

5 1930s dismissed by the Nazis of Dusseldorf Academy of Art , therefore he was overcome by sorrow and suffering from scleroderma (sclerosis?) and his paintings became more symbolic and metaphysical

6 His genius places him beyond all the movements of modern art

RP: Klee: wrote the theory of the form of the symbols. His writings has also inspired Pagnani who often add poems/ writings to his art

### **Abstract Expressionism:**

- Origin: New York 1940s, but took really off in the early fifties

- Some of the artist became famous when they worked on the Work Project Administration of Roosevelt to put unemployed artist to work during the depression

-The conditions of the second world war= the innovation of the artists

In 1940: the center of art moved to New York from Paris because of the conflict in Europe, also because many artists as Dali and Max Ernst came to New York as refugees.

- These European artist made a great influence on American art and Pollock and Motherwell was the one who had kept contact with them

A.E.: sometimes known as the New York school, but it has a broader meaning

Two currents in A.E.:

1) Action painting: Jackson Pollock the most important artist: “drippings”, seething psychological labyrinths that were never organized around a central point

Also Willem de Kooning, (Philip Guston and Robert Motherwell):

They were Gestural (bevélgelse) painters – sometimes even violent, some of them used the All-Over-technique which consisted of covering the canvas uniformly – like an aggressive attack at the canvas. De Kooning held a special place among the Action Painters as he never stopped practicing figurative painting.

2) Color-Field Painting: a more lyrical, meditative inspiration and in which color is loaded with emotion. Their canvases are simple and strict and there are less expression of the personal.

The artist were not all abstract. They had in common use of large canvases and a powerful use of the material and of color.

Less academic movement, then ex. Cubism (beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century)

Music: like free jazz, the improvisation of the feelings in the artist

### **The politics of modernism: Abstract expressionism and the European Informel**

Modernism rised after 2. World war:

7 a mix of realism and abstraction

8 The prewar surrealism: a lot of artist made abstract pictures without directly addressing politically:

9 “*There is no such thing as good painting about nothing. We assert that only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless.*” (As they wrote in a letter to New York Times.)

10 For example: Pollock, Rothko, Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning etc. -> soon labelled

¥Abstract Expressionist¥

11 stylistic they had borrowings from Cubist abstraction, Expressionism and Surrealism with a growing interest in myth and primitivism.

12 Abstract expressionism: the important in their pictures is psychoanalysis and classical myth but also the theme “modern man”

### **Jackson Pollock:**

American painter, 1912

Anti-traditional, The biggest in Action Painting: used the violent and intense style and all-over-technique

- The “freedom” which liberals as Pollock put into their pictures came to signify American democratic values in opposition to formal communist culture
- so was unwittingly infused with the politics of the cold war where its offshoots came from the imagined evils of Russian Communism
- The end of the 1950s New Yorks Museum of Modern Art made tours with exhibition of Abst. Expr. round America and used it as cultural imperialism – to public it widely

### **Barnett Newman**

American painter, 1905, New York

- one of the leading artist in bringing a new language in art: Abstract Expressionism

His canvases are punctuated by “zips” thin, vertical strips that create a very physical place within the color.

RP: the use of colour with simplicity and dividing of the colours

- > In France and Italy after the war, the many strong Communist parties led to debates among artist of the socially oriented realism or self-expressive experimentalism.
- In late 1940s: Artist like Barnett Newman wants to address the public and put an end to capitalism but the only one who could afford to buy and “read” his pictures was the upholders of the state power.
- The critic Clement Greenberg sees a conflict in the art where the artist's relation to his art has become more private at the same time, as he wants it to be more public. It became important to let the art be an expression of the artist feelings.

### **Willem De Kooning:**

Dutch-american painter from Rotterdam 1904

- came to USA in 1926 and in 1935-36 worked as a Muralist (wall-painter).

Both him and Arshile Gorky were influenced by Picasso with cubist space but tackled figuration.

- First exhibition was in 1948 where he became famous as a master of gestural painting on the basis of beautiful abstractions in black and white – his works are not only abstract because he also was drawn to the human figure.

- De Kooning produced the most urban-rooted Abstract Expressionist canvases.

The human figure was the central for him and to that also inspiration from Cubism or Expressionists paintings as his Women of the early 1950s.

RP: He painted black canvases (and many black and white) due to the Informal style of starting with the background building up the picture. He was also inspired by film noir which had its roots in expressionism

Film noir: black detective movie, urban settings, femme fatale, not-ness. happy ending

- Pollock, Rothko and Newman came longer in their abstract expression than De Kooning

### **Mark Rothko:**

RP: - Rothko painted horizontal landscapes as his “subject” in the picture whilst De Kooning painted a series of psychical images of women (– still *abstract* express.)

### **Robert Rauschenberg**

American painter, 1915

RP: Large variation of materials and a huge integration of objects into his works, in a strange mix

### **Robert Motherwell**

American painter, 1915

11 important member of New York school, because of his writings of Mediterranean culture and his free expressionist paintings

12 collages, illustrations and graphics round out his work – characteristic for the culture of the 1960s

- Robert Motherwell was the most educated of the artist and wanted to be less American in his expression – he became close with the critic Clement Greenberg who was the most important critic at that time (1940s) and both argued that Pollock and his contemporaries had made a model of American art to be copied in Europe: a model beyond the aesthetics of easelpainting and with a freer use of materials

## **Mark Tobey**

American painter, 1890

Inspired by asian art due to his travels in China and Japan.

13 tried to combine East and west

RP: inspired by the oriental techniques, colours and calligraphics, many abstract artists are

## **(Marcel Duchamp:)**

French-american artist born in France 1887.

-influenced by both neoimpressionism and afterwards of cubism.

- he putted everyday objects into the work of art such as a wheel from a bicycle

- he moved to New York where he also brought **Dadaism**: Tzara and Breton

Anti-tradition, anti-institution, anti-logic – anti-everything

His art is related to Abstract Expr., RP: Materials in the picture

## **Informal art** Action painting/ Informale (eur.):

only with hands, with an aggressive, psychical expression when you paint. The background prepared first – not the figure.

Not a structured group or movement.

Refers mostly to a trend among artists that happened to be together, during an exhibition in 1951 they were called the informal, in United States it was called Action painting/ Gestural Painting: its goal was to promote a language of new signs

**G. Mathieu** is the main artist of informal art (eur). The school of informal was in France.

Very improvising in his expression. Developed 1949 an “esthetic of speed and risk”, huge canvases, completed in a few minutes

Historic: After the 2. World War France was obsessed with Èpuration (purging or cleansing). The painter Jean Fautrier's exhibition in 1945 was one of the first signs of new artistic direction. - With a series of morbid torsos he was the first to mark a move towards the Informal: An aesthetic of brute materiality and formlessness

- Dubuffet had children, social outsiders and insane to paint pictures – due to the process of informal – where the expression should be due to the psychological feeling in the artist

## **Cobra**

- Acronym of Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam. Origin/main period: 1948-51  
inspired by Exp. and Dadaism: aggressive, wild, disorderly and violently colourful  
opposed to French traditionalism, Academism and Geometric Abstractionism

**Asger Jorn 1914** – the greatest cobra artist. Pictures with humour and the artists temperament.

RP: the expression, the violence in both paintings and engravings

## **Arte Povera (poor art)**

Origin: Italy, Genoa (Torino), 1967 named by the critic Germano Celant

It made a cult of poverty, raising banality to the stature of art.

**14** Borrowing from nature, specifically the elements of earth, fire and water

**15** The art in a symbiosis with nature, a new language where art “talks” with nature

## **Alberto Burri, 1915-96**

Precursor of arte povera

One of the most famous Italian artist

Worked with tars and pumiced stone and switched to canvas sacks

Worked with iron, wood, dried earth, fire and in the end plastic

Hilla Rebay, head of the museum of Non-Objective painting in NY in the 40s wrote: “Abstract art also retains certain aspects of nature – that artist in this category created their forms in a process of *ab-*stracting from objects existing in the environment.”

## **Land Art**

Origin: USA, 1967

The artist who represented it are also called Earthworkers. Took the art outside of the galleries to the countryside or the desert

Use of earth, stone and salt. Artist like Dennis Oppenheim, Michael Heizer.

Cousin to Arte Povera, also a kind of new Romanticism due to love of the nature not tainted by civilisation, but also a need for putting a foot print of art in nature that could last for long. (- An important phenomenon of the war years was Neo-Romanticism which some artist took up in the early 1950s)

It came in the 60s because of the alienation people felt by the cold war and the murders of JFK and Martin Luther King – therefore a need of going back to nature

### **The critics: Art and social function**

- 1965 an exhibition in America with the name: “For 20 years or more almost all the best new painting and sculpture has been done in America”

- A British critic, Heron, disagreed and said that the first moves towards Abs. Expr. had been formed in Britain (Europe) with abstraction towards flatness, symmetry and a centre-dominated-format and with asymmetric and mixed materials that all together made an overall architectonic harmony.

Heron thought that Greenberg forgot postwar artist such as Georges Mathieu

Greenberg represented only rarely the Abstract expressionist while for example the critic

Harold Rosenberg whose reputation was overshadowed by Greenbergs said:

“At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act – rather than a space in which to reproduce, re-design or “express” an object. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event”

