

THE PAINTER BEPI ZANON FROM TESERO (1926-2006)

The Man and the Artist

Among the artists from Trentino* who worked from the mid-twentieth century to the early years of this 21st century, there is Giuseppe, called Bepi, Zanon from Tesero*, a man perhaps little known, but of considerable value for the quality and amount of his pictorial production, for the contribution given to the knowledge and enhancement of natural environments through his paintings and for activities in the field of scientific progress.

Moreover, if we consider that he was a self-taught painter and that with difficulty had to break through to affirm himself, managing to reach very important levels, the measure of his talent and merits appears even greater.

Born in the splendid Fiemme Valley when local society was still rural in its economy and customs, Giuseppe Zanon as a child, as it will be said later, was strongly attracted by the inexhaustible book of nature and throughout his life never tired to read it with passion, each time discovering new, beautiful and interesting things that appeased and nourished his eyes and mind and responded to an insatiable curiosity. Nature became for him a generous source of happiness and, as usually happens to people, he felt the desire and almost the need to fix the best of what he had seen and found, in order to rediscover it later, so that others could enjoy his same feelings.

But, to do all this, it was necessary to use a suitable language and the one he found most congenial was painting, towards which he had a clear natural predisposition.

In the absence of a school, he let himself be guided by intuition and, taking advantage of the teachings that derived from a patient observation of surrounding environments, step by step he reached a full technical mastery of tempera painting, which he considered best suited to his needs and own taste, and came to express himself in an unmistakable style of extraordinary effectiveness.

The study of the past paint masters, whose works he analyzed with the critical eye of the connoisseur, also played an important role in his training.

His favorite ones, for evident elective affinities, both in, terms of content and of form, as can be easily understood by observing his paintings, were the nineteenth century Italian artists who revolved around the Macchiaioli Movement, including Giovanni Fattori, Silvestro Lega and Telemaco Signorini, but then also, though to a lesser extent, Filippo Palizzi, the Lombard realists, such as Girolamo Induno and Mosè Bianchi, then Giovanni Segantini, Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, Angelo Morbelli and, among foreign painters, the French Jean Francois Millet.

He knew contemporary art in its various tendencies, but its language was largely alien to him,

*Trentino, together with Alto Adige, is a region in the North-East of Italy

*Tesero, a small mountain town in Trentino, in Fiemme Valley.



PICTURE: local landscape and animals

mainly for its urban environment, which this art drew inspiration and nourishment from.

For Bepi* Zanon the real world, with which human beings had to try to reconcile themselves and live in harmony to feel intimately satisfied, was a natural one, made of woods, waters, plants, mountains, sky and animals, to be observed in silence with patience and to be enjoyed in all its aspects, changes and innumerable living forms.

Thence its representation could not be rough or purely allusive, but, following the principle of verisimilitude, it had to respect reality and enhance its beauty through a complex and delicate process of regeneration.

For him the same thing was also true when representing human environments, seen however and always within their natural framework and closely linked to it. So this painter went with his memory to his most familiar places, many times observed in childhood and youth, to depict the interior of a mountain cabin or the kitchen or living room of a house, where a rural family used to gather and welcome guests.

And the reconstruction was close to reality: wooden floors and walls, essential pieces of furniture also made of solid wood; the fire that illuminates and warms, or the light that breaks through a window; the neat tablecloth on a table; a harmoniously shaped bowl or an earthenware jug; a vase of flowers on a balcony or on a chest. To animate the environment, a variety of figures with the appearance and bearing suggested by the people who had really lived there and had been observed many times before, such as: children used to run and play on the streets, freely and happily, regardless of their approximate clothing; women of native beauty, with long hair gathered on their heads and a sober everyday dress; men returning from their stables or from hunting, hats on their heads, moleskin trousers and big dusty shoes; old men with a wrinkled face and a thick unkempt beard, absorbed in their thoughts. And again a cat, a dog crouched under a table, and maybe the siskin or goldfinch cage on a sideboard.

To those who have not met Bepi Zanon these scenes can appear pure mannerism. Instead, those who met him found, in his paintings, those graphic representation of reality and life aspects that he preferred and that deserved to be safeguarded and valued: the simplicity of living, the naturalness and spontaneity of gestures and relationships, the essentiality of material goods, freedom from fashion conditioning and independence of thought. All things that he felt and strongly defended, not by pose, but by rooted conviction.

Slim in body and lately a little curved and shriveled, his eyes still alive but with a gaze often absent, a cigarette between his fingers, he too, like the men in his paintings, invariably wore a dark hat, a heavy dull shirt, a handmade sweater, the usual trousers, not infrequently stained with color, always the same type of shoes, suitable for any place and any time, insensitive to the constant invitations of his family members about a better respect for personal care and respect for conventions.

*Bepi and Beppe are the short forms of the Christian name Giuseppe; they are widely used mainly in northern Italy.

PICTURE: A recent photo of Bepi.



He loved dialoguing and saying his own opinions frankly and sometimes toughly. Of course, his preferred topics were painting, nature, animals, hunting and fishing, and astronomy, but he also dealt with many other subjects, with competence, acumen and great judgment autonomy. Among them, classical and opera music of which he was an attentive and true listener.

With interest he followed science and technology progress and appreciated the advantages that derived from them in everyday life, but was also ruthless in condemning the abuses to humanity and environment detriment.

He noted with disappointment that the sense and taste for measure, proportion and harmony was gradually fading in all fields, which was largely due to the society's estrangement from direct observation and study of nature and its ruling laws.

Truly, Bepi Zanon's religious dimension is captured in the conception of nature as a marvellous gift of a Creator God who reveals himself to human beings in the universe through it, without necessarily resorting to other mediations.

If the aspects considered up to now of this notable character appear quite coherent with his personality, there is one, and not secondary, which at first glance can be contradictory and in some ways, scandalous: his passion for hunting.

In fact hunting was an ancestral instinct for him, strengthened by a strong family tradition. Anyway, in hindsight, it appears to have been a 'happy fault', since it has led him to tirelessly investigate the secret animal life and has continually provided him with content and stimuli for an extraordinary pictorial production.

His interest and love for hunting lasted a lifetime and although in the last few years he did not hunt any longer; he condemned the use of more and more efficient weapons that oversimplified the hunter's role; however as autumn approached, he felt, as strong as his dogs, the call of the forest and went out looking for his prey.

It's no coincidence that most of his paintings with naturalistic subjects show Autumn landscapes: they were the best known and most evocative, as well as a guarantee of a good pictorial performance thanks to the magic of mountain colours and lights.

Of Spring and Summer he appreciated and deeply felt brightness and warmth, the freedom of moving outdoors and the vital energy found in every creature.

Autumn and Winter did not lack charm and were artistically suggestive, but they gave him a certain melancholy and he spent them waiting impatiently for the nature's awakening.

Living in this way, governed by seasonal alternations, more than by civil calendars, and almost alien to social life, he was not at all dominated by the need to be and even less to appear in step with his times and did not feel the call of notoriety.

It was enough for him not to be subject to overly binding conditions and to be able of doing his job properly and freely.

PICTURE: Autumn hunting landscape



From time to time he taught students, to whom, as a self-taught painter, he could not give an academic teaching. Rather, he made them share his vision of reality and art, passing on the fruit of a technical experience, following their work and helping them to identify and enhance personal aptitudes, in a completely informal atmosphere.

Painting needed peace and concentration. So he got up daily, long before dawn, and shut himself away to his studio where, through patient and meticulous work, gave form and life to his projects.

At work, the initial idea, through a long elaboration process, had already been put into a well-defined and clear model in his mind. On a plywood panel the sketch appeared, drawn with confidence according to fixed and binding rules, dictated by precise technical and aesthetic requirements. Then, after the first patches of colour, the painting took shape, came alive, brightened and was fixed. Brush by brush, it was enriched with a thousand harmonized details to give body to the whole. The painting subject gradually assumed importance and showed itself in all its beauty, the Nature beauty, so often observed and admired, made of shapes, colours, movements, attitudes, faithfully reconstructed and skilfully elaborated.

Whether it was an outdoor or an indoor scene, the environment, born with the subject, ended up wrapping it and here the observer, favored and almost guided by a diffused brightness that softened contrasts and reached the most hidden corners, could embrace the whole setting and enjoy its global vision without meeting discord elements and then wander in search of details, all to be enjoyed, so much were they true. This process, repeated over and over the years, each time produced a new and unique work that speaks to people's eyes and hearts with a refined language, but accessible to all, inexperienced as well as connoisseur watchers.

His life

Giuseppe Zanon, better known with the name of **Bepi from Fia** - due to the spot on the north-eastern edge of the small mountain town of Tesero where he spent most of his life - was born in Tesero on March 14, 1926. He was the second son of a modest family that grew in the following years to six children.

His father, Ernesto (nicknamed "Péterla")* was a warehouseman at the SAIT store in Cavalese. His mother, Dorotea Zeni (nicknamed "Mola"), looked after their house, fields and stable, as most women in the village used to do.

As a child Giuseppe showed an acute observation ability and an innate interest in the natural environment surrounding him.

*In many mountain villages, where in the past there was no immigration, it often occurred that villagers had the same family names. Thereby nicknames were used to better distinguish one from another. For the same reason also in legal documents nicknames can be found, placed next to the official names.

PICTURE: a sketchy painting



Indeed, still young, he spent his days across meadows, woods, along the banks and in the ponds at the bottom of his valley, ready to spot, observe and even capture, when possible, any creature moving in the water, in the air and on the ground.

He stood for a long time in front of the dry-stone walls that flanked country lanes, waiting for a lizard or a green lizard or a snake that sooner or later - he knew it well - would peep out among the stones. When he came home, he would often take a grasshopper, a frog or an orbit out of his pocket, perhaps during the meal, to show it to his parents or siblings, who did not always appreciate this gesture.

He discovered many of nature's secrets on his own, through his tireless research and learned many of them at his father's school. The latter, as a hunter and fisherman by vocation, passed on to his children a great love for these practices and an extraordinary ability to see and understand every event concerning the local fauna and its environment.

When the time came for school, Bepi Zanon, who was endowed with a prompt intelligence and an excellent memory, had no difficulty in learning.

Instead, he suffered the boredom of long hours spent indoors, which he fought by virtually escaping into his visions.

Moreover, left-handed as he was, with annoyance he suffered the obligation to write with his right hand, reaching, quickly and in return, a sure control of both hands and becoming an excellent calligrapher.

He showed a strong interest in painting at an early age and in this regard, he later remembered that, aged eight, in the recently enlarged parish church with curiosity he had followed the decoration and execution of the large triptych on canvas for the central apse, made by the Venetian artist Duilio Corompai.

In the last years of primary school and in the following vocational school, Bepi Zanon's extraordinary skill in design and use of colour did not go unnoticed and was particularly appreciated by his teachers Tullio and Serafino Trettel.

In this respect, his classmates still remember Bepi Zanon's drawings on the classroom walls to illustrate some episodes of the novel "I Promessi Sposi" read by the teacher Tullio Trettel during the Italian lessons.

For his part, the teacher Serafino Trettel pointed out the student's promising inclination towards figurative arts to the teaching director Agostino Molinari and together they tried to find a training path for the boy that would allow him to put his talent to good use.

Unfortunately, the death of his father, who died of illness at the age of 52, when Bepi Zanon was 13, impacted the realization of this project and since then the boy had to adapt to the most varied jobs to meet his family needs..

From December 1941 to March 1943 he was in Bolzano, where he worked as an apprentice warehouseman in a seed store and where, thanks to his employers' willingness, attended evening courses in general culture.

Back in his valley, at the heart of the Second World War, he worked at a supermarket in Cavalese, "La Famiglia Cooperativa", from May 1943 to January 1945.

During this period he also worked at a branch of this store in Carano, a nearby village, and here he had the chance to see at work the painter Camillo Rasmò, who he kept a lucid memory of and from his works, especially those with a fairytale content, later drew some inspiration.

In July 1944, when the Trentino territory was now part of the Pre-Alps Operations Zone, under the direct control of the Germans, Bepi Zanon, who had just turned 18, was declared able to serve, on call, in the Trentino Security Corps.

But when the time came to enlist, he decided to go into hiding and, relying on the perfect knowledge of the territory and on his relatives' help, he lived tucked in the woods above Tesero for a few months.

Once the war was finally over, he returned to work in Cavalese, this time at a shop selling artistic and building painting items, where frames and prints were sold, in addition to paints and brushes.

The shop owner Giovanni Vanzo used also to paint, carve and decorate and sometimes carried out mass-produced works, such as backgrounds for domestic nativity scenes; so he availed himself of the young Bepi Zanon's help, who willingly offered his collaboration in this additional backroom activity, to him certainly more congenial than the work as a store clerk.

Being an adult, then, he was called to serve in the Italian Army as an Alpine Marconist.

He later remembered two ineradicable episodes about this experience: the amusing commitment of decorating some rooms in the Montorio Veronese Barracks, carried out in the style of the past fascist regime, and a trip to Rome, where inside the National Gallery of Modern Art, directly for the first time he saw the famous canvas by Giovanni Segantini, titled "Alla stanga" (To the bar).

When he returned to Tesero, he carried out seasonal work in the surrounding woods and mountain huts, without ever neglecting the practice of drawing.

His contemporary friends told that all Bepi needed was an ember removed from the fire and a sufficiently smooth surface, of any nature, to portray a landscape or a man or animal figure, quickly fixing its essential features and characteristic poses.

He also began to work on small paintings on commission, most often on still-life subjects about hunting, and for several years he worked as a decorator of wooden ornamental objects for the Borrelli firm in Cavalese, mainly using the technique of pyrography on wood.

Painting, in fact, if on one side fulfilled his true vocation, on the other hand was not enough to guarantee him sufficient means of survival.

This was perhaps an unproductive stage from an artistic point of view, but not without significant life experiences.

Bepi Zanon in fact relieved the weight of his monotonous work of decorator with long walks in the woods, hunting and fishing, visiting the workshop of his brother Giovanni, an animal embalmer, and observing the sky at night time.

PICTURES: Painting with gnomes



He also consulted art books, did readings on naturalistic and historical subjects, talked, often animatedly, to people around and played long chess games with his companion Giuseppe Anders, a polyhedric artist who lived in Cavalese, but was a regular to the former Bar Roma in Tesero. Independent and nonconformist as he was, Bepi Zanon did not willingly participate in Tesero's social life, but when the local drama company asked him to set the stage for a theatrical performance, he did not draw back and put all his inventiveness and skill in it, with always important results. In this case he often had a great deal of fun, also as a make-up artist, in highlighting some actors' caricatural traits, without taking too much account of the role that they would then play on stage.

In fact, the tendency of grasping the pleasant side of things and of not giving too much importance to his own and others' work was a peculiar element of his personality. He was also a careful observer of the people he met, fixed precisely in mind, not only their physiognomy, facial and gestural mimicry, clothes and movements, but also the character aspects that appeared in their speech and behaviour. He was often inspired in his studies by these figures whose memory was always kept sharply alive in mind.

In January 1957 Bepi Zanon married Valeria Deflorian, from Tesero. With her in a few years he had several children; of whom Paola, the twins Miriam and Renata and Ernesto remained alive. This new situation was relevant on him, but did not cause substantial changes in his lifestyle and work.

While continuing his job as a decorator, he increasingly devoted himself to paintings larger in size than in the past, executed as usual in tempera on plywood panels, but with thicker and thinner brushstrokes that animated naturalistic subjects of a greater breath, full of light and colour.

His paintings were now very much appreciated and the number of customers grew, also due to improved general economic conditions.

He took part in various group exhibitions at local and regional level and between 1965 and 1967 he contributed to the magazine "Diana" on which several of his paintings and drawings were reproduced.

In this period Bepi Zanon met Candido Degiampietro, a primary school teacher from Cavalese and author of valuable studies on the Magnifica Comunità Generale di Fiemme* and on local history and traditions.

Besides being a great admirer of Bepi's works, Candido Degiampietro was a hunter. This joint passion, together with other common interests and a mutual sympathy, that came from the witty and finely ironic way of communicating, typical of both, meant that in a short time the two became great friends and remained so all their lives.

*La Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme (Fiemme Magnificent Community) dates back to the 12th century (rare at the time) and is still in use. It is a very important official local institution which administers a great collective patrimony mainly in Fiemme Valley, in Trentino. This patrimony is made of a number of woods and pastures, subject to civic use. It also owns a bishop's palace in Cavalese – now its official seat - and some other properties.

PICTURES: Candido Degiampietro's portrait.



And, indeed, it was Candido Degiampietro who, in the late sixties, encouraged his friend Bepi to abandon the job as a decorator and dedicate his time entirely to painting.

And so the happiest and most fruitful phase of his life began.

Painting became easier and more enjoyable for him, although the work they ordered him to do was demanding, due to various reasons: the size of the surfaces, larger than before; to the difficulties he often faced in trying to reconcile his own preferences with his commissioners' ones; to his constant inner drive to refine and improve painting techniques.

As already mentioned, he preferred naturalistic subjects, and mainly those inspired by local environment and fauna, of which he had a wide and sure direct knowledge; anyway he also liked still life subjects.

In some occasions he worked on interior scenes with human figures and, for pure personal amusement or for study purposes, he also put his hand to fiction works, but always of immediate comprehension and with precise references to the practical daily experience of the people who live in close contact with nature.

In 1971, yielding to some friends' insistence, he set up his first personal exhibition in Lumezzane, a mountain town, near Brescia.

This was followed, at the end of the same year, by another personal exhibition in Ronzone, in the upper Val di Non (Non Valley), which was repeated successfully, in the same place, at a short distance.

A few years later Bepi Zanon was able to fulfil one of his life dreams: a small house of his own in Fia zone, at Montebello foot, with a small wood and meadows behind it, next to a back garden and with, in front of it, a very wide panorama that embraced Tesero, the Fiemme Valley with the Avisio river at its bottom and a landscape well beyond Cavalese, the Lagorai mountain range and the Brenta Dolomites in the background.

From the day he was able to set foot in his new home he never tired of calling himself lucky and cared for it with love, embellishing its walls over time with a rich collection of paintings, designed to make it warmer and more welcoming.

And others were the dreams he could satisfy in those years. These included the possibility of painting, with great freedom, following his own aspirations, since he no longer had to comply with his buyers' tastes and preferences; another one was visiting exhibitions and art galleries, especially in Milan and Lombardy, which allowed him to admire and study his favourite painters' masterpieces directly.

Among the friends who he spent long hours with, discussing various topics and inevitably about painting, there were two good local artists,

PICTURES: A pastel drawing of birds and some titles of articles on Abram's publications. Some headlines about Tesero's 1989 exhibition in composition/ Title from "Airone" magazine/ A reproduction with commentary

L'ADIGE, 26.01.1994

Sulle tracce di un calendario



Tesero | Un messaggio dalla mostra di Giuseppe Zanon

Rispettare la natura

Manca da anni all'appuntamento col pubblico ed il suo pubblico di ammiratori chiede l'incontro con l'artista amato, stimato ed apprezzato: finalmente Giuseppe Zanon ha deciso di ripresentarsi con una maxiperiponale che ha tenuto a Tesero nella magna delle scuole fino a domenica scorsa. È stato un grande, atteso ritorno, una grande ed attesa mostra che ha presentato una cinquantina di grandi opere che attraverso il linguaggio della semplicità e della cromatica più indovinata parlano di natura, di ambiente al primo, di flora e di fauna che sono poi il leit motiv dell'intera produzione di Bepi Zanon.

Con questa personale l'artista della montagna per eccellenza ha lanciato un appello che è quello della salvaguardia della natura, dell'ambiente, del mondo in cui viviamo. È stata cosa piacevole ammirare i quadri del Zanon, quelle opere qualificate e scelte che ha offerto in questa sua personale di notevole rilievo, certo una delle più importanti nel panorama artistico regionale dell'estate in corso.

Conoscitore minuzioso, osservatore attento di ciò che lo circonda e lo affascina, Zanon dipinge quello che vede e che sente senza mai lasciarsi travolgere da deviazioni artistiche di stile moderno. Lo scenario è uguale in ogni quadro, ma in ogni quadro è poi diverso: verdi prati, boschi dove regna il silenzio, la tranquillità e gli uccelli che si muovono in questo stupendo scenario tra il sogno e la realtà, tra leggenda ed immaginazione, sono cervi e caprioli, sono galli cedroni e stambecchi, sono insomma i signori della foresta, i principi di una fauna che esiste ancora all'uomo che la minaccia per distruggerla. Ecco, è anche questo il messaggio ecologico di Bepi Zanon che dall'alto del suo potere artistico lancia con questa stupenda personale una da migliaia di persone: una mostra che è una finestra aperta su un mondo che forse può apparire oggi irreali e lontano nel tempo, ma che, ritorna attuale anche attraverso le visioni che l'artista di Tesero ci ha offerto nei suoi quadri, di questi la caratteristica principale è anche la cromatica.

AIRONE MONTAGNA, INVERNO 1995

Un Pittore
in Val di Fiemme

LA TAVOLOZZA DELLA NATURA

Zanon è stato più volte elogiato come «poeta della Natura» e «cantore dell'ambiente». Uno dei suoi più persuasivi 'messaggi ecologici' è affidato ad un dipinto pulito e più che mai alieno da ogni concessione modernistica, «Camosci che va 'n amor» (camosci in amore), in cui possiamo godere uno dei suoi incomparabili cieli foschi dai densi vapori con deboli squarci di azzurro. In questo genere – giustamente definito «sfida al tempo e alla mano dell'uomo che distrugge» – l'artista obbedisce alla sua vocazione più che in altre espressioni artistiche, attingendo a quell'inesausto fonte che il Segantini definiva «limpida e fresca sorgente della Natura eternamente giovane, eternamente bella, eternamente vergine».

Giovanni Battista Daprà, called "Tisti", from Molina di Fiemme and Agnese Ximenes, "la Romanina", a creative woman and talented painter, born in Veneto region to a high cultured family, trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and later a full-fledged Fiemme inhabitant because of her long and stable stay in the valley.

Bepi Zanon had also the chance to meet and to be acquainted with the known painter from Villa Lagarina, Attilio Lasta, whom he esteemed very much for his humanity and for his valuable works, mainly the still life ones.

Another significant and fruitful experience was the one with Sergio Abram, a naturalist, from which an intense collaboration began in the field of scientific divulgation.

Bepi Zanon, as mentioned above, was a great connoisseur of the local fauna and, as far as birds were concerned, was a specialist. Therefore, Sergio Abram, in his turn an established ornithologist, asked him for the execution of a large series of pastel drawings about birds of numerous species, from the wren to the grouse, then used as pictures in two volumes that were very much appreciated and had a wide circulation.

The first, written with Carlo Frapporti, "Uccelli: nidi artificiali e mangiatoie" (Birds: Artificial Nests and Mangers) and the second, "Gallo cedrone" (Capercaillie Rooster). For their fidelity and descriptive effectiveness, these small portraits drew the attention of experts, in Italy and abroad, and gave the author a prominent place among naturalist painters.

These works were followed by other drawings included in papers' articles and inserts, for educational purpose.

In addition, again out of Sergio Abram's interest, Bepi Zanon was entrusted with the creation of some large dioramas for the Tridentine Museum of Natural Sciences, depicting the most representative wild animals of the region, seen in their environments.

In 1989, after a very long wait, the artist made his first solo exhibition in Tesero and it was a success. Rich of about fifty paintings carefully chosen and attentively distributed in the rooms of the Elementary School, it was visited by a considerable number of people, who had come also from far away to admire his works; it had a considerable resonance and various consents.

In the following years, Bepi Zanon went on with his work, pursuing a deeper search for light which, although already a valuable element of his paintings, should, in his opinion, be even more widespread and more true. And he devoted himself with greater conviction to portraits which he had previously made only occasionally.

But in the meantime, getting older and approaching the age of seventy, his eyesight gradually became blurred and create him considerable problems to the point that, after several postponements, he decided to undergo eye-surgery. His vision became limpid and clear again and he seemed to get younger, so that he resumed painting with fervour.

This singular painter, who was secluded in a small village in Trentino, but who made people talk about him with admiration wherever his works arrived, drew the attention of various periodicals with a naturalistic orientation, among which the magazine "Airone montagna"; actually, the November 1995 issue of this magazine with the title "Un pittore in Val di Fiemme. La tavolozza della natura" (A Painter in Fiemme Valley. The Palette of Nature) dedicated him a large and rich report with an essay by Cesare Della Pietà and photos by Vittorio Giannella.

Two months later a small volume by Ferruccio Bravi and Tarcisio Gilmozzi was published, entitled "Parole d'oro di Tesero, Fiemme e *foravia*" (Golden Words of Tesero, Fiemme and Outside) with several pictures taken from Bepi Zanon's tempera paintings and accompanied in part by brilliant observations by Bravi on the author, contents and style.

In 1996, with his children's help, the painter set up another important and successful solo exhibition in Tesero, this time at the Scuola Alberghiera (Hotel Staff School), and another one in the same seat in 1999.

Two years later he was invited to exhibit his paintings in Coredo ,Val di Non ,for the new town hall inauguration and shortly afterwards he returned there for a personal exhibition in the town of Cles.

After that, due to eyesight problems and other physical ailments, Bepi Zanon gradually reduced his activity as a painter, until he abandoned it completely in 2004.

But he did not shut himself up in isolation and continued to browse with curiosity, often through his children's eyes and stories, the great book of nature from which he had always largely drawn inspiration.

When the good season arrived and in good weather, he used to work at a nearby field, which he had bought a few years earlier and that had been turned into a vegetable garden and an orchard.

Here he spent most of his day taking care of its crops, cause of great pride, and above all he was there to observe, with attention and amazement, the miracle of life renewed and to admire and taste once again a leaf perfection, a coloured flower, the fragrance of a fruit, the sun warmth, the voices of the countryside.

Coming back home, he could enjoy other pleasant moments of the world that surrounded him and gave meaning and value to his existence, such as the presence of his wife Valeria, a dear and trusted travel companion for many years and the one of his children who had respect and great devotion for him. They, though had set up home in their turn, were always close to him, as were his grandchildren who returned his deep love for them with equal affection; moreover he took care of his cats and dogs, that he quite often talked to with the secret code of those who know animals well.

In this calm and reassuring environment that could alleviate his ills, he moved towards the final goal of death on October 6, 2006, at the age of 80.

Now Bepi Zanon no longer lives among us, but his paintings remain, scattered throughout Europe and the world. Wherever they are, they still speak of nature and of its poetry, sung by this excellent painter from Tesero.

Paolo Deflorian

Translation and notes by Laura Montanari