
Corrado Costa

Parma, January 1988

Dear Guerrazzi,

Finally, the art critic—if they are to speak about your exhibition—will have to step outside their usual language. You are the first painter of the Neo-Counter-Reformation, and as such, you demand a standard of judgment befitting the Neo-Counter-Reformation.

I see you as Veronese standing before his judges. Do you think they spoke of tones, hues, volumes, perspectives? They talked about Jesus, His place at the table, why there was a dog, whether Saint John was taller than the Madonna, and so forth.

The Critic, finally—when faced with your paintings—will have to adopt the language of bureaucrats dealing with zoning laws: in your paintings, is Berlinguer politically taller than Andreotti? Are the representatives of smaller parties depicted perspectively and politically as smaller, rendered in lesser proportions? Painting religious subjects puts you at risk of severe criticism: is Andreotti's halo painted larger than Paietta's? Have you taken into account that “secular figures don't have halos”?

What can I do for you, Guerrazzi? I can only outline the critical developments you're likely to face, the kinds of questions you must be prepared to answer once you start artistically portraying parliamentary figures:

The artistic proposition of Vincenzo Guerrazzi likely enhances its persuasive power by imbuing itself with polemical meanings against the Christian Democrats and the Communists. However, insofar as the natural boundaries of art are pushed, it's easy to observe that real pictorial spaces cannot be created merely by altering the visage of the

subject to amplify the polemical vigor. Fundamental issues (read: relationships between the characters) persist, and ultimately, it is with those that one must contend.

For example, the Christian Democrats have always acknowledged and continue to acknowledge, naturally, the existence of a secular culture that is quite significant in Italian historical evolution. This component has a major role, which is certainly more substantial than the quantitative attribution expressed in pictorial terms by Guerrazzi.

Be careful, Guerrazzi, for you might find yourself facing criticism of this kind: Are you sure you've got the measurements, dimensions, volumes, and quantitative attributions in square centimeters right? Have you always assigned the six parties proportional space?

Have the representatives of the relatively dominant parties been placed in the upper (noble) part of the painting? Are you sure? If you're not sure, tremble.

****CORRADO COSTA****

Reggio Emilia

May 20, 1980

The Music of Swallows and Terrestrial Musicians

The painting that Vincenzo Guerrazzi dedicated to Parma is a metaphorical, allegorical work in which figures from the cultural, economic, and entertainment spheres of both the past and present—those who have most profoundly impacted the city's cultural evolution and growth—are depicted. Guerrazzi's art stimulates public and critical interest through his choice of themes and colors. He draws inspiration from the Renaissance. However, while great Renaissance painters worked in service of a court or prince, Guerrazzi works for no court. He observes his time and describes it.

Like Paolo Uccello and Andrea del Castagno, his interest lies solely in highlighting the qualities of his characters, emphasizing their vital energy through the strength of color, light, and the compelling intensity of their expressions.

His painting is neither a sugary representation of “Top of the Class” nor an exaltation; it is a depiction of celebration and joy.

This painting is like a large mirror reflecting a possible representation of the city. The foreground is dedicated to the sky intersecting between the Cathedral and the Baptistery, collecting, from the azure and the light spilling in from the right, the flight of swallows. The icons appear as an infinite world where silence is suddenly broken by the sound of the orchestra.

The musicians are captured as they observe their reflection and recognize themselves. Each holds a musical instrument, reminiscent of the choruses of Fra Angelico, except that while angelic musicians hover in lofty heights, here the musicians are firmly grounded.

If we overlay a transparent sheet with a musical staff on the painting, the swallows will take the place of notes to compose the symphony of the city. This has already happened in a film by Russian director Alexandrov, where the camera lingered on telegraph wires with swallows lined up, while the soundtrack played the music of the swallows, with a trill accompanying notes as they soared into flight.

According to Guerrazzi, the music of Parma is written in the sky, and the earthly musicians attempt to capture its spirit. Just as cathedral images were once freely drawn from Scripture, so too today Guerrazzi draws his motifs from contemporary culture.

In the painting, each figure maintains their strong personality endowed with specialized abilities. Artistically, they are derived from various figurative repertoires freely drawn from history, fashion, economics, politics, and labor unions.

Beyond the realm of current events, each person, in relation to the others, becomes the product of a symbolic image. They express humanity's desire before the mirror: to immortalize their figure in time.

Few have had the opportunity to inaugurate their own monument. Guerrazzi offers this chance. If he chooses you, you witness, perhaps peeking from behind another's shoulder, the mechanism of artistic creation.

Guerrazzi goes beyond the photographs of a weekly magazine, which are nothing more than blueprints for a future monument, current events waiting to become history.

The *Festa di Parma* is a painting full of colors reminiscent of an endless Nordic spring, excited by the flavor of fruits that dissolve in the mouth and evoke the scent of flowers.

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Let me know if you need further clarification!