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ARTIST INSIGHT



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THE PAINTER AND SINGER-SONGWRITER: THE WORLD OF DALLA IN THE PAINTINGS OF REGAZZONI

An exhibition in Bologna, the result of a close collaboration between two artists. Dalla's most famous songs transformed into paintings

BY ALESSANDRA QUATTORDIO

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"And with the dust of dreams fly and fly", from "Le rondini" (The Swallows), Lucio Dalla, 1990

Music is in the blood and poetry in the heart. These words are abused, however they are well suited to the multi-faceted figure of **Domenica Regazzoni**, an agile "funambulist", who is perpetually walking the tight rope towards her "complete work", in other words, a product of the mind that summarizes various artistic expressions, all of which are exceptional.

Born into a family of artists – her father Dante was a master luthier – she is the sister of composer and conductor Cesare Regazzoni and the mother of Alessio Bidoli, a young and talented classical violinist.

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In the early 21st century Regazzoni, providing a perfect example of her versatility, presented a rich assemblage of sculptures inspired by the theme of violins. The instruments – fragmented in their entirety as if the consequence of an explosion of sound which, triggered inside their forms, caused the parts to reform into new, harmonious equilibria – also refer to the skill her father applied to his meticulous daily work, which Domenica often witnessed. But certainly, the extraordinary body of work of the painter (Regazzoni is first and foremost a painter) cannot only be attributed to a genetic factor.

Her talent has also drawn on other abundant sources. Confirmation of this is provided by the almost forty mixed-media works, most of which have never been exhibited before, freely adapted between 1998 and 2019 from some of Lucio Dalla's most powerful songs, which are currently on show in Bologna, at Palazzo d'Accursio, in the exhibition "Domenica Regazzoni Lucio Dalla a 4 mani", curated by Silvia Evangelisti. Some may think that it is a simple tribute by the artist from Lecco to one of the legends of contemporary song writing, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Her vast pictorial production, influenced by the notes and poetic lyrics of the composer from Bologna – the anniversary of whose death in 2012 is on March 1st and birth on March 4th – originated from a long friendship nurtured by Dalla's repeated visits to Regazzoni's studio, a place dear to the singer-songwriter, in the capital of Emilia Romagna and in the Tremiti islands, where he spent his summers. What then was the source of this artistic relationship, which was initially casual but later became more mindful?





Their meeting at the end of the nineties was brought about, one could say, by mutual friends, the Dominican fathers Paolo Venturelli and Michele Casali, helped Regazzoni get in touch with the musician after she had been moved by his songs and lyrics. Once he overcame his initial reaction of curiosity combined with mistrust, Dalla was captivated by Regazzoni's work and would often say - using a way with words all his own but also typical of a celebrity strongly influenced by pop culture, "Darling, you have touched my heart, you can do anything you want with my songs."

Regazzoni's informal material-based paintings, made of jute, gauze, paper, plaster, metal wire and oil colours, often of a deep blue - "he loved dark tones, those of the depths of night" - but also speckled with gold or gouged with scarlet grooves, convinced him of their validity and made him realize they were a fine visual transposition of his musical compositions. "Even though he never totally revealed it, Dalla was an educated, very inquisitive art collector, a man conflicted between attachment to earthly things and spirituality, immateriality and materiality. He read, for example, St. Augustine. In his way, he was deeply religious, but never revealed it. One day he said to me, 'Darling, paint me a portrait', but I replied, 'Lucio, you are a multi-faceted character, I can't paint your portrait.' But then I regretted it" recalls Regazzoni.

Domenica Regazzoni's artistic education at the Scuola degli Artefici in Brera had in fact figurative foundations. She remembers, "after five years of singing and classical guitar, I began to learn about painting, concentrating on the study of the human figure. In 1971 I held my first one-woman show, which was followed by twenty years of exhibitions of portraits and nudes. In 1992, Vanni Scheiwiller entrusted me with the illustrations for "Canto segreto" by Antonia Pozzi for "All'Insegna del Pesce d'Oro", but I had already outgrown figurative art."



Later came informal experimentation, the collaborations with Mogol and Dalla, exhibitions at important venues in Italy – Fondazione Stelline in Milan, Complesso del Vittoriano in Rome, former Church of San Mattia in Bologna, Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, Villa Manzoni in Lecco, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome – and abroad – the Ginza Center Point in Tokyo and the Italian Shanghai Center in Shanghai.

Finally, she cultivated an interest in haikus and - thanks to Giorgio Upiglio - engraving, as well as producing public works. With regards to her current exhibition in Bologna: which of Dalla's compositions are interpreted in the works? Regazzoni explains, "there are fourteen in total, including "Nun parlà", "Caruso", "Milano", "L'ultima luna", "Occhi chiusi", "Le rondini", "Henna", "Come è profondo il mare", "Amen", "Ciao", etc. The reference to the individual songs is clear in the titles of my works. Lucio said to me, 'You've chosen the less commercial songs, those are also the ones that I love the most.'

Today, an atmosphere of music and quotes from poetic verses emanate in Palazzo d'Accursio, intermingled with Regazzoni's works, are "landscapes" of the soul. These "landscapes", inspired by the words of his songs, were defined by Dalla himself, as testified by Silvia Evangelisti, who in 2001 secured the collaboration between artist and singer-songwriter at another exciting exhibition, which she also curated in Bologna, the same city that brings this memory alive today.

«Domenica Regazzoni Lucio Dalla a 4 mani», curated Silvia Evangelisti. Sala d'Ercole, Palazzo d'Accursio, Piazza Maggiore 6, Bologna (until 19 March). The exhibition is organized in collaboration with the Municipality of Bologna and the Fondazione Lucio Dalla. Catalogue by MR Fine Art. © ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

EXHIBITION VIDEO:

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/REGAZZONI.DOMENICA/VIDEOS/2710867842569921/](https://www.facebook.com/regazzoni.domenica/videos/2710867842569921/)



The exhibition will be reopened to the public from Mon 25 May to Tue 2 June 2020





Domenica Regazzoni was born in Valsassina (Lecco) in 1953. She began painting in the early seventies after taking evening classes at the Accademia di Brera (Brera Fine Arts Academy). She gradually abandoned figurative painting and adopted a more abstract, informal approach. Since the nineties, her work has been focussed on finding a meeting point between painting, sculpture, music and poetry, searching for the intimate bond that links colour and material, sound and words. During the nineties, inspired by the more poetic songs of Mogol and Lucio Dalla, the exhibitions "Colore Incanto" (Colour Enchantment) and "Regazzoni & Dalla" were organized, the latter in collaboration with the Galleria Blu in Milan. One-woman exhibitions were also held at the Ginza Center Point Gallery in Tokyo in 1997 and in numerous Italian cities, including: in 1996 at the Centro Culturale San Bartolomeo in Bergamo, in 1998 in Milan, at the Palazzo delle Stelline, as well as at the Complesso del Vittoriano in Rome in 2000 and Bologna where, in 2001, her works were hosted by the former Church of San Mattia.

In 2003, following the passing of her father Dante Regazzoni (1916-1999), the great Lombard luthier of the second half of the twentieth century, she decided to create the exhibition "Dal Legno al Suono" (From Wood to Sound), curated by Gillo Dorfles (catalogue published by Skira), inspired by the art of violin-making and presented in Florence in the Sala d'Arme in Palazzo Vecchio. The exhibition, which from time to time was enriched with new works, was presented between 2004 and 2006 at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan, at the Museo Civico di Villa Manzoni in Lecco and at the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome.

Exhibitions inspired by violin-making continued between 2006 and 2008 with "Lo spartito del sogno" (The Score of Dreams), curated by Domenico Montalto, at the Compagnia del Disegno in Milano, at Bocconi University of Milan and at the Miyawaki Gallery of Kyoto with the title "From Wood to Sound". In October 2008, the exhibition "Scolpire la musica" (Sculpting Music) (catalogue published by Skira) was opened at the Museo Internazionale e biblioteca della musica (International Museum and Library of Music) of Bologna, curated by Martina Corgnati.



In 2007 she began working in the field of engraving at the printing works of Giorgio Upiglio with whom she collaborated until 2013, the year of his death. In 2009, one of her large bronze sculptures "The Broken Violin" was permanently placed in Coltea Park in Bucharest's University Square.

In 2010, the municipality of Sestri Levante organized a retrospective exhibition of paintings inspired by the Ligurian city and created during Regazzoni's frequent vacations there in the eighties. In 2011, she participated in the exhibition organized at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Turin as part of the series of events linked to the 54th Biennale of Venice. In 2012, she organized an interesting joint exhibition with the celebrated photographer Gabriele Basilico at a Milanese gallery. In the same year, she held two one-woman shows in China at the Shanghai Italian Center and in Suzhou, and participated in the Art Fair of Shanghai.

In April and May of 2013, she returned to Shanghai for a one-woman exhibition at Tongji University organized by the department of Architecture and Urban Planning of the city. In October of the same year, she exhibited at the Galerie Nord of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. In June 2015, for Milano Expoincittà, in collaboration with the Chinese pavilion and the Shanghai International Association, she launched an exhibition of monoprints entitled "Convergenze Parallele" (Parallel Convergences) at the Palazzo della Permanente, together with the Chinese engraver Lu Zhiping, which was curated by Ivan Quaroni and featured a catalogue published by Allemandi. In 2017, she organized two one-woman exhibitions in Sestri Levante and Milan and participated in the Triennale of Visual Arts exhibitions in Rome.

Her published works include illustrations for the collection of poems by Antonia Pozzi "Canto segreto" (Secret Song) published by Vanni Scheiwiller for the prestigious series "all'insegna del pesce d'oro" (1992) and a monograph dedicated to "Haiku" poetry for Vienneperre Edizioni (2000).



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