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****The Paintings of Vincenzo Guerrazzi****

Vincenzo Guerrazzi's paintings elicit extreme reactions: they are either destroyed with kicks or embraced with eyes full of admiration. We choose the embrace, precisely because Guerrazzi is an ungovernable character. Were he not, he would be just another grim and worn-out Calabrian forever at odds with the world. The factory, the lathe, the milling machine, the cafeteria, the locker, and the artificial neon of the outskirts took his years but failed to assassinate his mind.

Yet the danger was there: factories prepare for massacres day by day, designing plans that lead to clownish buffoonery, grinding cells into pulp, infecting dreams, and putting the desire for freedom on hold. Guerrazzi was at great risk, for the factory latched onto his flesh. The more his proletarian romanticism emerged (and Guerrazzi never shied away from being a poet), the more the monster of productivity spat its black saliva. His youthful years were forged in the human struggle of Guerrazzi's life and now serve to show us where justice has hidden itself. The pampered offspring of wealth, dusted with talcum powder and privilege, have neither known Guerrazzi nor will they ever.

Guerrazzi's ungovernability is like the sword of the avenging angel, descending upon the perfumed wool of the rich without slaughtering angels. It does not kill but threatens; it does not deform but warns. Thus, it is irrelevant to distinguish between the character and the man—distinctions that reek of academic mildew and managerial pomposity. Vincenzo Guerrazzi has endured physical labor, digested its stench, and absorbed the vocabulary of the "industrial complex." He is immune to such trivial distinctions.

A man in his unity; a character only for those who amuse themselves with aesthetics or false mental acrobatics. Naturally, the infernal ring of critics, members of dreary literary clubs, the Saint Louises of delirious graphomania, and the notables awarding literary prizes between a sofa and a drink wish to make Guerrazzi, the character, perform a bear dance. The more he dances, the more they laugh; the more he moves, the sharper their knives, ready to strike at the one who dared open the temple doors, whip the merchants, and confront the cowards and traitors.

How amusing would Guerrazzi's bear dance be to such fauna! What orchestral harmonies, what melodious violin movements, performed over the fabric and flesh of the ex-Ansaldo worker! What an edifying Sunday spectacle for priests who pocket the gospel of literature and the formula of magical painting!

But Guerrazzi's work does not cater to this. His paintings, documents of labor and defiance, stand as forty compositions—pages of life narrated in the language of color, wielded by an artist who promised his fellow workers never to sully his soul or lose his face. Between his books and his paintings, there is no leap, no break, no deviation. The single thread that conveyed words in his books now offers a plastic verb in his paintings.

In every painting, Guerrazzi delivers sharp editorials, at times gripping the fundamental themes with cutting irony. Consider the painting depicting a reader's head smashing through a copy of **L'Unità**, precisely where the headline "Austerity" dominates. This painting encapsulates a powerful critique, placing Guerrazzi among those who reject hollow appeals and insincere implorations.

Other works, such as **La Non Sfiducia** (**No Confidence**), demonstrate a bitterly ironic synthesis: a wedding cake topped with a non-chaste union of the cross and Lenin, while the table features figures like Berlinguer and Zaccagnini. Here, Guerrazzi denounces the falsifications imposed by political hierarchies.

In **Eurocommunism**, Guerrazzi's critique reaches its peak. A triumphant square hosts political, industrial, religious, and financial luminaries—figures like Aldo Moro, Alcide De Gasperi, and even Marx, Lenin, and Engels, imprisoned spectrally, as the working class is glaringly absent. It is a celebration without its beating heart, a spine-less event. Guerrazzi's artistry underscores this void, exposing the systematic falsifications perpetrated by those in power.

Paintings like **Abortion in the Factory** go further, highlighting the bleak reality of working-class women, as a pool of blood stains the factory floor—a stark indictment of both societal hypocrisy and the oppressive conditions of working women.

Similarly, works like **Via Operai** (**Workers' Way**) depict a sea of umbrellas over exhausted workers, juxtaposed with advertisements luring them to the seductive escapism of Hawaii. Such grotesque contrasts are essential to Guerrazzi's relentless storytelling, which spares no element of life.

Through his unrelenting narrative, Guerrazzi challenges the void of popular art, rejecting both the riddles of elitist culture and the empty spectacles of commercialism. His art embodies the grassroots simplicity and sincerity of everyday protest, providing a militant yet refined response to a society rich in deception but poor in truth.

In his paintings, Guerrazzi offers a raw and honest testament, continuing the creative journey toward the signs and lights of a new world—one where the old worker will reopen his eyes, forever silencing the slogans of deceit and hypocrisy.