

Bepi Zanon

(biographical infos adapted from bepizanon.it website and from Paolo Deflorian's essay "Bepi Zanon, the Painter of Nature".)

Giuseppe, called *Bepi*, Zanon (Tesero, March 14, 1926 - Tesero, October 6, 2006), was a painter from the Italian territory of Trentino with a specific vocation for naturalistic subjects, mainly those inspired by the nature and fauna of the Dolomites of which he had a deep knowledge. He also loved to portray family and rural life scenes of the past and country settings.

Biography



Born into a modest family and second son of six, he showed a talent for painting from an early age. As he could not follow a formal course of study because of his father's untimely death at the age of 52, he had to work, still very young, to help his family, adapting to a number of jobs. Self-taught by necessity, he was able to create a completely personal style also inspired by contemporary art (Divisionism, Macchiaioli and Lombard Realism). He studied the various tendencies of these artists, but their urban references were largely alien to his personality. In fact for him the real world - with which human beings had to try to reconcile themselves and live in full harmony so to enjoy all its aspects, changes and

innumerable living creatures - was a natural one, made of woods, waters, plants, mountains, sky, animals and human beings of a rural past; they had to be observed in silence with deep and patient attention, focusing on the magic coloured atmosphere of Autumn and Spring and then put back on his palette enhancing these beauties through a complex and delicate process of regeneration.

With difficulty, but determined, Bepi Zanon, step by step, emerged as an artist, both locally and nationally, for the high quality of his vast production and careful and refined painting technique. He did not follow ephemeral trends, nor sought easy fame; he wished not to be subject to overly binding conditions and loved practicing his art in a proper and personal way.



He was a hunter too, according to an old family tradition, but, in hindsight, that appears to have been a 'happy fault', since it led him to tirelessly investigate the secret animal life and continually provided his art with contents and stimuli for a remarkable pictorial production which received resonance and praise.

He noted and frankly remarked with disappointment that the sense and taste for

measure, proportion and harmony was gradually fading in all fields, which was largely due to modern society's estrangement from direct observation and study of nature and its ruling laws.

Bepi Zanon no longer lives among us, but his works remain, and they, wherever scattered, still appease and nourish the watcher's eyes and minds through a poem in images, sung by this outstanding painter from a very small mountain town in Trentino.

The Years after the War

In the postwar period Bepi Zanon began to paint small paintings on commission, at the same time decorating wooden ornamental objects with the technique of pyrography on wood. Later, he started painting subjects of a larger size in tempera on plywood panels.

Exhibitions and Collaborations as an Illustrator



A shy character, it was only between 1965 and 1967 that he began to take part in some collective exhibitions at local and regional level; his ability in naturalistic subjects earned him a collaboration with the magazine "Diana" - edited by the Olimpia publishing house - on which several of his paintings and drawings were published. Thanks to the latter activity, from 1968 until 2003, many of his paintings were kept in the picture gallery of the Florentine publisher Enrico Vallecchi, owner of a known publishing house.

In 1971 he set up his first solo exhibition in Lumezzane (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 a short time later.

In the 1980s he was entrusted with the creation of some large dioramas for the Museo Tridentino di Scienze Naturali (Tridentine Museum of Natural Sciences), depicting the most representative wild animals of the region in their environments.

He also produced a series of pastel drawings about birds belonging to numerous species, for the illustration of two volumes aimed at ornithology lovers. [1], [2].

In 1989 the artist made his first solo exposition in his native Tesero with about fifty works.

The magazine "Airone Montagna", in its November 1995 issue, dedicated an extensive article to him entitled *Un pittore in Val di Fiemme. La tavolozza della Natura* (A Painter in Fiemme Valley. The Palette of Nature) written by Cesare Della Pietà and with photos by Vittorio Giannella.

In 1996 a book was published with many pictures taken from Bepi Zanon's tempera paintings. [3]

In 1996, and then in 1999, two personal exhibitions were held again in Tesero. Two years later he was invited to show his paintings in Coredo, Val di Non (Non Valley), on the occasion of the

new town hall inauguration and - a short time later - he came back to this valley for a personal exposition in Cles.

The Last Years and Exhibitions after Death

Later on, growing older and with eyesight problems, the artist reduced his activity until he retired completely in 2004. He died in his home in Tesero on October 6, 2006, aged eighty. After his death several exhibitions were set up.

Among the most significant ones:

- in 2011 “La natura trentina nelle opere di Bepi Zanon” (Trentino Nature in Bepi Zanon’s Works) at the Museo Tridentino di Scienze Naturali, Trento[4];
- In 2016 and 2017, several works were showed in the exhibition halls of Riva del Garda; that was organized - among others - by the Civic Museum of Natural History of Jesolo;
- from December 2015 to September 2016 “Il Pittore della natura” (The Painter of Nature), at Cavalese Palazzo della Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme (Magnificent Community of Fiemme Building)[5].
- In 2017 “Bepi Zanon, il pittore della natura” (Bepi Zanon, the Painter of Nature) at Palazzo Trentini, Trento, under the patronage of the Autonomous Province of Trento.

Bepi Zanon's works, in addition to the above mentioned dioramas at the Tridentine Museum of Natural Sciences, are currently kept in the Picture gallery of the Civic Museum of Natural History in Jesolo. Two books have also been printed, the last one in 2017 was supervised by the poet Renzo Francescotti [7], equipped with biographical notes and an extensive reproduction of his main paintings.

Notes

[1] Sergio Abram, Carlo Frapporti: *Uccelli: nidi artificiali e mangiatoie*, Manfrini Editore, 1988, ISBN: 8870243362

[2] Sergio Abram, *Gallo Cedrone*, Editrice Trentino, 1987, EAN: 2565666088277

[3] Ferruccio Bravi, Tarcisio Gilmozzi, *Parole d'oro di Tesero, Fiemme e Föravía: divagazioni fra lingua e tradizione*. Editore: Centro di studi atesini, 1996, EAN 2560031516331

[4] http://www.mtsn.tn.it/newsletter/e-news_continualeggere.asp?id=136

[5] <https://www.cultura.trentino.it/Appuntamenti/Bepi-Zanon.-Il-pittore-della-natura>

[6] <https://www.bepizanon.it/mostra-a-palazzo-trentini/>

[7] <https://www.giornaletrentino.it/cronaca/trento/un-libro-per-onorare-il-pittore-bepi-zanon-1.1216634>

Bibliography

- P. Deflorian et al., *Bepi Zanon, il pittore della natura*, Trento, Grafiche Futura srl, 2009. English translation by Laura Montanari.
- Renzo Francescotti, *Bepi Zanon, il pittore della natura selvaggia*, Trento, Tipografia Alcione, 2017

External Links

Official website: <https://www.bepizanon.it/>