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**TORRE DELLE ARTI BELLAGIO**

Salita Plinio, 25 Bellagio – Como

**BETTO LOTTI (1894 – 1977)**

**OF ART AND LIFE**

*curated by Luigi Cavadini*

**29 April – 21 May 2023**

**Opening Saturday, 29 April, 17:00**

*Event dedicated to 1st May, International Workers’ Day*

press release, 26/04/2023

From **29 April to 21 May 2023**, the **Torre delle Arti in Bellagio** will host the exhibition ***Betto Lotti (1894 – 1977): Of Art and Life***, curated by Luigi Cavadini. Through a selection of forty works, the exhibition explores some of the themes and techniques that characterised Betto Lotti’s artistic production, which was closely linked to the relationship between art and everyday life; in particular, the theme of work, which is presented from different points of view in the three sections that form the exhibition.

The opening, on Saturday 29 April at 17:00, centres on the theme of work, with an event dedicated to the 1st May, International Workers' Day.

The exhibition has been organised by Daniele Lotti and Lauretta Scicchitano Lotti’s *LottiArt*, with the patronage of the Municipality of Bellagio and in collaboration with the Torre delle Arti Cultural Association. It commences with a focus on **Twentieth-century arts and crafts.** Lotti depicts broad open spaces with soft, nuanced brushstrokes that create atmospheres imbued with a sense of suspended time, where work punctuates the rhythms of the day. This is true of *Chioggia*, a watercolour from 1950 that portrays a group of fishermen at work on the pier, and also *Contadini* [Farmworkers] (1940), or again *Le Mondine* [Female Farmworkers], a work in ink in which the figures, rendered with a few skilful strokes, narrate the natural movements and simplicity that characterised rural life at the time.

In his portrayal of interior spaces, such as the tavern, the tailor’s workshop or the artist’s studio, Lotti created works that transcend the simple representation of settings, and through his masterly handling of light and colour, combined with his command of numerous techniques, among them watercolour, Indian ink and oil paint, he recreated situations linked to a recent past.

The intermediate space of the tower hosts **Stories of toil and beauty** in which the universe of female labour is recounted with sensitivity and respect. In these works of great expressiveness and simplicity of execution, bodies engaged in hard daily work emerge from a minimum of drawn lines, as in *La Pescivendola* [The Fishseller] (1927) a work in sanguine, or *Donne al Pozzo* [Women at the Well] (1944), an Indian ink watercolour. Lotti outlines the stories of daily work with the same virtuosity and attention he devotes to the embrace between a mother and her child, *Madre* [Mother] (1966), and with the same expressive lightness as in *Dame dans le vent* (1925), in which sinuous lines, sharp shadows and flat backgrounds depict a street with a metaphysical quality, in which a female figure is blown by the wind.

With this section dedicated to **women**, *LottiArt* supports *Telefono Donna Como*, a voluntary association operating in the province of Como since 1991 as a **place for listening**, **meeting** and **protection** for all Italian and foreign women who suffer violence and abuse.

The exhibition ends in a room dedicated to **Large construction sites from the early twentieth century**. Large format drawings and etchings, such as *I costruttori* [The Builders] (1914), *Disarmo* [Disarmament] (1914) and *Nel cantiere* [On Site] (1916), capture the vitality and dynamism that characterised the early years of the twentieth century. As the curator **Luigi Cavadini** comments:

*‘We are in the middle of the1920s. Lotti was twenty years old or a little more and his draughtsmanship was already particularly mature. His lines and drawing are no longer solely products of the Academy but have acquired a freshness and descriptive capacity that in the black and white of a pencil (and in his etchings) have found a secure anchorage for transcending simple representation. A close look at these works reveals a certain spirit typical of Futurism, recognisable in the complexity of the construction sites and in the compelling dynamism of the builders at work.’*

**Biographical notes.** Betto Lotti (1894 – 1977) was born in Taggia (Imperia). He attended the art high school in Venice and later enrolled at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence where he befriended Ottone Rosai. After completing his studies, he continued his artistic activity, in which charcoal, oils, watercolour and engraving were his favourite techniques. He associated with artists such as Carrà, Soffici, Papini and Campana, with whom he shared exciting years of cultural and artistic intensity. From his very first works in group exhibitions of etchings, Lotti demonstrated a precocious natural inclination for this technique and obtained important recognition. At his first exhibition with Rosai in Florence in 1913, the two artists’ work was highly commended by Marinetti, Boccioni, Carrà, Papini and Soffici.

During the First World War he was interned in a concentration camp in Austria, where he continued to paint. In 1918 he returned to Florence and frequented the lively artistic atmosphere of the historic Giubbe Rosse café. During those years Lotti worked as a successful journalist, illustrator and poster artist in Italy and abroad. In 1936, he was appointed to the Chair of Drawing in Como, where he moved with his family. During the course of almost 40 years in Como, Lotti became well acquainted with the Como abstract artists and consolidated his ties with Mario Radice, Manlio Rho, Aldo Galli and Carla Badiali, exponents of the historic ‘Como Group’. Although he did not subscribe to the theories of his abstractionist friends, he was nonetheless undoubtedly influenced by them.

His painting became sharper and more attentive to form. He took part in group and solo exhibitions in institutional and private venues and was considered an important figure on the art scene. His died suddenly in Como on 13 April 1977.

During his career he received awards and prizes, and his work can be found in public and private collections, among them the Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli of the Municipality of Milan, the Pinacoteca Civica in Como and the Museo Nazionale Collezione Salce in Treviso. Numerous articles, catalogues and critical texts have been published on his work, including ones by Luciano Caramel, Philippe Daverio, Raffaele De Grada and Elena Pontiggia.

**Exhibition details**

**Title** Betto Lotti (1894 – 1977). Di arte e di vita

**Curated by** Luigi Cavadini

**Venue** Torre delle Arti Bellagio, salita Plinio, 25 Bellagio - Como

**Dates** 29 April – 21 May 2023

**Opening** Saturday 29 April, 17:00

**Opening hours** Monday – Friday, 10:30 – 13:30 / 14:30 – 17:30 | Saturday – Sunday 11:00 – 18:00

**Free admission**

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