

In the artistic "doing" of Roberto Sanesi there is as if there were a subtle deception, the substance or appearance of which proves to be far removed from the vocation towards art in a critic, that is, from the endogenous amusement which is connected there. It is not a question – and with irony – of simply looking for diversity in a field which is apparently remote from one's usual expression (in Sanesi's case, however, the fields are manifold: poetry, translations, criticism and teaching), nor that of the "arrogant" shifting of a grid of aesthetic-critical values.

The diversity of "doing" (or making) art for Sanesi consists in an anomalous choice which appears to be of extremely rare or of no attendance at all on the part of other artists. Not even by those who practice visual poetry or "scriptural" graphics.

In fact, and as Guido Ballo has put it, "he continues to write". Rather, "to write in colour", adding another plane of reading to an old and perfect "dominion of the word" of his. Certainly, he "uses" poetry which has always been – and continues to be – his fundamental work and from which he set out even in his earliest pictorial works (dating to the 1960's), and this in a way which certainly approaches visual art from which he has come to detach himself, risking to an every greater extent, lucidly privileging the context with respect to the text.

What does this mean? Quite simply that the artist originally "accumulated" text upon text, signs and meanings, rewriting and superimposing diverse writings, colours and heights of individual words or letters, often leaving it to the text or texts to take on their own semblance of readability (whatever this might be). He subsequently came to restrict the halo of poetry, de-structuring the text of reference and, at the same time, broadening his pictorial *alter ego*, decom-

posing the verses and finally the very words themselves.

Essentially speaking, Sanesi's art still originates (as it has always done) from the poetry of Shakespeare or John Donne. Yet if it is true that all of the modern experimenting in poetry began with the funambulatory *Coup de dés* by Mallarmé, in the case of the Milanese artist-poet one must absolutely conclude that every painting of his is – and remains – a painting in the very same moment that it assumes whatever possible (residual) poetic responsibility.

Neither can one say that we are dealing with "art-poetry" because the art value remains indelibly fixed in spaces which are increasingly more broad and extended, in grand vacuums (that is: existential questions), in coloured spots and marks dominated by the suggestion in which they appear: here a word that is still legible in Sanesi's cursive writing; there one, two, ten letters, an hail of hieroglyphics, therefore involving both the most enigmatic level of linguistics as well as the evocative quality of art.

Finally one realizes the impossibility – except in minimum measure – of intending or rendering the indissoluble interweaving for which the painting also functions as poetry, while poetry in its own right (having disappeared or "on the trajectory of the disappearance" which is increasingly more accentuated) for some unknown reason works by way – or through – pictorial sight: no longer reading but memory, indelible charm, sin of dream and of emotion. Precisely in this way, as two-fold vector, the object-painting lays hold and seduces.

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Gilberto Finzi

(English translation by Howard Rodger MacLean)



PER INFINITE PIANURE, 1991, cm 71×54, mixed media



CAHIER D'ISABELLE RIMBAUD, 1991, cm 71,5x53, mixed media



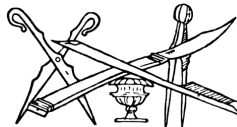
QUATTRO QUARTETTI (OMAGGIO A T.S. ELIOT), 1991, cm 79×72,3,
 Indian ink and pencil on paper laid down on canvas

ROBERTO SANESI

Roberto Sanesi (Milan, 1930), poet, literary and art critic,
professor of Comparative Literature at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan.

Winner of the Byron Award in 1960, he spent an academic year
at the University as a poetry professor. He began his activity of "visual poetry"
in the same year, and apart many one-man shows he exhibited
in important collective art manifestations, in Italy as well in Great Britain,
Belgium, Canada, USA, Brazil, Taiwan, Japan.

He received the 1993 European Poetry Prize,
and his poems are translated and published in France, Great Britain, USA,
Romania, Spain, Japan, etc. He is also a well known scholar of
English and American literature, and editor in Italy of the complete works
of T.S. Eliot, the *Paradise Lost* of J. Milton, and selected
poems of W. Whitman, W. Blake, D. Thomas, H. Crane, E.E. Cummings,
P.B. Shelley and many others. The quality of his "visual writing"
depends on his manifold experience in the fields of art and literature.



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