

JEUX

INKS AND WATERCOLORS
BY LUCIO FANTI



1. *Toro, Éventail*, 2016 © Lucio Fanti

EXHIBITION FROM SEPTEMBER 3 TO NOVEMBER 26, 2016

PREVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION ON SEPTEMBER 3, 2016
FROM 6 PM TO 8.30 PM

From September 3rd to November 26th, 2016, FLAIR Galerie presents “Jeux”, watercolors and colored inks by painter and set designer Lucio Fanti. A leaping bull, dreaming dog, jagged-edged black horse, half-rooster and half-donkey chimera, the odd fly or bee as an incongruous presence here or there... this unique bestiary examines, surprises, amuses. Romanticism, poetry, history and drolleries are mingled, always with a proper dose of irony, a characteristic of Lucio Fanti's work. These variations on a theme are indeed diverting and quite casually reveal many secrets about their maker. Come play.

Lucio Fanti has painted nature, unsettling seas and skies, trees and pylons, some “urban water lilies”, vines and gigantic bunches of grapes. He has also hijacked soviet imagery, built houses of cards and labyrinths. Scores of works that have earned for this Italian, who arrived in France in 1965, the praises of Régis Debray, Jorge Semprun, Louis Althusser, and Italo Calvino, among others. In his world, man barely makes an appearance: a bust, a statue, a ghost, a puppet.

And animals? They are not more palpably depicted : barely a bull in a blur, the shadows of two dogs before a bunch of grapes, or dogs seen from behind,

absorbed in the contemplation of a sunset or starry night. Overwhelmingly they recall Caspar David Friedrich's *Evening Landscape with Two Men*, a famous painting by the master of German romanticism so admired by Lucio Fanti. However, he does not dwell on it. Is Lucio Fanti a romantic ? Certainly, but one filled with irony. Touched by the enigma of a landscape or the silence of infinite space? With a few animals cleverly posited in the scene, he dubs his watercolors, *Sense of Nature or Dog Contemplating Canis Major*. A frequent defense of the serious artist who takes almost nothing seriously, especially what he calls “artistry”. He is a painter looking for the flipside of everything he sees, even words. By choice, he has always remained an outsider. Lucio Fanti and the art of outfoxing.

But let's get back to tracking animals. Absent in his paintings, they were nevertheless important to their author who confessed to having a “misanthropic side” and “a great tenderness for anything not human”. So much so that, years ago, he imagined and legally registered the name of a newspaper to be called “Le Chien Diplomatique”, exclusively dedicated to news concerning the animal world. In an idiosyncratic way, without hammering or being a ham, he dealt with the question of our rapport with animals. He acknowledged them.

.../...

Today, Lucio Fanti plays with animals and, thanks to them, we pick up the puzzle pieces of a self-portrait, a notebook. Bulls call to mind the Camargue, where he owned a mazel (a small Provençal cottage), and the bullfighting that fascinated him. Why not paint them on a folding fan, a geometric form he studied relentlessly ? Yes, why not ? Italy also features in a dark horseman, reminiscent of Chirico, next to which Lucio Fanti sets the famous six-legged dog, logo of an Italian oil company, ENI. Ancient Rome is at the center of an ink drawing, where we vaguely decipher the letters of the renowned "Cave Canem" from Pompei, an intriguing warning since "beware" also means "take care" of the dog. Needless to say, the painted letter is a theme as dear to the heart of our author, as is the play of light and shadow. Russia is represented in a portrait resembling Pavlov. But the scientist, who used dogs to study conditioning, is now a dog too. A wink from Fanti to Charles Le Brun or the rock band, Pavlov's Dog. Go figure...

Out of this ubiquitous wit, it would be wrong to label Lucio Fanti flippant particularly in terms of technique. He remains outside of the mainstream, crafting his work in a classic, even academic, style. The ultimate allusion here is The Young Hare by Dürer. Always important for Fanti is not the interpretation of a subject but its representation. By painting an iris, he seeks not his own painting but the flower, "a wonder of nature in itself". He crowns the iris with a bee, a highly symbolic insect not noticed straightaway. This detail is the secret subject of the image nevertheless, which becomes primordial by lending the image its title: The Bee.

One is reminded of those painters in the 15th and 16th century, who put a minuscule fly in their paintings. A token of their virtuosity, the musca depicta (the painted fly) also stood for the ephemeral and made the painting much more a vanitas. Lucio Fanti may have had that in mind. Unless all this is mere surmise, a delusional interpretation. Just another game this exhibition invites you to play..

Marie-Françoise Leclère, 2016

Traduction d'Ilsa Carter et Pierre Guglielmina

BIOGRAPHY OF LUCIO FANTI

Born in Bologna, Italy, in 1945, after studying in London, Lucio Fanti settled in Paris in 1965. As early as 1968, he took part in the Salon de la Jeune Peinture, joining the painters of "Figuration Narrative", the movement formed by Gérard Gassiot-Talabot. From there followed numberless exhibitions, solo or collective, in Paris, Rome, Milan, Venice, Nîmes, Grenoble, Le Cailar et Budapest.

At the same time, beginning in 1973, Lucio Fanti would create more than thirty theater and opera sets for well-known European directors, including Jean-Pierre Vincent, Jean Jourdheuil, Ermanno Olmi, Klaus Michael Grüber, Bernard Sobel, Luc Bondy and Peter Stein. Sets that would be seen successively in Paris, Berlin, Brussels, Salzburg, Lyon, Cardiff, Barcelona, Bergamo and London. In 1986, he would receive the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Set Design of the Year by The Society of London Theatre.

By 2011, a double retrospective was dedicated Lucio Fanti at the Musée Estrine in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence: his paintings exhibited in the museum and his sets displayed in the Library. Last year, he created the set for Gorki's Summerfolk, staged by Gérard Desarthe at La Comédie Française. At the moment, Lucio Fanti is designing sets for a production by Bernard Sobel.



2. Pavlov's Dog, 2016 © Lucio Fanti

VISUALS FREE OF RIGHTS FOR THE PRESS

1. *Toro, Éventail*, 2016 (page 1)
Watercolor on Arches paper
33 x 63 cm
© Lucio Fanti

2. *Pavlov's Dog*, 2016 (page 4)
Watercolor on Arches paper
39 x 29 cm
© Lucio Fanti

3. *Du Coq à l'Âne*, 2016
Watercolor on Arches paper
48 x 58 cm
© Lucio Fanti

4. *Abelle*, 2016
Watercolor and oil
on Arches paper
57 x 38 cm
© Lucio Fanti

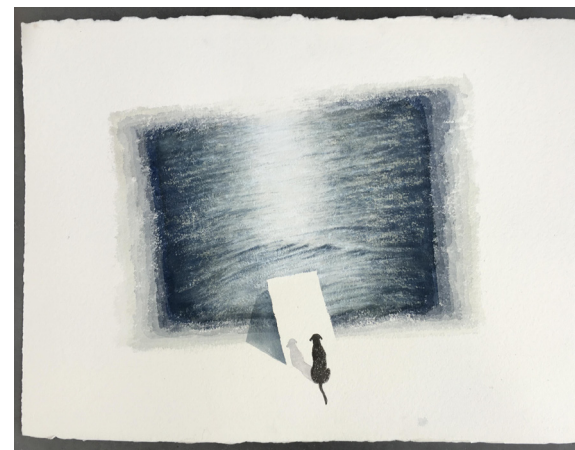
5. *Le sentiment de la nature*, 2016
Watercolor on Arches paper
58 x 77 cm
© Lucio Fanti



3. © Lucio Fanti



4. © Lucio Fanti



5. © Lucio Fanti

On request at FLAIR Galerie



LA GALERIE

FLAIR Galerie, Art Gallery dedicated to animals, situated in the historic heart of the city of Arles, offers exhibitions of artists, a collection of contemporary art objects specially designed for the gallery, and a selection of art books and reviews.

FLAIR Galerie has recently opened an online store enabling to acquire a selection of artworks presented at the gallery.

FLAIR Galerie is a member of the Arles Contemporain network. 

FLAIR GALERIE'S EXHIBITIONS

2016

Zoom, photographs by Dolorès Marat

Dogland, illustrations by Lucy Marshall

Impatience, photographs by Jean-François Spricigo

2015

A special breed, paintings by Jenifer Corker, sculptures by Holy Smoke

All Friends, drawings and paintings by Baltasar Dürrbach

Tout Bêtement, photographs by Nicolas Guilbert, sculptures by Marie Christophe

Le loup et les sept chevreaux, illustrations by Christian Roux

Eden, photographs by Salvatore Puglia

NEXT EXHIBITION

Sculptures by Roland Roure

From December 3rd, 2016 thru January 7th, 2017



© Roland Roure

In September and in October Wednesday to Saturday, in November on Fridays and Saturdays from 11 am to 1 pm and 3 pm to 7 pm, and by appointment.

11 rue de la Calade ■ 13200 Arles ■ 33 (0)9 80 59 01 06 ■ 33 (0)6 20 75 13 58 ■ contact@flairgalerie.com www.flairgalerie.com