

λάθε βιώσας

BONARIA MANCA

Antonella Vicini

Into the jungle

Vibrant the life flows on the walls, the ceilings, the doors of Bonaria Manca's house.

Uninterrupted run the years of her life, the people she has met, the family she still cherishes both in her memory and in her daily life.

Watching her paintings gives the feeling of plunging straight into her heart, a jungle of emotions, events, memories, where everything happens simultaneously in a circular time out of normal linear conventions.

Episodes of her life are painted next to the new testament life of Jesus, from his birth to the beautiful cross that would look perfect in a gothic church, each element becomes both earthly and celestial at the same time, so that the humble events of daily life acquire both fantastic and divine nature, while the sacred story of the Messiah takes on the quality of human living.

The dancers under the stars follow an ancient repetitive and haunting tune, while Bonaria's parents get warm sitting near her fireplace, since the winter used to be so cold back home.

The houses in the many villages depicted on the walls huddle up around the main scenes, while few traits show the empty canvas that will be filled with the joy of the newlywed on a beautiful canvas.

Life, life and more life pours out of Bonaria's art, without constraints, without reserves, with total adherence and joyful participation.

I was stunned into silence the first time I saw such bounty of life, such abundance of imagination and courage, her paintings made the house alive, the stories wanted to be told, seen and accepted. I left in tears for the impact her work had had on me. I let time go by until I could face again her intensity, here below you will find some of her knowledge.

Like a wise woman of long ago, Bonaria speaks in short sentences, rich in meaning, telling some of her life stories, some sparkle of hard earned wisdom:

“The hands of an embroiderer should not get dirty with menial work, looking after animals, cleaning or cooking.”

(In this way she was teased by her relatives, yet she did just so until one day:)

Life exploded inside me and I had to follow it, even if I didn't understand it.

Nature is in me and I believed in it.

Usually we see it: this moment of life just before our eyes, but we don't believe it. I did and, in my simple way, I painted it, thus following God's project. So I have lived fully the life God has given me.

We are here to share what we have, we cannot just keep it to ourselves.

We are like a bunch of leaves, we do not know where we are going.

We are forever walking: this is our existence.



Originally from Sardinia (Orune, Nuoro), Bonaria comes from a very big family with many brothers and sisters, everything was simple back then, however poor.

Bonaria has a long history as both embroiderer and shepherd woman, therefore nature and manual labour are integral parts of the poetic paintings both on the walls and on canvas. She came to her actual residence in Tuscania in 1951 and never moved away. Here her inspiration took over, as she described above and her life was filled with images and stories.

Important art historians and experts have dedicated her intense pages on several publications and they have organized exhibitions in Italy and abroad.

People like Bonaria are precious, they shine in the life of any person who may meet them. Regardless of how much art we can understand or appreciate, we are able to see her greatness and the depth of her presence in life.

On my first and during my most recent visit with Bonaria, she said her farewell with a beautiful song that came spontaneously to her, it was a touching and profound moment, a hymn to life in all its beauty and greatness, beyond our limitations.

I do believe art is a great healer, certainly art has made her whole, so that Bonaria could grace the world with her numerous works of art.

Antonella Vicini

λάθε βιώσας (*living in hiding*)

Epicurus considered friendship the highest good, both materially and spiritually. However friendship can only be cultivated in a small circle, away from the storms of life.

The motto: Live in hiding (away from the crowd) is especially appropriate for art that often hides from the glitter of the media market, in order to achieve peace of mind and greatness of spirit. Last year I started this journey introducing you to a secluded piece of land where several artists have chosen to live and work, following the ancient motto of Epicurus in their own ways.



Inspired by Bonaria's art I have created this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwCij1e4UT0&feature=youtu.be>

This is Bonaria's website organized and managed by her niece Paola Manca, she is also the photographer for all the artist's work you will see in the next pages. <http://www.bonariamanca.it/>

List of the art work shown in the following pages:

1. I Pastori e la ricotta, Sheperds making ricotta cheese, fresco
2. Genius Loci et Lares, fresco, Sardinian Dance, detail
3. The Birth fresco
4. Nativity, fresco
5. Blessed are the meek, fresco
6. Il porto preistorico, The prehistoric port, 90's
7. Il vaso di fiori, The flower vase, 1985
8. Bonaria porta i fiori ai suoi cari, Bonaria carries flowers for her loved ones, 90's
9. Battesimo, Baptism, 1999
10. L'armatore, 90's

From 1 to 5 we enter into Bonaria's house with its walls and ceilings covered in stories, from 6 to 10 I have chosen a very small selection of her canvas. Consider these just a taste of her work.

