



the image

the Generali Group and the art of advertising



GRUPPO
GENERALI

GENERALI



The detail of the oil on canvas painted by Gino Boccasile is an example of the posters for Anonima Grandine and Anonima Infortuni, Generali Group companies eventually absorbed by the parent company. In the country-life scene, the characters' faces are serene despite the approaching storm, suggesting their faith in insurance coverage. The painting was the basis for a 1936 poster for Anonima Grandine.

This book was created with two objectives: on the one hand, preserving and handing down the memory of an era when advertising was synonymous with art and the insurance sector was extremely active in communicating its message of social security, with the help of some of the greatest illustrators of the time; on the other hand, collecting in one book images from the historical archives of all the companies that were active in the 1800s and in the first half of the XX Century, though under different names, and that today strengthen Generali's leadership with their experience and professionalism: besides the parent company, other companies such as Toro, FATA and INA Assitalia have contributed to the creation of this book.

In the first section, the critical essays and interviews cover the following topics: the image tradition of Generali; a brief history of posters in Italy; the origins of the Salce Collection, the largest Italian collection of advertising posters; the "elegant touch" of Marcello Dudovich, one of the greats who designed for the Group. This section is followed by reproductions of the posters, half-sheet posters and calendars created for Generali and for the other companies of the Group: an overview – introduced chapter by chapter by brief essays by Pietro Egidi, co-editor of the book – we have tried to make as complete as possible, by presenting not only works from the archives of the Group, but also those found in the Salce Collection or in other public collections, or lent by private collectors eager to contribute to the project. Our most sincere thanks go to them, as well as due credit in the final pages of the book. In the appendix, for the benefit of scholars and enthusiasts of the genre, we have also provided inventory numbers for all the works from the Salce Collection.

The works created by masters such as Leopoldo Metlicovitz, Achille Beltrame and Gino Boccasile, besides the above-mentioned Dudovich lead us to the second half of the XX Century, when the golden age of posters and of quality advertising graphics comes to an end, dethroned by the advent of new techniques and strategies of business communication. The book does not end there, however: after two chapters dedicated respectively to the so-called "small" publicity materials and to the works designed for some of the Group's foreign companies, mostly in Spain and France, there was room for an "extra" focusing on cartoons, comics and logos designed after 1985 by some sublime authors such as Milo Manara, Marco Biassoni and Giorgio Forattini to promote insurance products. In closing, the tradition renews itself with two previously-unpublished cartoons drawn especially for this book by Silver, from an idea by Alfredo Castelli, and by Carlo Squillante.

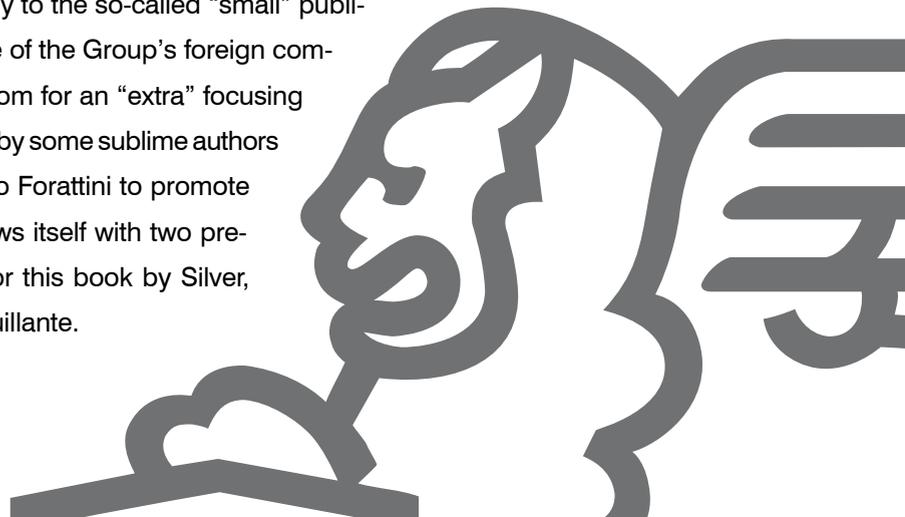




table of contents

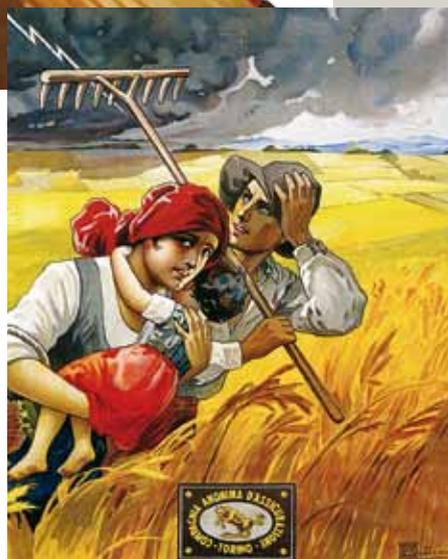
Marcello Dudovich chapter IV

■ CRITICAL ESSAYS

From the Eagle/Lion to the Art Poster <i>by Pietro Egidi</i>	6
> From the Group Archives <i>by Roberto Rosasco</i>	14
That Wall Art That Works over Time <i>by Roberto Curci</i>	16
> The “Legend” of Mele’s Department Store <i>from Corriere del Mezzogiorno</i>	24
Nando Salce: a Life for Posters <i>interview with Eugenio Manzato by Elisabetta Delfabro</i>	26
> Collecting: Passion, Pathology, or What? <i>by Pietro Egidi</i>	36
Dudovich’s Elegant Touch <i>Interview with Roberto Curci by Elisabetta Delfabro</i>	38
> The Dudovich Household: Art, Culture and Patriotism <i>by Roberto Curci</i>	46

■ THE IMAGE (Texts by Pietro Egidi)

Chapter I – The Lion in Color	50
Chapter II – The Great Italian Companies of the Group	58
Chapter III – Farmers, the Country and the Great War	66
Chapter IV – Dudovich’s “Sign”	82
Chapter V – The Italian Companies between the Two Wars	94
Chapter VI – Boccasile and Others	110
Chapter VII – The War and Its Aftermath	120
Chapter VIII – Small... but Effective	134
Chapter IX – Abroad	152
Extra – Great Comic Strips and Cartoons	164
> Drawn Especially for Us	176



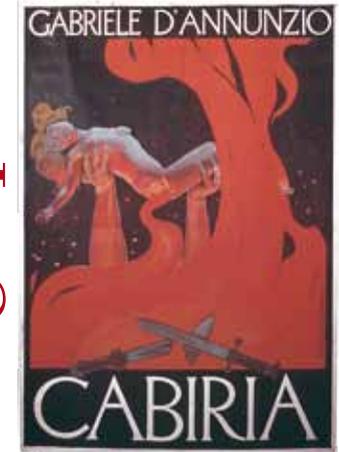
Oswaldo Ballerio chapter V



Marco Biassoni extra

Biographies

Leopoldo Metlicovitz pg. 64



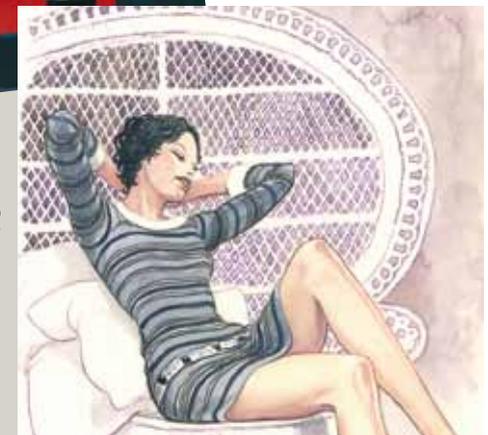
Achille Beltrame pg. 80



Severo Pozzati (Sepo) pg. 108



Milo Manara pg. 174



THE ARTISTS (Texts by Pietro Egidi)

Plinio Codognato – The “Bard” of Machines and Speed	56
Leopoldo Metlicovitz – A Great Master of the Art of the Poster	64
Oswaldo Ballerio – From Frescoes to Advertising Graphics	79
Achille Beltrame -- ...Or, <i>La Domenica del Corriere</i> , “Italy’s First Video”	80
Pollione Sigon – Raised in a World of Art	91
Marcello Dudovich – The Great Master	92
Tito Corbella – Advertising, Film and Postcards	107
Severo Pozzati (Sepo) – Italy, France and Innovation	108
Aldo Raimondi – Master Watercolorist	117
Gino Boccasile -- “Miss Great Authors, with Your Novecento Ways...”	118
Mario Puppo – The Artist of Tourism	131
Anselmo Ballester – Cinema’s “Painter”	132
Alberto Bianchi – Graphic Designer, Illustrator, Portrait Artist	149
Adolfo Busi – A Pleasant, Effective Graphic Sign	150
In Brief – Other Poster Artists	162
Marco Biassoni – The Light Art of Humor	172
Milo Manara – Master of Comic Books	174

SNAPSHOTS OF HISTORY (by Annamaria Miot and Roberto Rosasco)

Culture and Leisure at the End of the XIX Century	55
The Age of Giolitti	61
“But in My Heart No Cross Is Absent”	72
The Last “Doge” of Venice	85
Italo Balbo’s Transatlantic Flights	106
New Land to Farm	114
Legendary Champions	124
Publicity Postcards	137
Arts and Culture in the Age of Mass Media	157
Italian Comic Book Masters	166

INDEXES

Group Companies	180
Artists	182
Works	183
Selected Bibliography	205
Acknowledgments	207

critical essays

With the scientific articles written by three experts, with texts written directly by them or through the interviews conducted by Elisabetta Delfabro, we focus in this section on the “image tradition” of the Generali Group within the larger context of the history of the poster and of the collectors who devoted their efforts to that “wall art” which, as Dudovich wrote, “works through time.”

Born in Pitigliano, he lives and works in Trieste; he is an archaeologist, author of many studies in the field, and teaches literature. He also studies industrial archeology in the history of business and in period advertising; he has published the books *Collezionare Trieste. Pubblicità e prodotti industriali d'epoca* (Collecting Trieste. Vintage Advertising and Industrial Products, 1996) and *Trieste in fumo* (Trieste in Smoke, 2005), a history of the Trieste companies producing cigarette-papers, with essays by Claudio Grisancich. For Generali, he has collaborated on the books *Tradizione d'immagine* (Image Tradition, 1993) and *Palazzo Carciotti* (1995)

PIETRO ECIDI



Born in Trieste, Curci received his degree in Art History with a dissertation on Dudovich, later published in book form as *Marcello Dudovich, Poster Artist* (Marcello Dudovich cartellonista, 1976). For over thirty years, he worked as editor of the newspaper *Il Piccolo* and, for thirteen years until 1995, as editor of its culture section. Together with musicologist Gianni Gori he published the book *Dolcissima effige: manifesti italiani dell'opera lirica* (Sweet Effigy: Italian Opera Posters, 1983). He contributed essays for the catalogues of several exhibitions and in 2002 curated the exhibition *Marcello Dudovich. Oltre il manifesto* (Marcello Dudovich. Beyond Posters) at Museo Revoltella in Trieste.

ROBERTO CURCI



Born in Quinto di Treviso, he has taught Art History at the University of Udine. As director of the Musei Civici di Treviso, between 1980 and 2001 he curated many exhibitions and edited many catalogues. He has published books and guides of the city. As far as the Salce Collection posters are concerned, besides curating exhibitions, he has researched the history of the Collection by studying and cataloguing the archives extensively. After leaving the Musei Civici, he has continued to research and write about the arts of Veneto, as well as the history of the poster.

EUGENIO MANZATO



From the Eagle/Lion to the Art Poster



“IMAGE” AND VINTAGE ADVERTISING IN GENERALI’S HISTORY

Terms and concepts such as business communication, company image, marketing and sales information strategies, which are today common in business, are part of a relatively recent lexicon, the result of the profound transformation of technology, of the market and of media in the business world during the last fifty years.

In 1831, when Generali Insurance was born, initially under the name of Austrian-Italian General Insurance, the above-mentioned terms and concepts, including that of “advertising” as we mean it today, were unthinkable, though the newspapers and bulletins of the time were not devoid of small graphic and textual ads. It would take several decades for advertising proper to establish itself on a large scale as a promotional means for companies – together with the full range of tools which would shape modern “business communication.” In the early 1800s, when business information was still limited and not particularly aggressive, in order to “sell” a credible and competitive image, companies offering specific products such as insurance policies or financial services had to rely on factors linked to their internal structure: the quality of their



business, the solidity of their capital, the authoritativeness and reliability of their managers.

Generali too, for its founding assembly on December 26, 1831, chose as founding members some of the most prestigious names in Trieste's world of business and finance, some with solid experience in the insurance field: this was the case, for example, of Giuseppe Lazzaro Morpurgo, the creator of the new organism. The very sum established as share capital, 2 million "Fiorini," was remarkable for an insurance company of the time and guaranteed ample financial coverage.

The choice of headquarters also contributed to the creation of a solid "company image": Palazzo Carciotti, one of the most prestigious buildings in Trieste, built on the waterfront of the "Maria Teresian" neighborhood between 1798 and 1803, symbol of the rise of the new business middle class, would be the home of Generali through 1866.

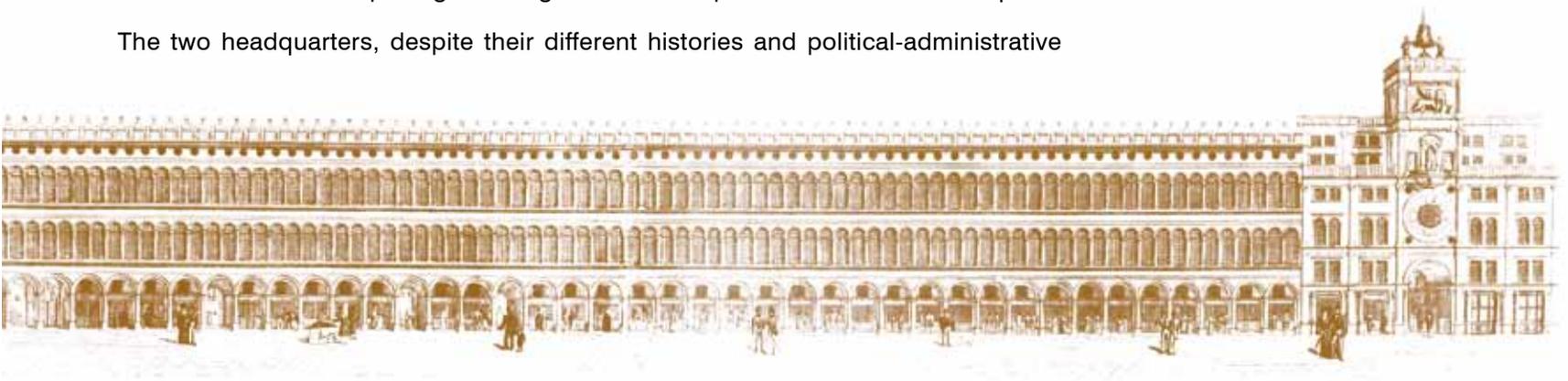
The same criteria of reliability and financial solidity displayed by the founders of the Trieste headquarters were the guiding force behind the choice of men, capitals and building in the Veneto Headquarters (Direzione veneta), established in Venice for all business in the Lombardo-Veneto Kingdom and situated in the heart of the city, in the most beautiful and prestigious wing of the ancient porticoes in Saint Mark Square. The two headquarters, despite their different histories and political-administrative



Facing page: Palazzo Carciotti, first headquarters of Assicurazioni Generali, in a lithography of the mid-1800s

Above: metal plate of the 1920s/30s

Below: the Procuratie Vecchie (Old Porticoes) of Saint Mark Square in Venice, head office of the Venetian management (from a period print)



Right: brass plate
(1833/1848)

Below: Frontispieces
for policies of
the mid-1800s



milieus, offered parallel contributions to the rapid growth of the company, using as leverage – in terms of product value and credibility – symbols and images that guaranteed a strong impact on the public. The emblem of the Habsburg imperial eagle, which had previously been used on the policies of the Azienda Assicuratrice di Trieste formerly created by Morpurgo, featured prominently on the documents of the new company from 1833 on; from 1848 on, the Venetian management adopted, as logo for its Italian business,

the image of the winged lion of Saint Mark, pictorial synthesis of the greatness of the Serenissima republic and of its longtime economic and entrepreneurial activities; this image went through several changes, but ultimately established itself as the symbol of Generali.

Through the skill of its early leaders and the impact of that first “company image,” the company increased its business volume significantly, particularly in the late decades of the XIX Century, and reached important objectives: the supremacy in the Italian market, the creation of affiliate companies, the establishment of a large network of agencies in various





continents, and the acquisition of prestigious real estate. In 1886, a new Generali building was inaugurated on the waterfront of Trieste, as permanent headquarters of its management.

In those late 1800s, because of the massive evolution of industrial and



Above left: Istrian stone winged lion of the XVI Century; the frieze was placed on the facade of the Generali building in Piazza Venezia in Rome at the beginning of the XX Century

Above: central management building in Trieste, headquarters of the company since 1886

Below: 1860 poster for the Turin agency

commercial activities, and because of growing competition, companies had a greater need for visibility: a need to be better known and to give out more detailed information about their activities and products. This “entrepreneurial fever”, this will to be seen, was attested by the proliferation, in the second half of the XIX Century, of all kinds of universal expositions, exhibitions and fairs, and by the increasing use of the advertising message: initially through simple written ads, flyers and cards laid into the products; subsequently, beginning in the mid-1880s, through the medium that was to become the prevailing instrument of business information: the chromolithographic poster.

Some nations, Italy among them, came rather late to the use of the illustrated color poster, compared to countries like France, where “affiches,” first in black-and-white and then with parts in color, appeared in the 1850s, and where, thanks to the technical and artistic intuitions of great masters (Chéret, Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard and others), the genre came into its own relatively early and became the “modern” chromolithographic poster we know today.





This page, from the top: Assicurazioni Generali posters, 1901, 1906/09 and circa 1910 (detail of a poster by Sormani)

From the last decade of the XIX Century, at any rate, this advertising tool met with considerable success, and many companies, especially the more affluent ones, began exploiting it in a massive way to advertise their products: in the streets, in the squares and wherever posting was allowed.

The insurance field has never been an easy subject for advertising, due to the particular nature of its products and services; nonetheless, major companies such as Generali did not hesitate to promote themselves through posters, often designed by great artists, and to exploit the potential of the new medium for years to come.

The material available today dates from the early years of the XX Century, starting with a 1906/09 poster depicting the Venetian winged lion in the small square of Saint Mark: unfortunately, only a black-and-white reproduction survives. The porthole poster signed by Sormani dates from a few years later, and features the neo-classical figure of Mercury, protector of merchants and new symbol of progress, against the backdrop of Venice, a city whose historical allegories and views will figure prominently in Generali's advertising.

Then, in the 1910s, there are posters designed by Chiurlotto, Codognato and some uncredited artists.

For many companies, poster advertising went hand in hand with other forms of publicity, such as cal-





Left: rural scene, from an oil sketch by Beltrame for Anonima Grandine (1931)

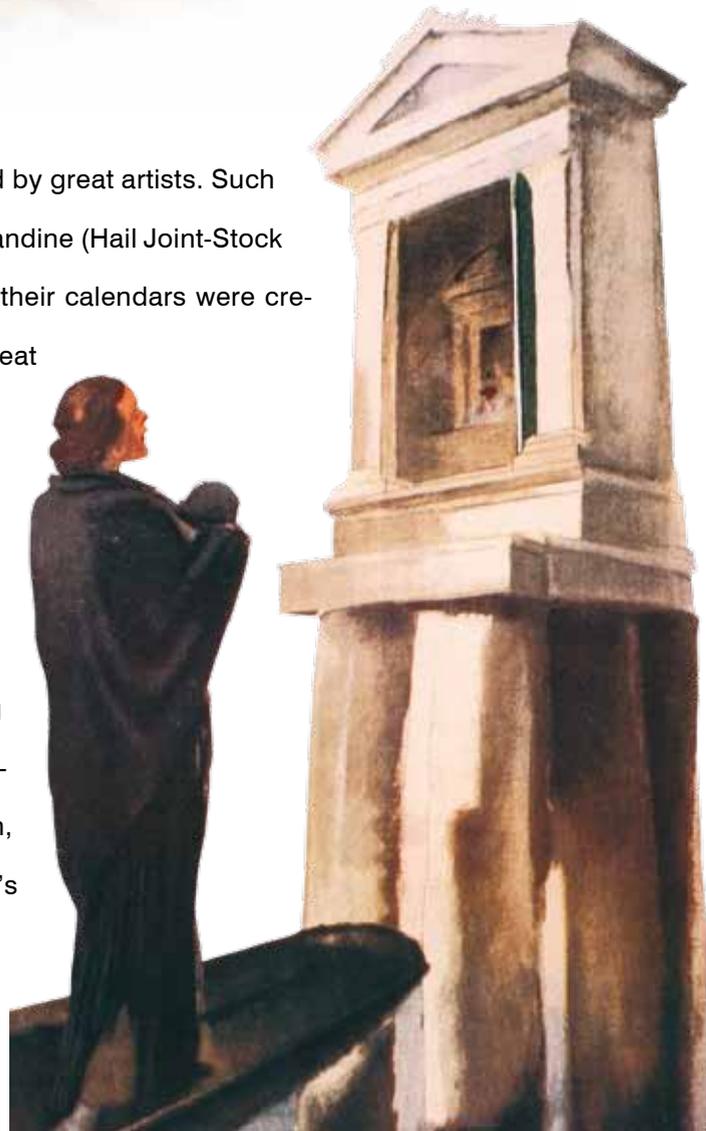
Below: detail of a company wall calendar illustrated by Dudovich (1935)

endars, postcards, and pamphlets, sometimes illustrated by great artists. Such is the case, for example, of the calendars for Anonima Grandine (Hail Joint-Stock Company), a company created by Generali in 1890: all their calendars were created by the great painter Achille Beltrame between the Great War and the early 1930s.

The poster, however, was the most effective instrument to advertise products and services, because of its visibility and, in many cases, artistic value.

From the mid-1920s, after the troubles of the war, Generali was able to strengthen its economic status, laying the foundation for its development in the following decades. With new markets and a new historical situation, new criteria had to be used in promoting the company's visibility, as well as big names in the art world.

Thus, a new collaboration was born between Gen-





Above, from left: detail of a Dudovich poster for Generali (circa 1937) and of two wall calendars, the first by Boccasile for Anonima Grandine (1937), the second by Mosca for the Fiume company (1935)

Below: detail of a poster for Assicurazioni d'Italia (Assitalia) by Ballester (1940)



erali and Marcello Dudovich, an artist from Trieste who was one of the biggest names in poster design. In roughly ten years of work for the company, Dudovich produced a large number of posters, many of them featuring Venice and its lagoon; other works of his display a more “historical” slant, such as those depicting the Fascist colonial campaigns in Africa.

During the 1930s, other great graphic artists collaborated with Generali or its affiliates, beginning with Gino Boccasile, one of Italy’s best-known and prolific artists, who painted sketches for posters, half-sheet posters and calendars for Anonima Grandine. In those same years, Osvaldo Ballerio, Aldo Raimondi and Franco Mosca also worked for Anonima Grandine or for Generali itself. In that decade, a collaboration also began with Modiano, the Trieste paper manufacturer. Pollione Sigon, Modiano’s main illustrator,

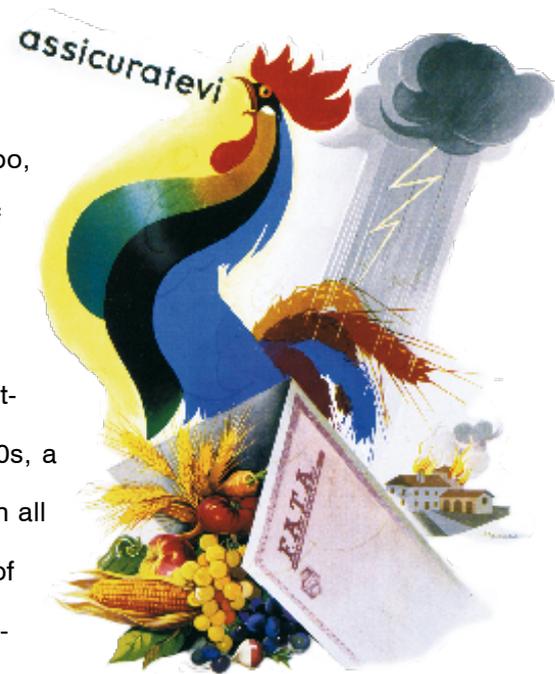
created billboards, calendars and other promotional materials for Generali.

These same graphic designers and illustrators worked – along with great artists such as Metlicovitz, Mazza, Severo Pozzati (Sepo), Puppo, Ballester and Busi – for several Italian insurance companies, some of them later acquired by the Generali Group: Alleanza, Toro, INA and its controlled companies Assitalia, Fiume and FATA.

For these companies as well as for Generali, the above-mentioned artists produced posters and other publicity material through the 1950s, a time when the illustrated poster was going out of fashion, along with all

vintage advertising born out of the magical, sometimes “naive” merging of craftsmanship, intuition and creativity. This twilight of the genre inexorably shows in the poster production of those later years, displaying symptoms of a noticeable looseness of graphic sign and promotional message.

An entirely new era was to begin for advertising: the era of photography and of film and television, which brought about a profound change in taste and habits, and a new style for promoting products, even insurance policies. ■



Above: the rooster created by Busi for a FATA (Fondo Assicurativo Tra Agricoltori) poster (1959)

Left: photographic poster (1953)

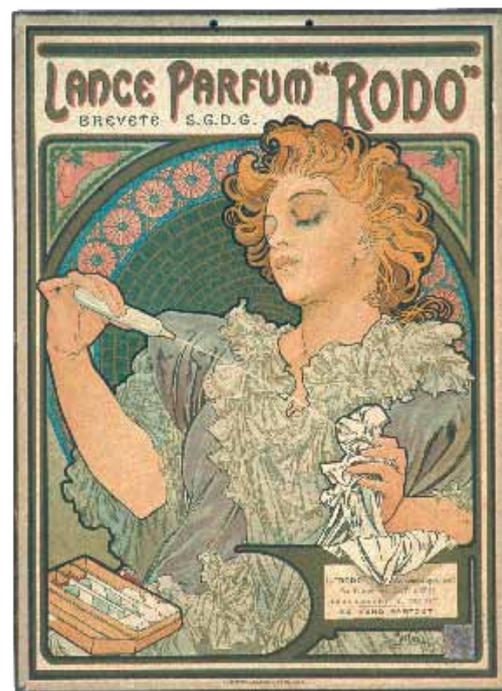
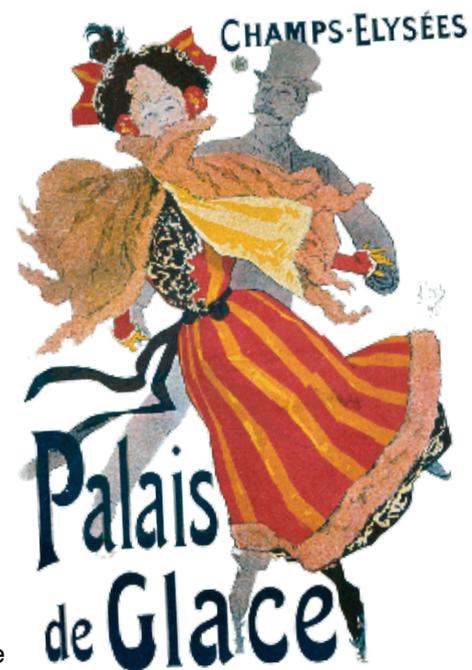


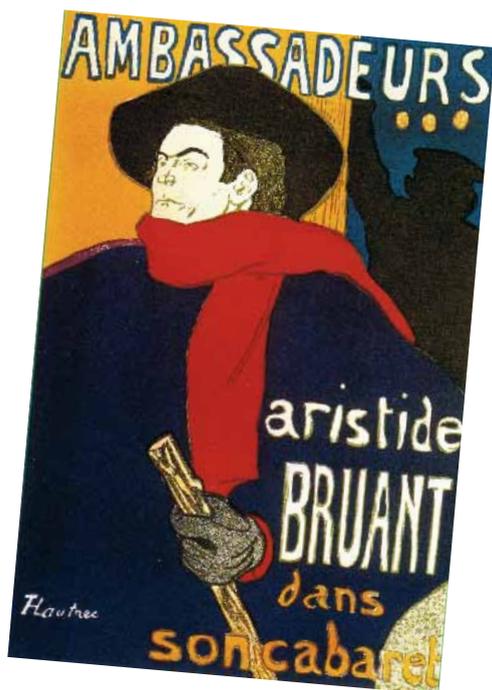
That Wall Art That Works over Time



“An advertising poster after all is no great thing. So how do you explain, then, that an image will linger in your mind’s eye for years, and become charged with a seemingly important meaning? Even the drawing of an everyday object can gradually acquire its own special personality: the simplest of figures can speak, sing, smile, shout at you. A poster is like a delayed-action bomb. That is why it is art: it works over time.”

In simple words (he hardly ever used difficult ones), Marcello Dudovich – considered, together with Leonetto Cappiello, the top player of Italian graphic advertising in the 1900s – stated the simple truth of a fundamental concept of poster artistry, of the “street art” which, from the last years of the XIX Century, had begun to color the walls and fences of Italian towns big and small – though somewhat late compared to other European countries and to the United States. An unusual galaxy of shapes and colors, within the communication genre of posting materials which had existed since





the 1500s, supplanted once and for all the non-illustrated notice: the one where perhaps a few ornamental squiggles framed a sheet of paper encumbered with words, words, and more words, forcing the viewer to read and interpret the message with some effort.

The “delayed-action bomb” was the disruptive force of the *Image*, which, defeating the Word and reducing it to a slogan, imposed itself with ever-increasing strength on the poster at the turn of the century and made instantly recogniz-

able a brand, a name, and therefore a product, even at a distance, even for the hurried and inattentive man of the street. Though non-occult persuasion and consumerism had yet to be defined as concepts, even Cappiello saw the need for the advertising poster to be “an act of authority over the passer-by.” In his view, the task of the poster was “to loudly shout a name, and, through clarity and pleasure of form, through surprise and novelty of arabesque, through intensity of color, to become unforgettable.” For the longest time, it must be said, this was not so in Italy. At the end of the XIX Century, the cultural (but also social-economic and industrial) backwardness with which the country viewed poster art matched the indecisiveness of artists-illustrators, who were still anchored to a pictorial (or pictorialist) tradition firmly rooted in Academia and who, at the same time, were impressed by what the French, Anglo-American, or German poster artists were producing: strong, “modern” figurative images; à *plat* colors; linear captiousness deriving from that movement known in Italy as Liberty and elsewhere called Art Nouveau, Modern Style or Jugendstil, a movement in turn influenced by Symbolism, by the Pre-Raphaelites, and by the Japonism then in fashion.

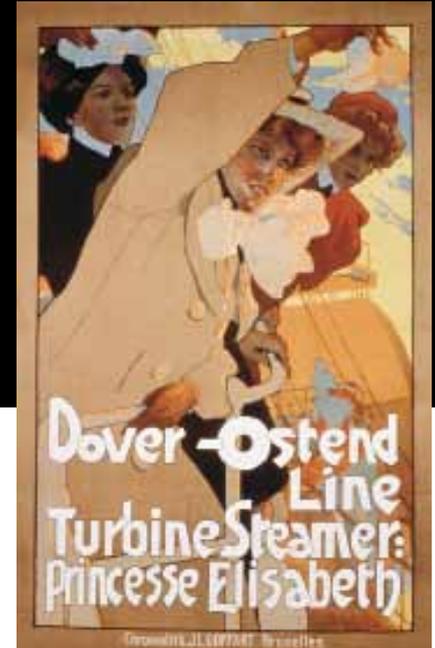
When in Italy a well-respected art magazine such as *Emporium* and a thoughtful critic such as Vittorio Pica finally began to praise the qualities of the so-called “wall art,” the



These two pages, from left: *Corriere del Mattino* (Pusterla, 1887), *Palais de Glace* (Chéret, 1896), *Lance Parfum “Rodo”* (Mucha, 1896), *Aristide Bruant* (Toulouse-Lautrec, 1892) and *The Sun* (Rhead, 1900)



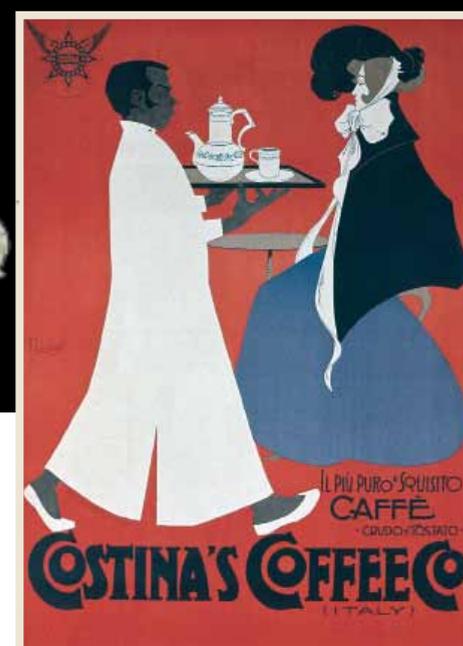
From left: *Tosca* (Hohenstein, 1899), *Calzaturificio di Varese* (1914, detail) and *Sogno di un Valzer* (1910) both by Metlicovitz; *Dover-Ostend Line* (Hohenstein, 1900)



year 1895 had already come and gone; France had regaled the world with the works of great masters such as Chéret, Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, Steinlen, and Mucha; the United Kingdom could boast names such as Beardsley and the Beggarstaff brothers; America had produced Bradley, Rhead, and Penfield. And in Central Europe, anti-academic Secessions proliferated: in Vienna, Munich, and Berlin.

Not coincidentally, perhaps, the first true Italian poster artists, those who understood the requirements of a new artistic language, not to be contaminated or mixed with “pure” painting, were all “foreigners”: Adolf Hohenstein, born in Saint Petersburg but clearly of German origin and educated in Vienna, and the two artists born in Trieste but of Dalmatian descent (and, lest we forget, Trieste was *not* in Italy at that time), Leopoldo Metlicovitz and Marcello Dudovich. They paved the way, in the exciting context of the chromolithographic workshop where they worked: Casa Ricordi in Milan, which ended up becoming the most important “school” for Italian poster art, with its diverse interests: music, commerce and advertising.

Hohenstein worked at Ricordi until 1905 as artistic director, producing exquisitely designed posters with a savvy balance between middle-class realism and “modernist” graphics; he thus became the real leader of a pool of smart, innovative poster artists.



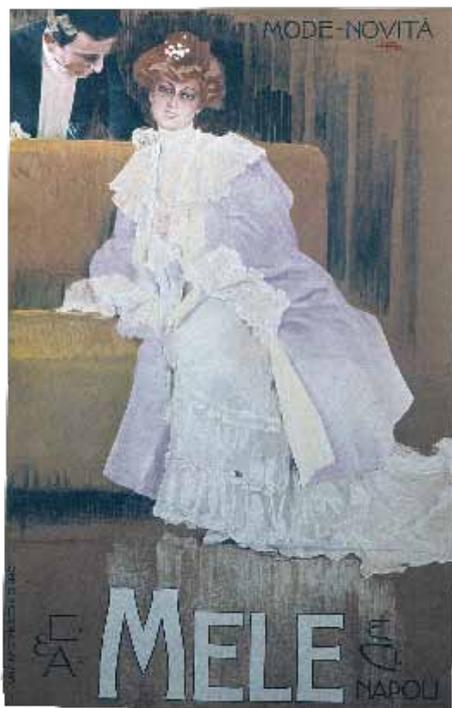
From this group of artists who were still wavering between two figurative worlds (or between two Centuries) – Giovanni Maria Mataloni, Aleardo Villa, Vespasiano Bignami, Emilio Malerba – soon new, bold, original names emerged: the already-mentioned Metlicovitz and Dudovich, and the Polish immigrant (a “foreigner,” again...) Franz Laskoff, with his penchant for stark silhouettes and flat color fields inspired by the British school.

It must be said that, at that time, the advertising message was born – sometimes extemporaneously – from the free inventiveness of the artist on hand, not conditioned or inhibited by market surveys or “scientific” studies about its possible target audiences. We were still a long way from the era of targeted advertising and advertising agencies: thus, the choice of subjects and their graphic representation was exclusive domain of the artists, the only “creative directors” of the time, barring any dissenting opinions on the part of the customers or of the managers of the printing shops: not only the already-famous Ricordi, but also Doyen



Above, from left: *Chocolat Klaus* (Cappiello, 1903) and *Costina's Coffee* (Laskoff, 1914)

Left: detail of a poster designed by Dudovich in 1908 for *Magazzini Mele*



Above and right: two more examples of figures of women, designed respectively by Metlicovitz and by Dudovich, circa 1912, for Magazzini Mele

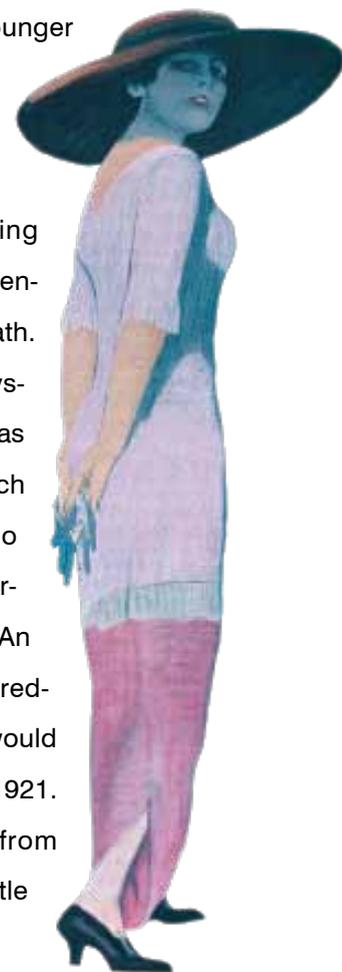
Below: Bitter Campari (Sacchetti, 1921)

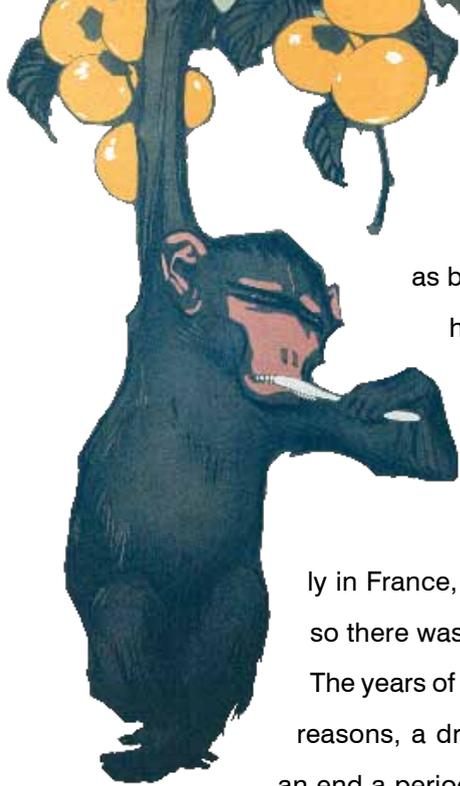


in Turin, Chappuis in Bologna, Arti Grafiche in Bergamo, Armanino in Genoa, Modiano in Trieste, and even Passero in Udine and Monfalcone.

This climate of buoyant creative freedom was perfectly represented by the long – unparalleled – series of posters designed up to 1915 by various Ricordi artists for the Neapolitan department store owned by the Mele brothers. In the midst of the prevailing contradictions and inconsistencies of the design world, in the sea of mediocrity of the period, these fascinating works by Metlicovitz and Dudovich stood out conspicuously – and do to this day (Hohenstein, homesick for his Germany, had already left). Of the two artists, Metlicovitz, the teacher, was definitely more “painterly,” while the pupil, Dudovich, was more synthetic and purely “graphic”; these two artists, uprooted from Trieste to work in Milan, fought from the start a sort of

personal “duel of titans”: a duel eventually won by the younger Dudovich, with posters displaying perfect command of composition and color, dominated by large figures of elegantly-dressed women. From that time on, the coupling Dudovich-Woman became a personal signature running throughout his production (even after the style of the XX Century started changing profoundly) right up to the artist’s death. Dudovich’s personal lesson – trenchant and vibrantly “physical” posters rendered with a uniquely lightness of touch – was soon eagerly inherited by other excellent poster artists such as Aleardo Terzi, Enrico Sacchetti, and the sarcastic Aldo Mazza (who produced wonderfully idiosyncratic cypher-posters – or idea-posters) who proved durable over time. An example: if one were to focus on the Max Meyer logo (the red-paint-spattered dog with a paintbrush in its teeth) one would scarcely believe that it is a replica of a Terzi poster dated 1921. Another ingenious Italian artist, Leonardo Cappiello from Livorno, could have been the runner-up for Dudovich’s title





as best poster artist of the pre-war years, with his rascally, dynamic inventions: usually, a single character flying or sauntering, rendered in bright colors against a black background (another first).

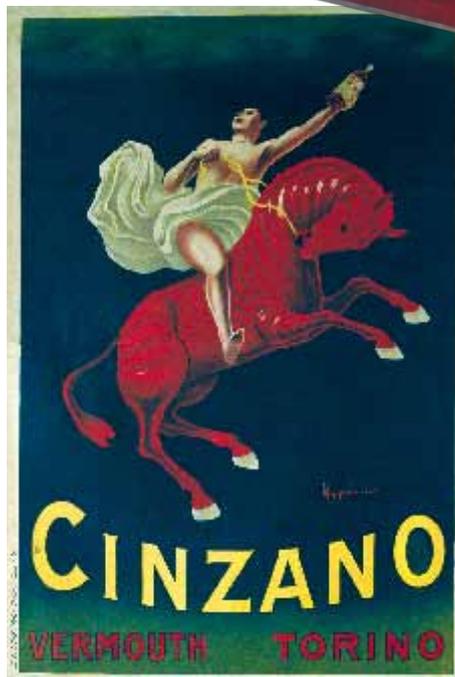
Cappiello, however, worked mostly in France, where he became very successful, so there was never a real contest.

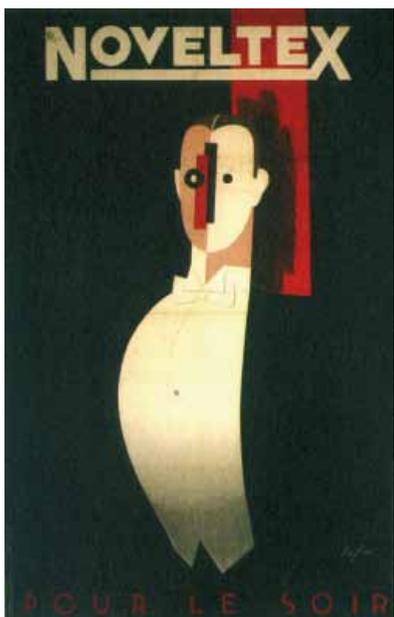
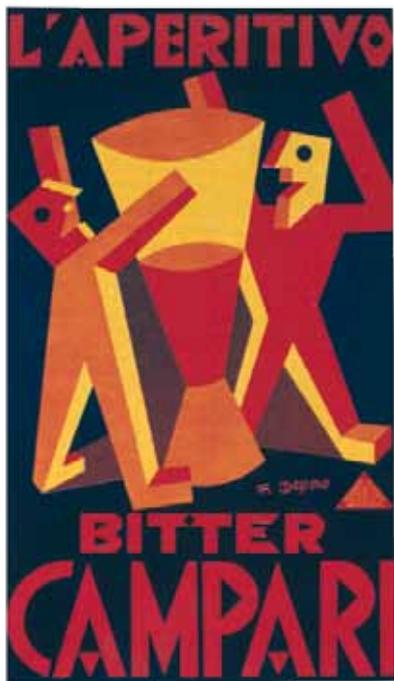
The years of the Great War marked, for obvious reasons, a dramatic caesura, and brought to an end a period that could still be called *Belle Epoque* or *Gay Nineties*. Only another foreigner, the French Achille Lucien Mauzan (who worked in Milan and was the author of the famous poster with the intense soldier pointing



Above: posters by Terzi for *Dentol* (1914, detail) and *Colorificio Italiano* (1921)

Left: *Magazzini Mele* (Mazza, 1910) and *Cinzano Vermouth Torino* (Cappiello, 1910)





Above: half-sheet poster for *Bitter Campari* (Depero, circa 1925) and poster for *Noveltex* (Sepo, 1933)

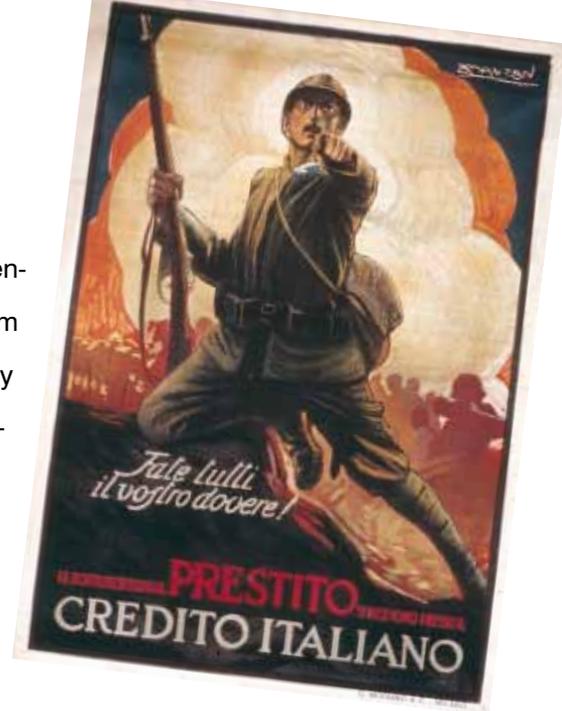
Above, right: “*Fate tutti il vostro dovere!*” (“You must all do your duty!”) Mauzan, 1917)

his finger at the viewer over the imperative sentence “You must all do your duty!”) benefited from this change of climate, producing posters mostly aimed at the nascent film industry: vaguely expressionistic posters, often bordering on showy or coarse.

Everything changed after the war and in the 1920s. Advertising was well on its way to becoming an exact science, so to speak; market considerations began to prevail over free inspiration, and the first agencies and internal advertising departments were born. Dudovich himself – working in those years for La Rinascente department store in Milan – had a fling with a conflict of interests when he produced posters for Igap (General Company for Posting and Advertising, founded in 1892) and became its artistic director, i.e. the contractor of himself.

But it is from the point of view of taste that things changed most dramatically. A stronger influence was exercised on poster design by painterly avant-gardes: Cubism and Futurism (hence the unmistakable posters by Fortunato Depero, the only futurist drawn to advertising); Art Deco or Style 1925, which retained a link to the calligraphies of Art Nouveau; Modernism (Novecentismo) which displayed massive, orthogonal shapes and showed a clear kinship to Fascist aesthetics. Later on, Bauhaus rationalism leaked into the art of the poster with its geometric rigor, inspiring – for example through the use of photo montages in the Russian or German style – some promising young graphic designers such as Marcello Nizzoli and Erberto Carboni.

Thus, between the 1920s and the 1930s, there was a proliferation of diverse thematic and stylistic choices: this favored the emergence of powerful, original personalities, regardless of their individual sympathies towards one particular movement or another (for example Severo Pozzati, a.k.a. Sepo, with his affinity to the French post-cubist masters Cassandre,





Carlu or Loupot) or of marginal eccentrics (for example Federico Seneca, with his religiously sober posters, or the bizarre, moody Primo Sinopico). Within this range of diverse styles, there was only one certainty: the constant presence of Dudovich, by then revered as master, notwithstanding his own indecisions and changes of mind due to the rise of new styles and new fashions.

Another war, more devastating than the first, inexorably shortened the lifespan of the visual ad, even though Dudovich continued to produce his last works, and Gino Boccasile,

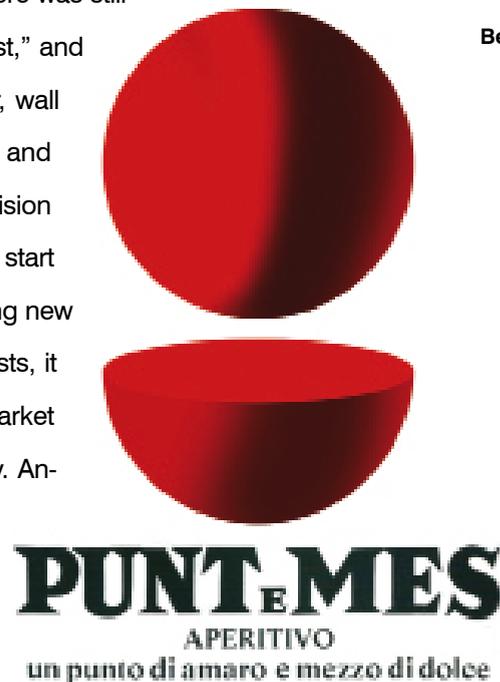
emerging unscathed from his propaganda for the Italian Social Republic, devoted himself to reassuring ads for Mio cheese and Pavesi cookies. There was still

room for the brilliant Armando Testa, the “last poster artist,” and his colorful, ironic expedients. More and more, however, wall advertising preferred the camera lens to paint brushes and pencils, and eventually gave in to the power of the television commercial. The “wall art” did get a new lease on life at the start of this new millennium, though under new forms and using new contents: no longer the child of a handful of creative artists, it became rather the product of punctilious, sophisticated market studies and of newfangled, hyper-specialized technology. Another “act of authority over the passer-by,” if you will, but one less fascinating and persuasive – shall we say less beautiful? – than the one imagined by the great Cappiello one hundred years ago.



Above: posters by Boccasile, during WWII *Alle armi!* (To Arms! X° Mas) and after (*Biscotti Pavesi*)

Below: *Punt e Mes* (Testa, 1960)





The “Legend” of Mele’s Department Store

The store was founded in 1889 by two Neapolitan brothers, Emiddio and Alfonso Mele: enlightened businessmen who stocked the shelves of a huge palazzo (an area of about half an acre between the streets of San Carlo and Municipio, with 500 employees) with all manner of goods. Firstly, clothing, both for elegant ladies and for well-groomed gentlemen: coats, furs, hats, veils, neckties, shirts, boots, vests and bodices, stockings and culottes. And then, soaps, laundry starches, champagnes, wristwatches and clocks, furniture, upholstery, perfumes. Absolutely everything. “Top convenience,” screamed the ads, printed in bold capital letters all over the city walls. The Mele brothers catered to a new clientèle: the well-to-do bourgeoisie that wants to spend money and have fun, that wants, and gets, the latest fashionable garment to show it off at the racetrack or on the boardwalk. In Naples, of course, but not only. What is the difference between the lively customers of the Caffish and those of Milan’s Gran Caffè in the Galleria, between the citizens of Padua sitting at the Caffè Pedrocchi and the Romans sitting at the Aragno or Caffè Greco, or the inhabitants of Turin patronizing the Cambio? The Mele Emporium decided it was time for Italy to unite as far as shopping was concerned. And so it offered a truly amazing range of products – wholesale, retail, or mail order – in the Neapolitan area, in Puglia, in Sicily, in Sardinia and in Malta. It then laid siege on the North, the most appetizing phalanx of customers to be conquered. But in order to sell, one needs to expand, to be known, to spread a winning brand and image. One needs advertising. Thus, the brilliant intuition: Mele Department Store signed an iron-clad 25-year agreement with Ricordi Graphic Workshop in Milan, a firm that started its activity in the



music field by publishing scores and books and then branched out and forged some of the most extraordinary advertising posters in the international panorama. Thirteen master artists designed posters for the department store: Beltrame, Caldanzano, Cappiello, De Stefano, Laskoff, Malerba, Mauzan, Mazza, Metlicovitz, Sacchetti, Terzi and Villa. And the divine Marcello Dudovich, an artist from Trieste with a soft, persuasive style.

The works of these artists are true masterpieces, a riotous tour of the taste and fashion of some roaring years which shattered upon the trenches of the Great War. It was 1915: it was no longer the time for fashion shows and heedlessness: business declined and one could hear the roar of the cannons. The Mele brothers sold their business to their nephew David, and the legend of the country's most fabulous emporium faded. To remember it, we still have the posters.

From the newspaper
Corriere del Mezzogiorno

These two pages, clockwise from top left: posters by Villa (1899 and 1902), Dudovich (1907), Metlicovitz (1909, detail), and Laskoff (1901)



Nando Salce: a Life for Posters



Above: the 1977 book about the great collector, from a graphic project by Toni Basso, edited by Basso and Andrea Cason

Professor Manzato, your extensive research and your work as curator of the Salce Collection, during your twenty years as director of the Civici Musei di Treviso, make you the best-qualified person to talk about the importance of this wonderful collection of posters.

The donation took place in 1962, but it took us quite a few years to actually take charge of it, because we did not know how many items we were dealing with. As a matter of fact, Salce himself thought he had accumulated 12,000 posters, 14,000 maximum: he did not know the exact number. For this reason, after his death, we began an inventory of the collection – this process took about a decade.

That long?

Yes! Just think of the space 25,000 posters took up... not counting all the logistical difficulties: we had to find a suitable space for them, lay the posters flat on the floor in packs, employ a person who, one poster at a time, transcribed the data under the supervision of Luigi

Menegazzi, who must be given credit for publishing the first catalogue.

In what year?

In 1974, under the sponsorship of Cassa di Risparmio bank and with wonderful

pagination created by Diego Birelli, a great paginator/graphic designer at Electa publishers. In this first book we were able to reproduce about 500 posters, many in black and white – at the time it was not easy to render color. A hard-to-find book now; I own a copy because my father was a client of the bank.

A historical copy then?

I would say so. In subsequent years, the anthology was reprinted, though in partial form: Electa published a not-for-sale volume where only 250 posters appeared. Immediately after that, however, another book came out that finally made the collection famous, featuring exactly 24,580 posters!

Had professor Menegazzi, who was the first curator, met Nando Salce personally?

In the early '50s some mutual friends had taken the professor to see the famous attic where the posters were displayed and stored; this allowed him to see first-hand the collector's activity, but he was too late to actually collaborate with him. Other important information emerged thanks to Giuseppe Mazzotti who in 1959 curated an exhibition of mountain-themed posters and wrote a beautiful, well-researched introduction for the catalogue. On that occasion, the legend was born of a 17-year-old Salce corrupting the town's billboard posting man in order to buy his first poster.... At any rate, regardless of the truthfulness of that anecdote, we know that in 1895 young Nando was so taken with the beauty of a woman depicted on a poster, whose sensual features could be divined under her dress, that he invested 1 Lira to acquire that first piece.

That poster was by Giovanni Maria Mataloni....

Yes, the one with the Auer-patented gas lamps. A beautiful poster, rather daring for those times: the glowing smile of a

Below: the 1895 poster by Giovanni Maria Mataloni for the Auer patent, the first poster bought by Nando Salce





Above: a portrait of Regina Gregorj as a young girl: Gina, from a well-to-do industrialist family from Veneto, met Nando when the two were very young; they married in 1899, just over the age of 20

topless woman dressed only in veils; so innovative that Vittorio Pica in one of his articles rated it at par with the best European posters.

Could Salce's purchase have been prompted by his reading that article?

I think his passion for posters came from his curiosity for the new. We shouldn't forget that in the late 1800s there weren't many other kinds of color image reproduction: rich families could afford paintings, but, before the popularization of the photo camera, posters were a novelty and an attraction, people actually left their homes especially to go see them. Anyway, his first buy might have been a coincidence, but Salce certainly read Pica's article because it was published in an Emporium anthology that we found in his library.

So, curiosity starts him off, but then he chooses to continue....

He immediately began to do research and read materials useful to a poster collector, in order to become acquainted with the authors, judge which were the best posters, etc. If his had been simple curiosity, even propelled by a passionate aesthetic sense, he probably would have contented himself with a hundred or so posters; he would not have ended up buying 25,000 of them!

Then he found a beautiful relationship with his kindred spirit Regina Gregorj...

His niece tells the story of how they had known each other since they were children, they were practically the same age: he was Gina's senior by one year. It has always struck me that this man was always very sure of what he wanted: he took one road and went on in that direction, undaunted, with great determination. Both his passion for posters and his love for his wife – a really charming person – lasted his entire lifetime.

Was Gina also from a well-to-do family from Veneto?

Yes, she was rich, and cultivated. When they married, the newlyweds merged their elective affinities as well as their fortunes. There is a picture of the two of them skating together in the prime of their youth: they are gorgeous. He with a proud, happy expression, she elegant and beautiful, though a little intimidated – but that might just be because she didn't feel safe on skates. And the incredible thing is, they remained that fascinating right through their old age.

Were both of them willful, and did they both cultivate a passion for posters?

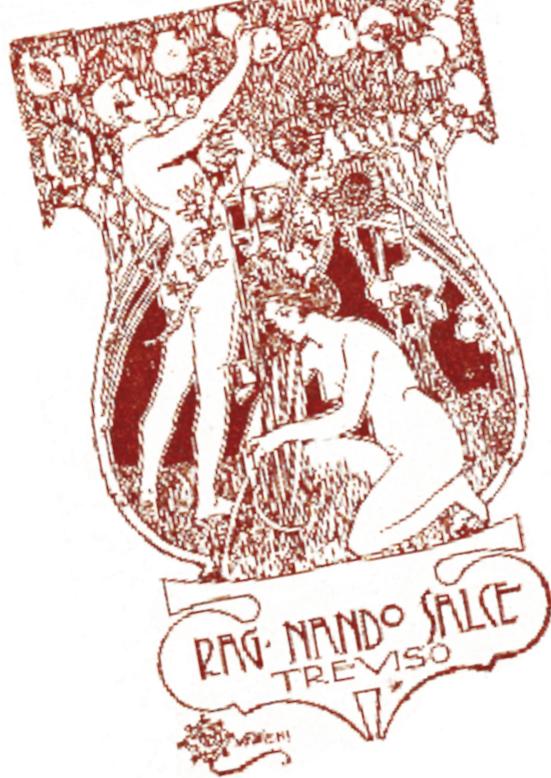
That passion was Nando's, she simply humored him. They loved and respected one another, leaving one another maximum freedom of choice: they were a very modern couple. Nando, for example, was agnostic, while Gina was religious; so he would take her to the church in his carriage, then have a ride by himself before going back to pick her up. They were a lucky couple and were able



Above: Gina and Nando boating during a trip to Sorrento in 1910

Left: the natural skating rinks in Treviso and environs





Above: decoration created by Giovanni Maria Mataloni for Salce as stationery letterhead

Below: water-color commissioned by Salce to caricaturist Bepi Fabiano for a thank-you card



to a enjoy a nice life: Guido Mestriner, their trusty driver, every year took them on a holiday trip, to Switzerland or Austria, then to the seaside or to a spa. They had a fantastic live-in cook, who spoiled them rotten and served, for example, tortellini in a tureen made of baked bread dough.

When at home, did Nando devote a lot of his time to the collection?

Yes. In the morning he answered letters and in the afternoon he put order in his collection in the attic.

He had his own way of doing things, he was meticulous and practical...

A true professional. As if that were his job, he pursued his objectives with scientific precision. One can truly say he was the first director of that collection.

Is this corroborated by his correspondence and by the documents?

Yes. It's very interesting to study those documents. The correspondence began in 1898, when he turned 18 and decided to marry; before then, he had bought posters occasionally, but it was in that year that he began to work at his passion. This is documented by the letters he sent to the poster artists themselves, but, even before

that, to the specialized galleries. He contacted the artists directly after he had accumulated a substantial group of posters, so as to tap the source for the missing pieces.

Periodically, he would send the artists a letter with the list of the posters he owned...

It was a strategy, that allowed him not only to find pieces he was missing, but also to understand what the latest styles or works were: for example, there are letters between him and Mataloni, and between him and Hohenstein, who

would then redirect him to Sipizzi the lamp manufacturer... who in turn would send Nando the posters. He also corresponded with the publishers of the posters, and he was so stubborn that, even when initially they denied him the items, they eventually gave in.

By working in this way, didn't he end up with a lot of duplicates?

He always wanted to have duplicates, to use as exchange currency, especially with non-Italian gallerists. Using this method, he was able to get works by Leonetto Cappiello, no less, from his French publishers.

Aside from being practical, was he also skillful and knowledgeable?

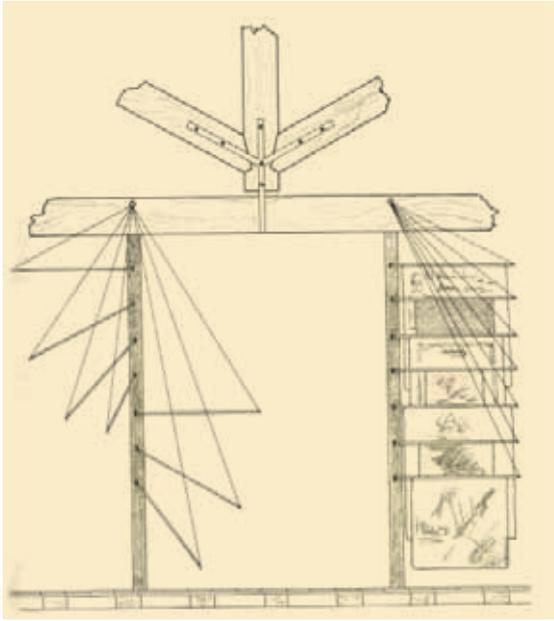
He had a multi-faceted, rather brilliant personality. Among other things, he published a book of mathematical studies related to the family business: his father owned a thriving textile and wholesale clothing company.

Did he sell in Treviso?

No, he sold all over Italy. And he met the Mele brothers in Naples thanks to the business. From a letter, we learned, for example, that one of the Mele brothers wrote to Nando to ask him about a shipment of berets ordered from his father. Young Nando immediately took advantage of this, answering politely that he had forwarded the query to a clerk and asking the Meles for news of their latest poster! We can safely say that his father's staff was so efficient that they managed perfectly well without Nando's collaboration; Nando was initially his father's partner and then

Below: poster by Leonetto Cappiello for the Livorno summer tourist season of 1901





Above: the drawing of the system Salce adopted in his attic in Treviso to allow people to view his posters (the actual image is from an unproduced 1950s short film about his collection)

inherited the business from him, but there was no real need for his presence, so he was free to devote himself to his posters.

He worked very creatively to find a practical solution to the problem of displaying the posters, did he not?

He had invented a contraption that allowed viewing without effort; not all the posters were exhibited, only the most beautiful ones. Posters were fitted between two thin rods with a string that kept the two works horizontal, back to back, and was in turn connected to a vertical beam so as to allow flipping, like the pages of a big book that, when turned, created a distinctive, pleasant rustle.

This way he could share his hobby with others?

He invited his most trusted friends to the vast attic of his Borgo Mazzini house in Treviso; some articles were also written advertising this special poster gallery, but I would say that Salce invented it all especially for his own pleasure.

So this collection was already famous during its creator's lifetime?

Oh, sure.

Were there any particularly valuable pieces in the collection?

I think the real value of this collection is its aspiration towards completeness. Salce did not only go after the showy posters, which might get chosen following personal taste, he also collected the less striking pieces for the sake of research. The range of items is enormous, with a nice selection of foreign posters, especially French, but also English and German posters... the collection even includes Japanese posters!

Has anybody calculated how much he must have spent?

It's difficult, because one would have to include in the calculation the frequent swaps; but, even without chancing a sum, we can be sure that the amount of money spent was very large.

Prior to his death, was he worried about the fate of his collection?

Certainly; he realized that it presented difficult problems, and he did not trust his home town, attached to it as he was. After the war, the local museums had just been restored and the situation, still in a flux, did not seem to offer an adequate site. He tried to involve Brera and the university circuit, but got no-where because the sheer size of the collection deterred the potential recipients of the donation. Plus, the time was not ripe for posters to be seen as actual works of art.

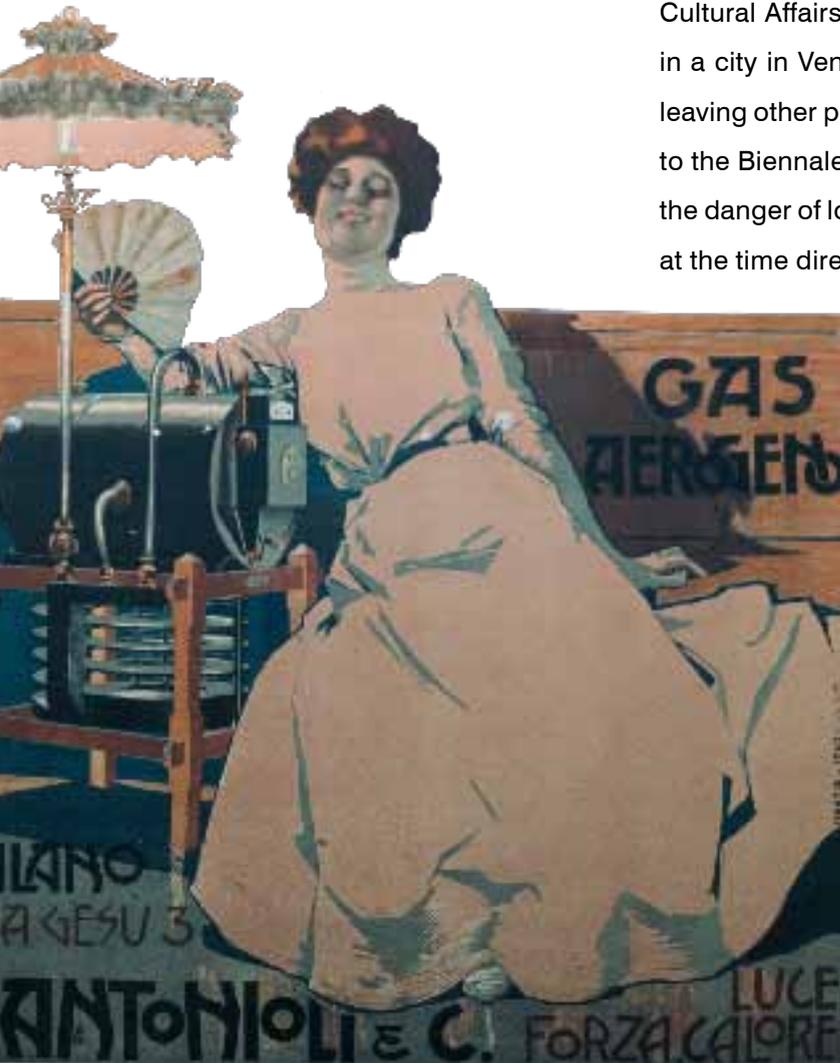
So can one call Salce a precursor?

Absolutely, because he understood the phenomenal power advertising had acquired through the poster and how influential this medium was on progress. Only in recent times have we reached the same conclusion. This vision was made official by the Milan exhibition called "Italy's Changes through the Posters



Above: 1898 poster by Adolf Hohenstein for A. Calderoni Gioielliere

**Below: 1902 poster by
Aleardo Villa**



of the Salce Collection”; but in the years when Nando was pursuing his passion, posters were viewed as ephemeral, unimportant objects. No scholars were studying this phenomenon; it would take many more years for specialized magazines to be born and for the role of the advertiser to be studied and formalized.

Upon his death, where did the collection end up?

Salce was forced to make up a will without being sure where the posters would go. He decided to leave them to the Ministry of Education – there was no Ministry of Cultural Affairs then – with the stipulation that the collection be preserved and kept in a city in Veneto. This way he wasn’t explicitly ruling out his home town, but was leaving other possibilities open. He was probably thinking of Venice, which was home to the Biennale art exposition, or Padua, important university town. Treviso, sensing the danger of losing the collection, responded with a public petition; Mazzotti himself, at the time director of the town’s tourist council, got involved, stating that the collection ought to stay in its town; he found a home for it in Palazzo Scotti and had the building renovated to that end.

This was the first home of the Salce collection after his death...

Yes. It was set up with the collaboration of prof. Menegazzi; an ingenious system was devised, similar to the mechanism used by Salce in his attic, to pull out and view the posters.

How long did the collection stay at this location?

For thirty years. In 1996 I decided to transfer the posters to another location, which guaranteed better safety. Since then, rather than being arranged in bunches, the posters have been stored in large iron cabinets with drawers; this might be less quaint and less “faithful” to Salce, but it is certainly safer.

Nando Salce was a generous man: aside from this donation, he also did a lot of charity work.



It's true, he was a member of many philanthropic associations; furthermore, since he and Gina did not have direct heirs, he left his entire estate to rest homes. To this day, in Treviso there is a Salce Hotel-Home,

which is his own house adapt-

Left: 1922 poster by Josef Maria Auchentaller (1865-1949); thanks to research by prof. Manzato, the poster was only recently attributed to the Viennese artist, who relocated to Grado in the early years of the XX Century

Below: Nando Salce photographed in front of a Pirelli poster advertising colored balls

ed to that use in accordance with his last will. Those who knew him describe him as willful, as a man of character, but also as kind, easy-going and friendly.

If Mr. Salce were a collector today, what would he collect?

His sensibility would be attracted by TV commercials: video advertising today has the same impact that posters had in his times. In 1962, at the time of Salce's death, the TV-commercial anthology "Carosello" was already very popular, and advertising moved from the city walls into the television sets, inaugurating a new era. But there is a kinship between the two worlds, even though the two media are very different. The atmosphere one finds in the TV commercials for Barilla, for example, is pretty much the same one finds in the old posters depicting a mother with her children: the look of wonder in their eyes creates the same emotion we feel today in front of the TV commercial. And, today as yesterday, the boldest and most beautiful commercials are the ones gravitating around speed and motors.... Yes, I definitely think that, were Salce alive, he would direct his passion towards commercials, the natural descendants of posters. Though I'm not exactly sure how he would collect them!





Above: vintage Italian comic books

Below: detail of an ad for a collectors' fair

Below, right: period radio models

Collecting: Passion, Pathology, or What?

It has been said that “being a collector is an illness, but it is the most beautiful illness in the world.” Nando Salce probably agreed with this definition as he stashed thousands and thousands of posters in his attic; but there are many who, behind this act of collecting, see something beyond the undeniable pleasure of owning things that one likes: something morbid, almost pathological.

In recent years, psychologists and scholars of human behavior, when referring to people who gather objects in a maniacal way, have even diagnosed them as suffering from the effects of childhood traumas such as abandonment, parents' separations, or malformations. Others simply view the collector as a “monster” with many souls: at turns nostalgic sentimentalist, robber, trader. There is probably a kernel of truth in all these views. What is certain for now is that the passion, desire or illness (however one might wish to call it) of collecting, which has always existed, has grown beyond measure, spilling over all boundaries of social station, economy and taste.





People collect everything and anything, so much so that it would be pointless to try to list all the types of collections in existence.

Take for example the number of books or specialized magazines published in the last few decades, or the number of collectors' shops, auctions, reviews and markets, replete of all sorts of items and crowded by people in search of something for their collections. And, once they find that something, off they go, home, to look at it, admire it at leisure, enjoy it in their beloved collection... but not for long, for their mind is already racing to the item they are missing, to the item that can be added, and to the place where it can be found....

Maybe it really is an illness. But a gorgeous one.

Pietro Egidi

Above, from left: lobby-card shop; some pocket "barber's calendars"

Below: hurray for trading cards!



Dudovich's Elegant Touch



Above: one of the first known posters by Dudovich: printed in 1899 by Chappuis of Bologna, it summarizes in the brilliant slogan ("I set the idea," but the pun could also be interpreted as "I stare at the idea") the very "philosophy" of the advertising poster

Right: young Dudovich with his father Antonio in the early 1900s

Marcello Dudovich proved himself an extremely skilled illustrator from the start; he displayed great talent from a very young age.

Yes, his talent was absolutely innate: since childhood, he had had a knack for drawing, and around him, at home, he found the right environment to cut his teeth, or, better, ... his eye. He frequented the studio of his cousin, the painter Guido Grimaldi, and the artists' social club Circolo Artistico Triestino. But his big leap forward took place in Milan, where his father sent him almost as punishment. The year was 1897, and Marcello was not 20 yet.

Did his father want to yank him from an environment he considered morally unhealthy?

More or less. In an attempt to make him "grow up," his father sent him to his friend Leopoldo Metlicovitz, who had already settled at the Ricordi Graphic Workshop, becoming technical director there, and working side by side with an artistic director of the caliber of Adolf Hohenstein. The latter had been working at Ricordi since 1889 and, having been educated in Vienna, had a leaning towards certain "modernist" models not yet popular in Italy. Hohenstein was a master at brilliantly reconciling painting and graphics: i.e., he knew how to insert painterly figures, rendered with chiaroscuro and a skillful use of color nuances, in an Art Nouveau graphic context, requiring more essential lines. Metlicovitz was





less “bold,” but in his posters too painting and graphics were able to coexist, often very harmoniously.

And young Dudovich?

Upon his arrival at Ricordi, Dudovich was hired as “chromist,” that is, as the person in charge of reproducing other people’s work using the chromolithographic technique: a subordinate role, to be sure, and not a particularly creative one. Young Marcello however

was soon noticed, and earned his first assignments

as poster designer. In this first Milan phase, at any rate, Dudovich was still searching for his “voice”: his mind was not made up yet, he wanted to be a painter and opened a studio together with a painter friend; he also accepted assignments from firms other than Ricordi. He had a foot in both camps, in other words, and was not sure of his talent; this also because at the firm he was “obscured” by two strong, established artists.

The turning point was not far, anyway, and his personality helped him to pursue success...

He was certainly determined, and his ego was fairly large. At times he was also an eccentric, and liked to wear flashy clothes. His was an attempt to be unique, and a successful one, so much so that a young publisher from Bologna, Edmondo Chappuis, of French ancestry, noticed him. The year was 1899 and Dudovich accepted his invitation to relocate to Bologna, upon promise of some very big things. He was disappointed at first, when he discovered that the Chappuis firm was housed in a basement and its staff was far from distinguished compared to Ricordi’s.... In any case, something clicked for him: Marcello almost immediately entered a contest for the promotional materials of Bologna’s annual spring festival, and for three years in a row he beat the competition with his posters. His popularity soared, but so did the jealousy and competitiveness of his rivals, with the result that he is treated as an intruder, notwithstanding his good

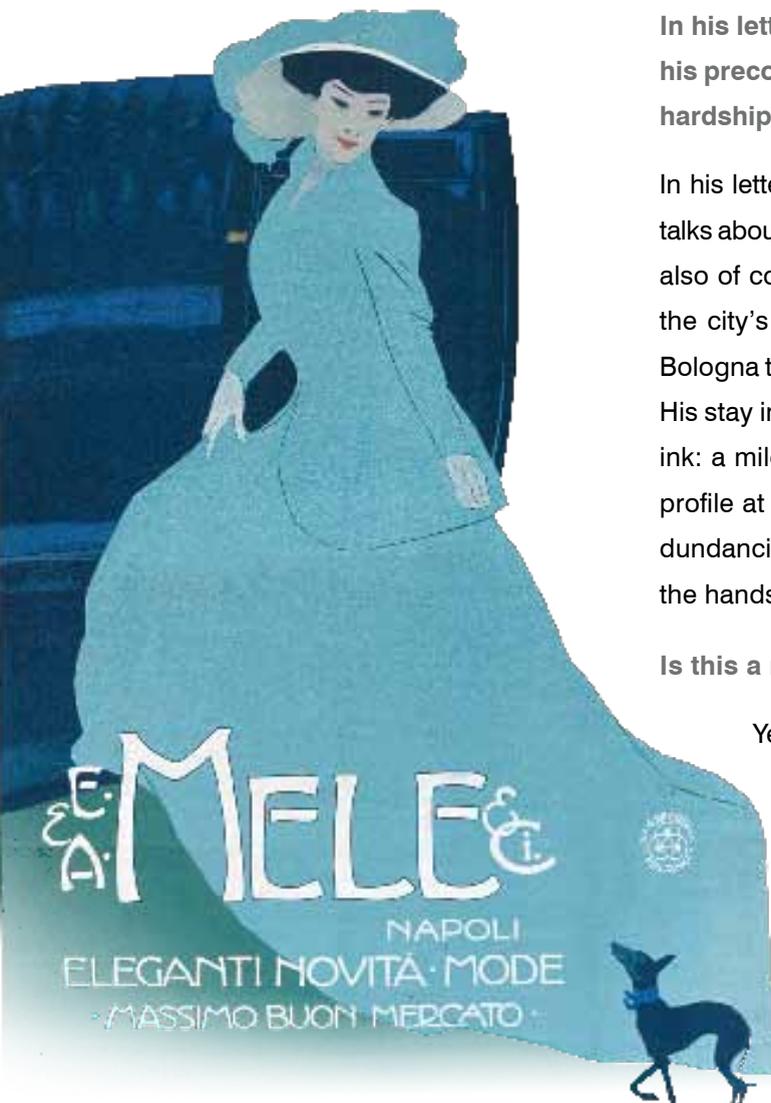
Left: a photographic portrait of Dudovich as a young man

Below: the first of the posters – still in allegorical and mythological style – with which Dudovich leaped into the limelight – for three years in a row, from 1900 to 1902 – by winning the contests to publicize Bologna’s spring festivals



Right: the background that plunges the figure in darkness was, creatively speaking, an absolute novelty for the years in which this poster was designed for *Rapid* ink (1906, Industrie Grafiche Armanino in Genoa)

Below: the light-blue-clad lady in the poster for *Magazzini Mele* dated 1908 was also reproduced on an Italian commemorative stamp celebrating the art of the poster (2003)



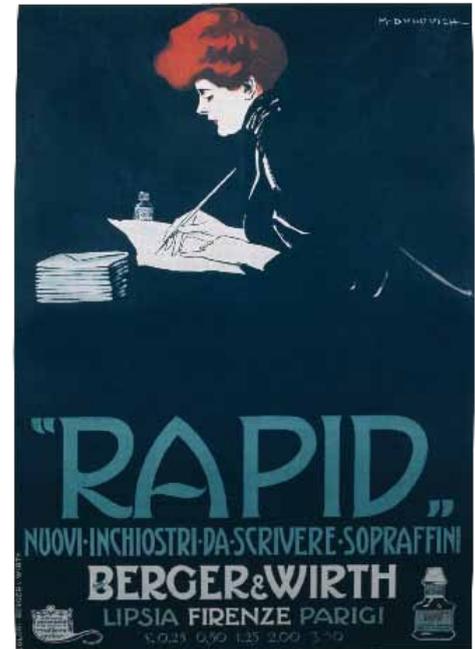
relations with many artists in town. In the same period, he collaborated with an avant-garde magazine, *Italia Ride* (Italy Laughs), which favored a simplification of form and a flat, contrasted design devoid of chiaroscuro. The magazine was short-lived, but it was important for Dudovich to be able to distinguish himself in this context also.

In his letters of the period he writes of his precocious success but also of the hardships...

In his letters to his father and mother, he talks about the prizes and the success, but also of conflicts with Chappuis and with the city's artistic environment; in fact, at one point he writes of his decision to leave Bologna to accept an invitation from another graphic establishment in Genoa, Armanino. His stay in Genoa was short, and all that remains of that period is one poster for "Rapid" ink: a milestone of a poster; the subject is a woman writing some letters, portrayed in profile at the desk, and the rendering is a bold synthesis which does away with all redundancies: against a very dark background, Dudovich stresses the essential: the face, the hands, the pen, the woman's bright red hair. Everything else is implied.

Is this a novelty, a disruptive idea compared to the prevailing style?

Yes. Dudovich was bold enough to dare, to stick his neck out; he did this perhaps more and better during those first years, from 1905 on. In 1906 he returned to Ricordi, and began his series of posters for the Neapolitan department store Mele. Not just Dudovich, but also the other great poster artists of the period – Hohenstein and Metlicovitz, Alearo Villa, Leonardo Cappiello, Franz Laskoff, Alearo Terzi – collaborated with the Meles to produce a large number of posters over many years, to advertise both the regular



seasons and special sales and promotions. Important material to study the evolution of poster art in Italy.

Did Dudovich always take inspiration from real life?

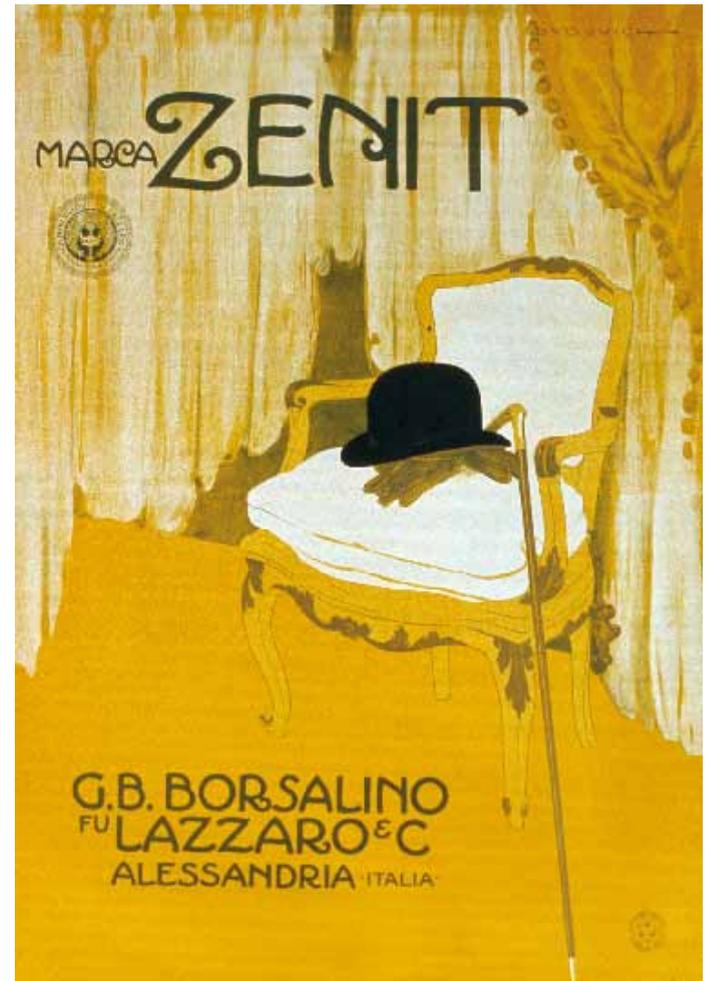
As far as I know, he did not use photographs at the time, since all the images we found date from the 1920s and 1930s; but he already had an excellent eye for the social life around him, and was gifted with a grace and lightness of touch that no-one else had. And his stylistic choice, to privilege fields of flatly-applied color, stark lines, and bright, strong hues, allowed him to reach a level of expression without precedent. Even when he used pastel colors, he was able to achieve the same result: a splendid poster for Mele represents a woman in a light-blue gown as she is getting in her car. The dress is not bright red like in some of his other posters, but is just as striking, for Dudovich was able to excel using a range of registers. Up to that point, also, there had been a forced co-existence of image and captions explaining – sometimes in prolix detail – the subject of the ad. With the Mele posters, thanks also to their size – they are just under 7 feet tall – the visual impact is truly remarkable: the women seem to be stepping out of the posters and the captions are pared down to a minimum.

Was this the beginning of a new advertising technique?



Yes. We are of course talking about Dudovich's best production, which can be dated from 1905/06 to about 1910, the year of the Borsalino contest, when he came up with the poster of the bowler hat sitting on an armchair in an elegant living room; Dudovich's decision not to

present the human figure but only to suggest a situation, an atmosphere, is an absolute novelty: there is only one precedent by Hohlwein, in Germany. Then, in 1911, Dudovich arrived in Munich, invited by the publisher Langen: from that point on, he designed a few more posters for Ricordi, but devoted most of his time inventing illustrations for



Above: this work, innovative for the conspicuous absence of the human figure, was not to the liking of the owner of Ricordi, but nonetheless won the national competition sponsored by Borsalino in 1910

Left: detail



Above: Marcello Dudovich, in a gondola in Venice in the Twenties, together with a model

Right: a poster for *La Rinascente* (circa 1934)

Below: Dudovich's wife, Elisa Bucchi, who inspired many of the artist's posters



the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, illustrations that were later reproduced in the anthology *Corso*. Most of them represented scenes from high society: ladies and gentlemen, ballrooms, casinos, horse races....

So he became a sort of reporter for the social register?

He was a special correspondent, in a way, and with his drawings Dudovich rendered snapshots of easy living and of a sophisticated, elegant world. The "Gay Nineties" were coming to an end, and Dudovich's wife, Elisa Bucchi, followed him on his assignments because she was a fashion reporter. Their only daughter, Adriana, was born in 1911 in Germany, where the family stayed until just before the Great War.

Was he already a well-known poster artist at this point?

Oh, certainly. Already after his period in Bologna Dudovich was a famous artist, an up-and-coming young talent: he was admired, imitated, and envied. Upon his return to Italy from Munich, he settled in Milan, where, with the exception of some brief periods, he lived for the rest of his life. He received friendship and support from some high-class families, e.g. the Borlettis or the Brustios, founders of *La Rinascente* department store, who would be his most important clients during the 1920s and 1930s. During the Great War, of course, poster production dwindled: Dudovich produced a few war posters and many magazine covers. He also began



designing film posters. In Turin, capital of the early film industry, he met a French artist, Luciano Achille Mauzan, who also resembled him physically: both were tall, gangling blonds. Both worked for the cinema, but the Frenchman's style was a little crass, vulgar. Dudovich's style remained light and airy.

His artistic style matched his lifestyle...

True. In Milan his ego could have become bloated, but it never did. Humbly, he considered himself a capable artisan and never exploited his fame, remaining true to his artistic style and to his lifestyle. Though he was paid well, he was regularly broke, rumor has it because of all the women swooning around him.... He was a fascinating artist, but also a fascinating man, a very sweet, meek man without a trace of arrogance. His relationship with his wife remained very amicable even after they separated formally; in 1945, when she became seriously ill, Dudovich stood by her with great devotion to the very end. Elisa Bucchi had been his model on several occasions; then, in the Twenties, her figure was replaced by that of their daughter, who was still a girl: there are some Rinascente posters where Adriana's boyish haircut is unmistakable.

In the years in which in Italy fashion and style changed and most poster designers chose the Novecento or rationalist style, what did Dudovich do?

He became detached, true to his ways, feeling a certain nostalgia for painting, even though he continued to produce posters – in direct competition with a whole new generation of artists: Severo Pozzati (Sepo), Marcello Nizzoli and above all Erberto Carboni whose success grew after WWII. Dudovich's only "pupil" was Walter Resentera, who married Adriana in 1935. In the 1930s, as he felt his inspiration waning, Dudovich left more and more room to his son-in-law, who spurred him and encouraged him to catch up with the times, and actually collaborated with him. Dudovich's best work from the 1930s was probably the Balilla poster, produced in 1934. After that, his shapes became more massive, cubical, more akin to the style in vogue during the Fascist regime. As someone once wrote,



Well-known poster, of elegant line, which Dudovich created in 1934 (many of his works deal with cars, to publicize the products of FIAT, Michelin, Pirelli and Bugatti)



Above: this 1955 work contains a very creative idea to promote *La Rinascente vacanze*

Right: 1933 letter from Dudovich to general manager Marco Ara, about the delivery of some works commissioned by Generali

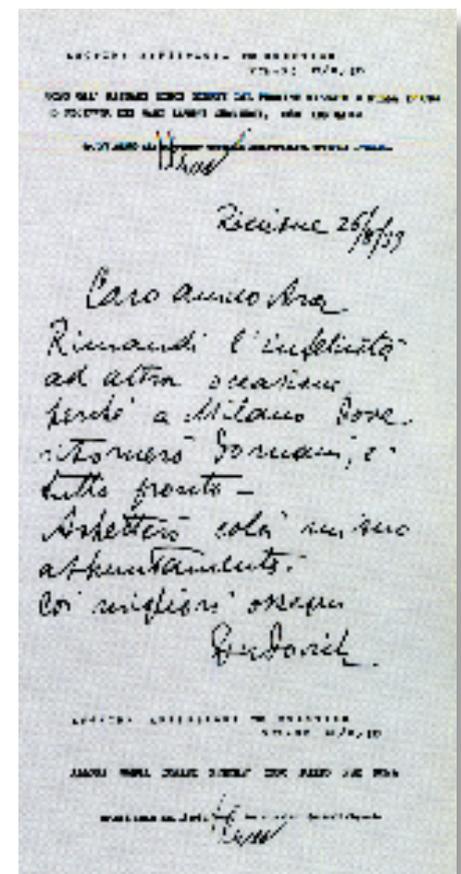
his style became “Resenterish,” losing that lightness of touch that had been his trademark. In some of Dudovich’s posters, one can actually see Resentera’s hand.

Did his first trip to Libya around 1936 help him in this unproductive period?

It certainly shook him up and stimulated him, and stirred up his dormant passion for painting, especially tempera; he produced fewer posters, though his activity lasted through the Fifties. He still came up with some nice ideas, such as the bathing beauty lying in a pool on top of a large starfish, in a 1955 poster for *Rinascente*; but he obviously was no longer the Dudovich of yesteryear: he took refuge in painting, nostalgically, reprising the old themes developed in the *Corso* album, the high society of lost times, the elegant outfits, and so forth.

Was he hard on himself in preparing his works?

Dudovich had a great knack for drawing. Like a writer who writes without rewrites, who does not macerate himself over the blank page, so he too did not suffer over the sketch. He was sometimes lazy and did not meet deadlines, but this was part of his personality, slightly slothful and a little dissolute. At any rate, the Twenties were a period of intense work for him, he had also become artistic director at Igap, the General Company for Posting and Advertising, and was deluged with a lot of assignments. In his correspondence of the period, he writes that his clients sometimes had to send him reminders,



and he had to assure them that he would deliver the works on time. But actually, once he got to work, he worked very quickly. He claimed that he “waited to fall into a trance”; at first he avoided the work, he procrastinated, then – once inspiration struck – he finished the sketch in no time.

Did he take a lot of photographs?

Yes, it was common practice. From the late 1800s onward, many poster artists, but also famous painters, used the photographic medium as a reference point. And Dudovich always carried his sketch book with him anyway. Of all the drawings we found (thousands!), some are, yes, finished renderings, more or less perfect; but often they are just notes, unfinished sketches or scribbles. It fascinated him to capture on paper – with pencil or charcoal – a hand, a foot, a knee, a shoe, or a hat: anything that drew his attention.

Was he very creative, did he have a vision different from the majority of people?

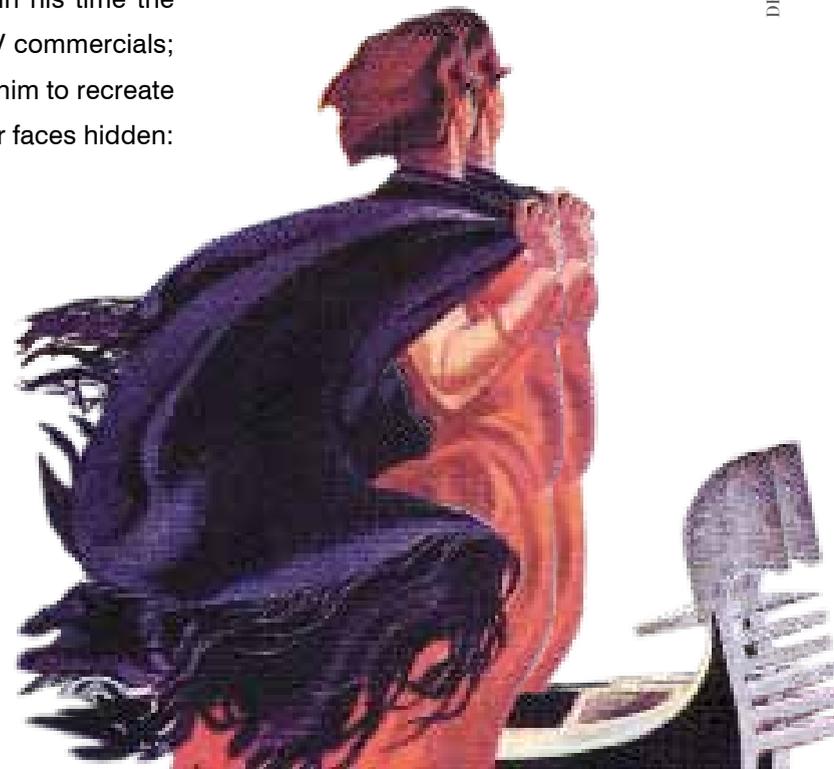
He was brilliant, surely, but I do not think he imagined things “other” than reality, he was simply able to capture the quintessence of certain situations, usually revolving around the feminine universe. That was his main interest: women, who were in his time the protagonists of poster ads, just as today they are the protagonists of TV commercials; he had a great passion for women, a sincere admiration, which allowed him to recreate the feminine mystery in his posters. Many of his female figures have their faces hidden: either by a hat, or because they are drawn from the back.

So, we can say that his inner life was very present in his works?

Definitely, this mysterious world that fascinated him animated his works and determined his stylistic choices. His way of “capturing” that mysterious something of femininity and his capacity or translating such feelings into drawings allowed him to reach some extraordinary results. But Marcello Dudovich was fundamentally a simple, straightforward man, there were no dark zones about him. I would say that the thousands of drawings from the various collections speak for him. He was a rare, transparent person and, I daresay, a happily naive one. ■



Above: preparatory photograph for the poster Dudovich designed in 1928 for Generali (below, a detail)





Above: Antonio Dudovich in his Garibaldi army uniform

Below: the Trieste Quartet (Quartetto Triestino): from left, Jankovich, Viezzoli, Baraldi and Manlio Dudovich



The Dudovich Household: Art, Culture and Patriotism

Marcello Dudovich was born in Trieste on March 21, 1878. His father Antonio, originally from Traù (today Trigor), in Dalmatia, was an employee of Assicurazioni Generali. A fervent irredentist, he wore the Garibaldi red shirt, and fought in his army in Bezzecca (1866) and Dijon (1871). Dudovich's mother, Elisabetta (Elisa) Cadorini from Trieste, was an excellent pianist, and a loving and beloved mother.

At home, art, culture and patriotism were always in the air. Marcello was the third of four children: Maria (1873), Itala (1874) and Manlio (1882). Manlio became a well-known violinist and played for thirty years in the Quartetto Triestino together with Jankovich, Viezzoli and Baraldi, touring all over the world.

Marcello's maternal cousin was Guido Grimani (1871-1933). From a very early age,

Dudovich frequented the studios of Trieste painters and attended the jolly "Sabatine," or Saturday soirées, of the Artistic Club (Circolo Artistico), occasionally performing in drag in some sketches. In his years attending art school (1893-95), Arturo Rietti was a big influence on him: his pastel self-portrait painted circa 1895 confirms this.

In Bologna, where he worked from 1899 to 1905, he met Elisa Bucchi from Faenza, fashion reporter, who became his



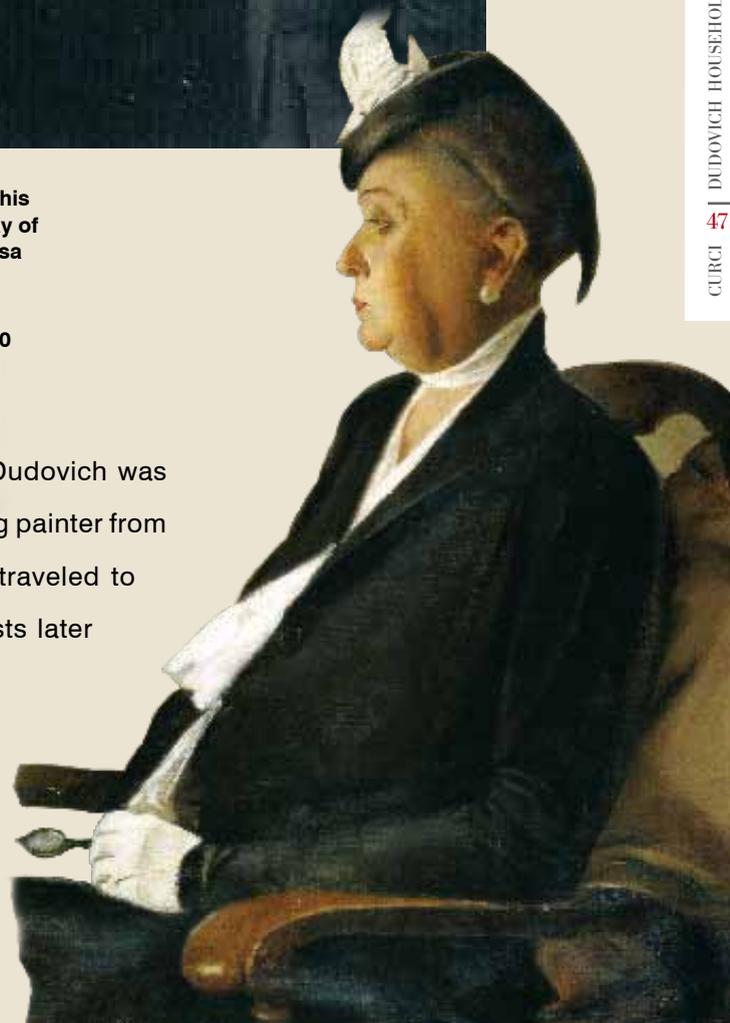
Left and above: Marcello Dudovich in his self-portrait, circa 1895, and on the day of Adriana's wedding, 1935, with wife Elisa and the young newlyweds

Right: *Portrait of Sister Itala*, circa 1930

wife. Their only daughter, Adriana, was born in Munich in 1911, when Dudovich was working for the magazine *Simplicissimus*. In 1935 Adriana married a young painter from Seren del Grappa in Veneto, Walter Resentera, who years before had traveled to Milan with the intention of studying with his idol Dudovich: the two artists later collaborated on the production of both posters and mural decorations.

Dudovich's *Portrait of Sister Itala* dates from the Thirties, and is one of his most intense paintings. Itala's daughter, Nives Comas Casati, became her uncle Marcello's pupil and posed for him as a model. She is a good painter in her own right.

Roberto Curci



the image

Browsing through the images and reading the introductory texts by Pietro Egidi, we can review the history of the business communication developed through art by Generali and by other companies which today belong to its Group: posters, calendars, half-sheets and some examples of “small publicity” alternate with the biographies of the most famous illustrators commissioned to carry out these works.

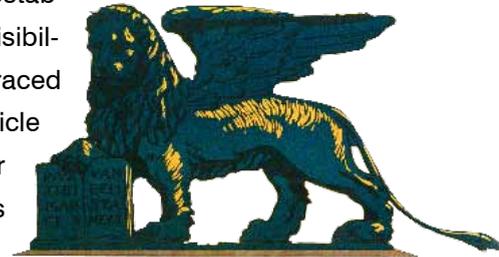
Chapter I	The Lion in Color...	50
Chapter II	The Great Italian Companies of the Group	58
Chapter III	Farmers, the Country and the Great War	66
Chapter IV	Dudovich's "Sign"	82
Chapter V	The Italian Companies between the Two Wars	94
Chapter VI	Boccasile and Others	110
Chapter VII	The War and Its Aftermath	120
Chapter VIII	Small... but Effective	134
Chapter IX	Abroad	152
Extra	Great Comic Strips and Cartoons	164



The Lion in Color...

**ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI
AND AFFILIATES: FROM THE
CALENDARS OF THE LATE
1800S TO THE FIRST POSTERS**

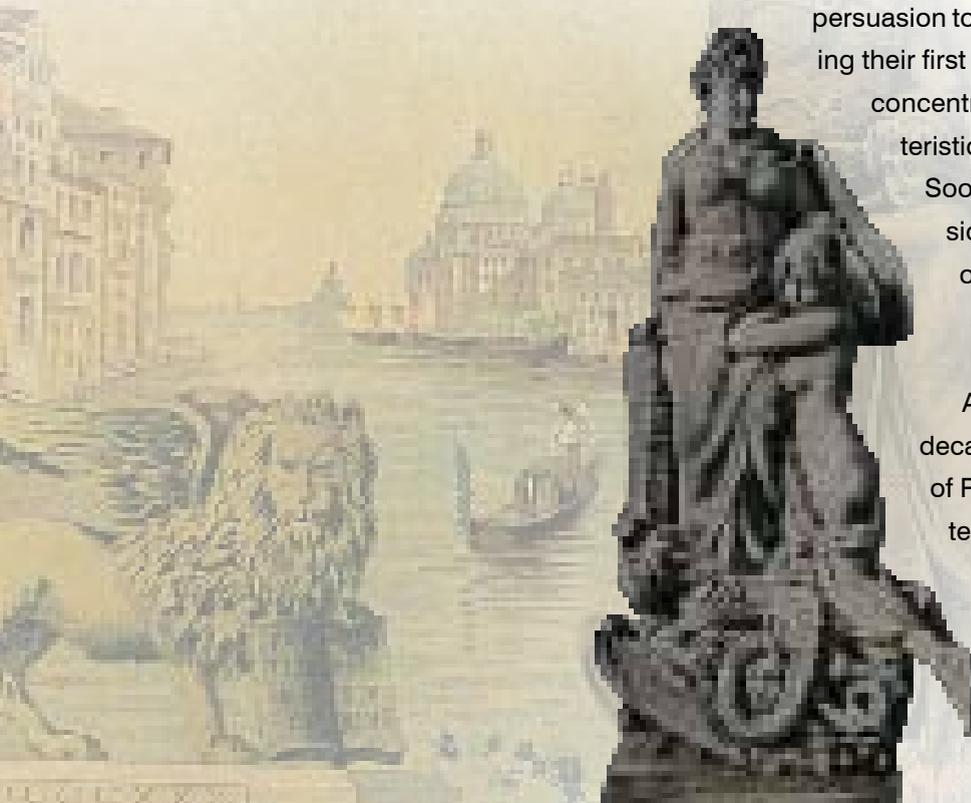
In the second half of the XIX Century, and especially in its last decades, thanks also to the evolution of typo-lithographic techniques, illustrations and graphics for advertising became more widespread, propelled by an ever-growing industrialization and by economic development. Companies, established or emerging, understood the importance of a visibility that had to be in tune with the times; thus they embraced new forms of communication which had their best vehicle in the chromolithographic poster, along with other forms of promotion where illustrations and graphics prevailed, in increasingly effective ways.



Assicurazioni Generali acted upon this persuasion too, distributing illustrated calendars in the 1890s and producing their first illustrated poster at the beginning of the XX Century, initially concentrating on images of Venice, on its landscape and its characteristic symbols, such as the winged lion of Saint Mark.

Soon, Anonima Grandine and Anonima Infortuni, the two subsidiaries created by Generali in 1890 and 1896, also made use of the new medium for their publicity, though in a more traditional style where text and numbers virtually took up all the space of the posters.

Among the poster artists working for the company in the first decades of the XX Century, an important name stands out: that of Plinio Codognato, who was the author of much publicity material for companies acquired by Generali over the years.



ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI
 DIREZIONE
 VENEZIA V. GIURUFFINO S. MARCO

VENEZIA

1894

CAPITALE SOCIALE
 AZIONI NOMINATIVE
 L. 13.000.000

ASSICURAZIONI INDIVIDUALI

PREMIATE

DIPLOMA D'ONORE
 TORINO 1884

INCENDIO
 SCOPPIO DEGLI APPARECCHI A VAPORE
 ESPLOSIONE DEL GAS E TORNINE
TRASPORTI MARITTIMI
 PIÙ ALI E TERRESTRI
 ASSICURAZIONE DELLA VITA E MANA
 A RISCHIO DI MORTE NIENTE AVANTAGEI BASI STRAORDINARI
DOTALI
 RISARCIMENTI DI DANNI
 Effettuati durante l'anno 1892
 RISARCIMENTI DI DANNI
 Effettuati dal 1° al 31 dicembre 1892
 in Italia L. 13.000.000 L. 13.000.000
 in Italia L. 13.000.000 L. 13.000.000

STAB. ARTISTICO COHEN & O. MILANO

ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI
 1892
 VENEZIA

1892

ASSICURAZIONI INDIVIDUALI

PREMIATE

DIPLOMA D'ONORE
 TORINO 1884

This page: wall calendars dated 1892 and 1894



These two pages, from top left:
Generali posters designed
by G.L. Sormani (circa 1910),
F. Chiurlotto (1911/12),
uncredited artist (1913/15)
and P. Codognato (circa 1920)

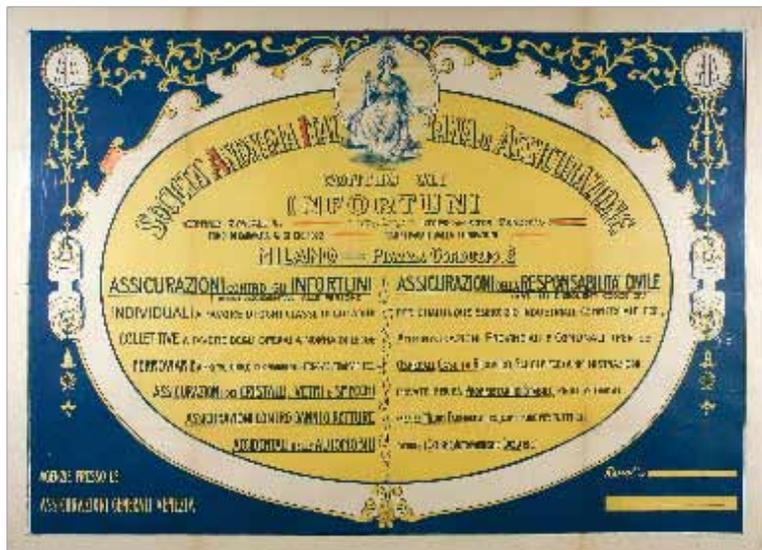
focus

The city of Venice and the symbol of the winged lion, featured in the early posters produced by Generali, are connected to another “pictorial tradition” of the company: that of the tapestries, displayed on the porticoes in Saint Mark Square, in observance of a Venetian tradition born during the religious ceremonies of the time of the Dogi, and repeated to this day during national holidays. The original tapestries were commissioned by Generali to the renowned artistic textile manufacturer Fortuny, using a color palette reminiscent of the precious banners of the golden age of Venetian art. After most of the originals were rendered unusable by heavy wear and tear, more tapestries were made in 1983 by Bevilacqua Weavers, using a happy mix of past experience and modern technology.



Culture and Leisure at the End of the XIX Century

Those Italians who could read in the late 1800s (about one out of two) loved to read about the adventures of the heroes in Emilio Salgari's novels. During those same years, new inventions were developed and new forms of entertainment introduced which would become the great passions of the following Century.



Above: poster for Anonima Infortuni (1923)

Facing page: posters for Anonima Grandine (1900) and for Anonima Infortuni (1914)



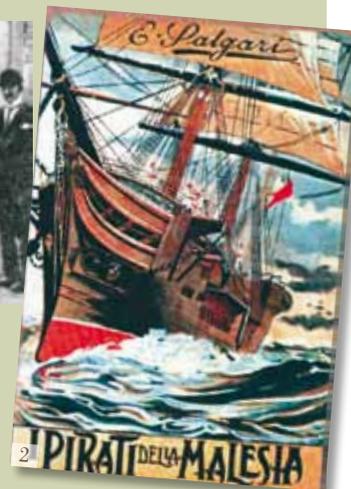
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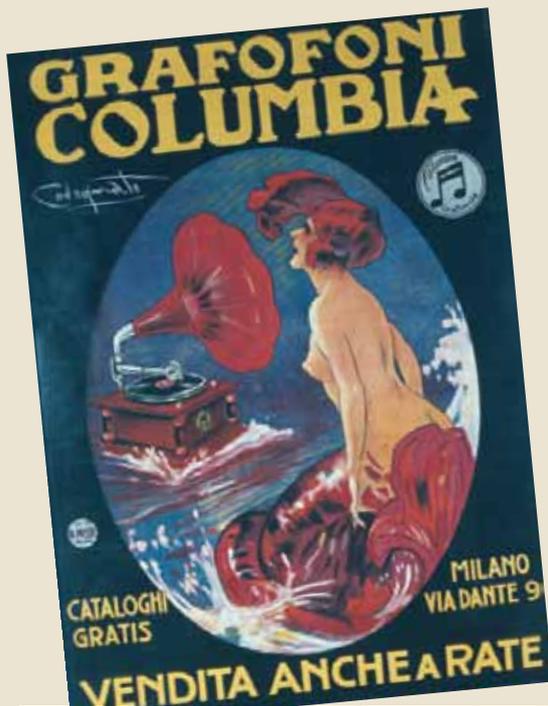
4



2

- 1 Team photograph of the Genoa Cricket and Football Club, which between 1898 and 1900 won the first three Italian football championships
- 2 Giuseppe Gamba's cover art for the first edition of Emilio Salgari's novel *I pirati della Malesia* (The Pirates of Malaysia, 1896)
- 3 FIAT's 3 1/2 HP, the first car built by the Turin factory in 1899
- 4 Guglielmo Marconi and his "wireless telegraph" during the 1897 experiments in the gulf of La Spezia

The “Bard” of Machines and Speed

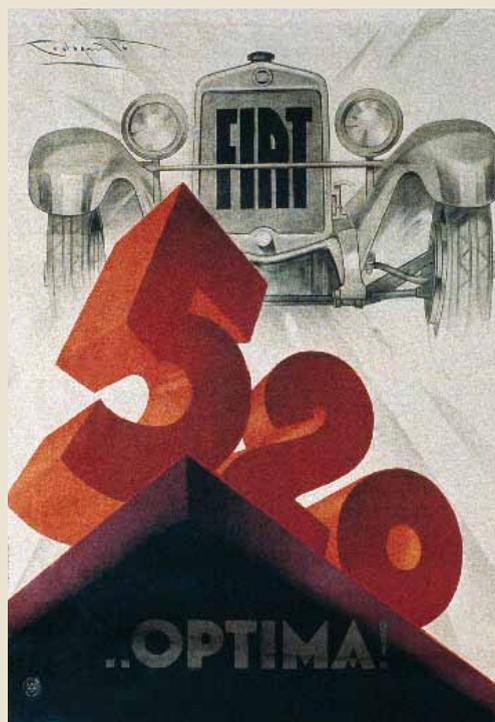


Codognato was among the best and most prolific Italian poster artists and illustrators; he was born in Verona in 1878, where he attended first a school for painters and then the Academy under Mosè Bianchi; he soon devoted himself to poster design and to illustrations; he produced his first posters at the beginning of the 1900s, for fairs and companies in his home town, and for the opera productions of the Arena. His relocation to Milan in 1918 was instrumental for his career as advertising graphic artist: the city was in those years the home of important companies specializing in the design and printing of posters.

His contacts in Milan and his growing skills afforded him the opportunity to receive assignments from major industries in Lombardy and other regions (Campari, Pirelli, Ansaldo, Atala, Bianchi, Frera, Cinzano, FIAT, and Liebig) that commissioned from him posters as well as other publicity materials.

Meanwhile, he also continued his activity as illustrator, collaborating with many periodicals, such as *Il Secolo XX*, *La Lettura*, *L'Illustrazione Italiana*. For about twenty years he was in charge of advertising for FIAT, for whom he created important posters; he was also in charge of FIAT's magazine, very well-regarded among company





Facing page:
Grafoni Columbia (1910/15),
Circuito di Cremona (1924),
Pirelli (detail of a lithographed
tin, circa 1930)

This page: **Frera** (circa 1925)
and two posters for **FIAT**,
circa 1928 (left) and 1923 (below)

magazines. And it was within this world of engines, cars and speed, which fascinated him beyond measure, that Codognato's talent shone brightest; in this world he produced his best (and best-known) works, especially those advertising car races at a number of tracks of the period. For his skill in rendering a sense of movement and of dynamism through nuances of line and color in the contours of his figures (a technique inspired by futurism which he pioneered), he has been called "the bard of speed in posters."

Throughout his years as graphic designer and illustrator, Codognato also worked as a painter. His life and career, after his early years in Verona, become linked to the city of Milan, where he was celebrated for his talent and where he died in 1940.



The Great Italian Companies of the Group

TORO, ALLEANZA AND INA: POSTER ART BETWEEN THE LATE XIX AND EARLY XX CENTURIES

In the period of advertising examined in this book, from the end of the XIX Century to the early 1960s, some important Italian insurance companies expanded or were founded, before eventually being acquired by the Generali Group.

Beginning, by founding date, with Toro, founded in Turin in 1833 and acquired by the Group in 2006: little material survives of the advertising of that period. The acquisition of Alleanza Assicurazioni, on the other hand, dates from 1934. The company was founded in Genoa in 1898, and once again very little

exists today of its publicity material: just a few posters from the early 1900s, in Art Nouveau style. In 2000, Generali acquired Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni (INA), a state-run life-insurance company originally founded in Rome in 1912 with the intent to create a life-insurance monopoly; the company's historical logo, the sower, created by Andrea Petroni and re-used by other designers who worked for the Institute, remained in use for more than half a century. INA produced many posters and other promotional materials, designed over time by big names among the artists of the field, such as Leopoldo Metlicovitz and Plinio Codognato; more material was also produced by INA to publicize controlled companies founded in the 1920s.



Right: the sower, historical symbol of INA (detail of Petroni's poster reproduced on page 62)



Above and right: half-sheets for Compagnia Anonima d'Assicurazione di Torino (later Toro), 1894 and circa 1910



focus

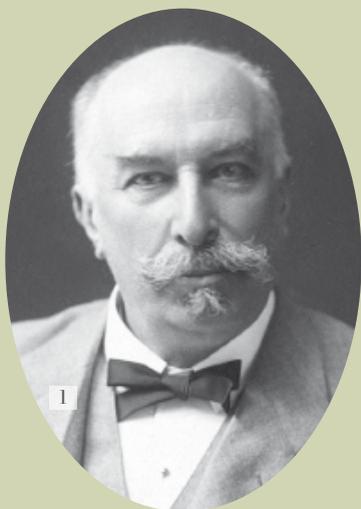
The law which in 1912 created INA stipulated that companies operating in the life insurance sector could sell their portfolios to the new institution “provided they pay the Institute the sum of the mathematical reserves corresponding to the duration of the contracts, net of the not-yet-amortized acquisition expenses.” Thus the financial maneuver was launched whereby the life portfolios were transferred to the budget of the Institute without direct economic intervention on the part of the state. Initially, 24 companies took advantage of such option, most of them foreign; many of these companies had promoted their visibility on the market through posters commissioned to great artists (above, two examples).



Above, from left: Alleanza posters by L. Guerrini (1901) and by uncredited artist (circa 1905)

Below: detail of Guerrini's poster and of another Alleanza poster from the early 1900s





The Age of Giolitti

The 1912 law which brought about the Istituto Nazionale Assicurazioni (INA) was one of the first reforms of the so-called Age of Giolitti (1903-1914), from the name of Giovanni Giolitti who in that period was Prime Minister for more than one term.



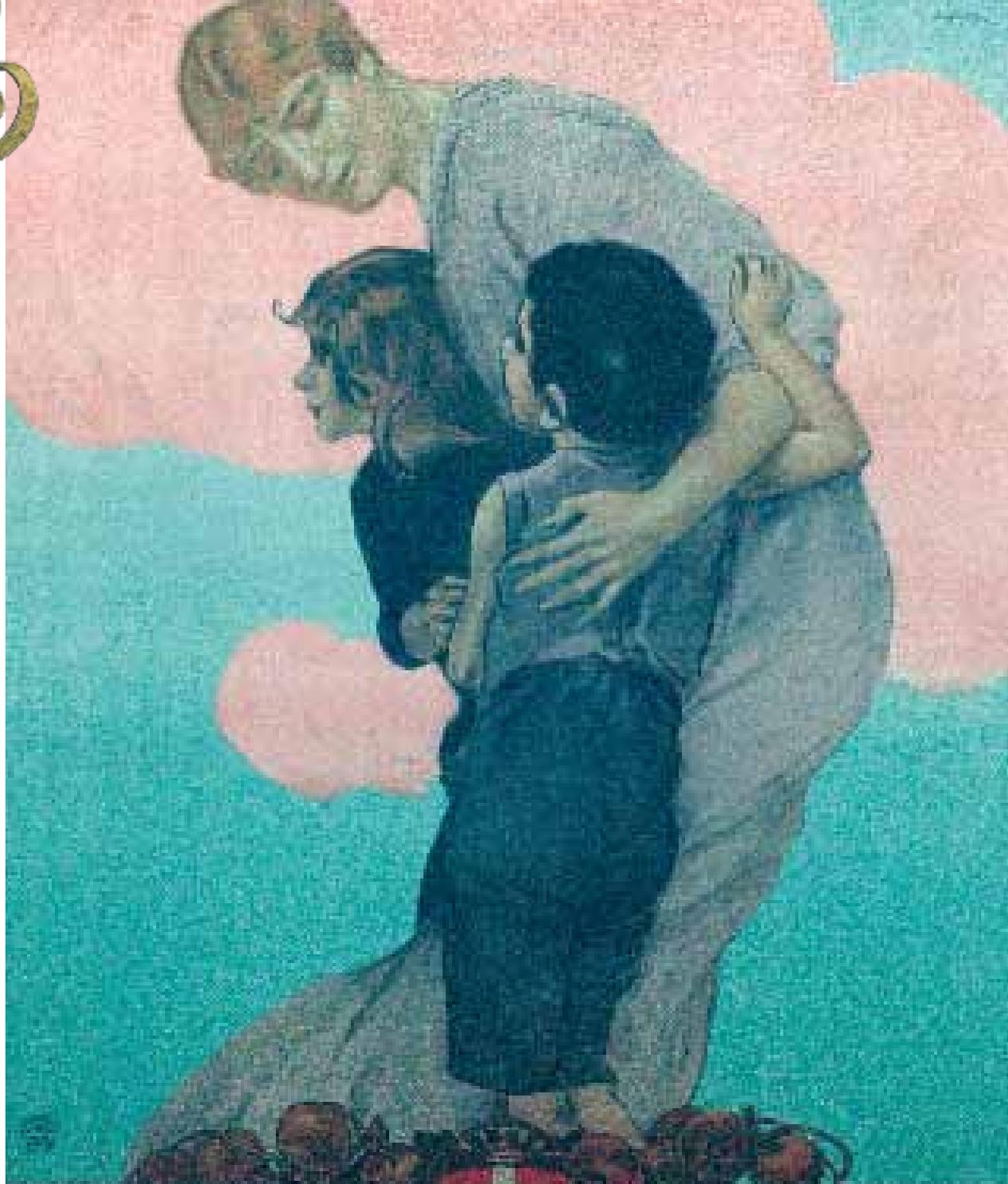
- 1 Another important reform was also dated 1912: the introduction of universal suffrage for men
- 2 Seamstresses: during the Age of Giolitti laws were passed to protect female and child workers
- 3 A drawing by Achille Beltrame celebrating the victory in the war between Italy and Turkey (1911-1912) which gave Italy the chance to conquer Libya
- 4 The futurists were the real celebrators of war, "only possible hygiene for the world," and advocated a radical renovation of art as well as society





Above, from left: INA posters by Petroni (1912) and Codognato (1914), who reprises the figure of the sower created by the former artist

Facing page: INA poster by Metlicovitz (1914)



ISTITUTO NAZIONALE
DELLE ASSICURAZIONI

CAPITALI ASSICURATI OLTRE 1 MILIARDO - POLIZZE GARAN-
TITE DALLO STATO - CAPITALI E RENDITE INSEQUESTIBILI



Right: Leopoldo Metlicovitz

Above: E. & A. Mele & Ci. (1907)

Below, left: *Distillerie italiane*
(circa 1899)

Below, right: *Gianni Schicchi*
(detail, circa 1919)



A Great Master of the Art of the Poster



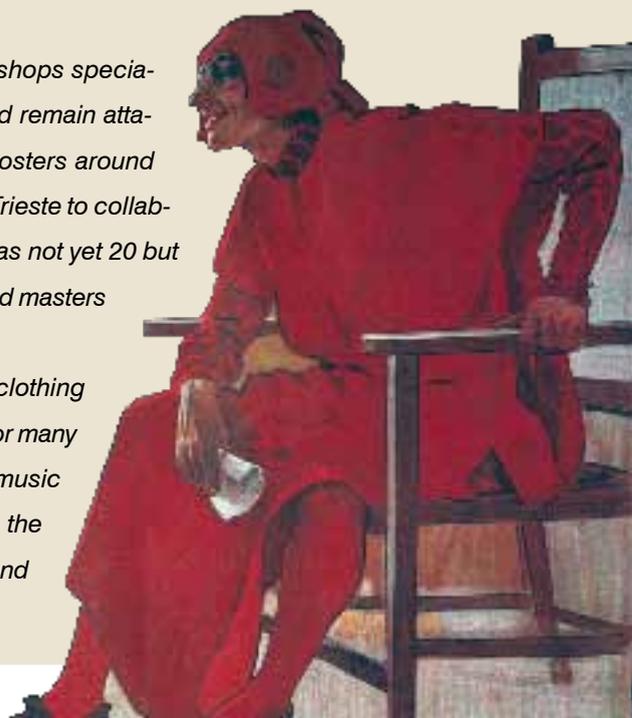
Born in Trieste in 1868, Metlicovitz was one of the first creators of posters in Italy. He was active especially between the late 1800s and WWI, in the early stages of this new medium, which initially was heavily influenced by the Art Nouveau style: for years the artist gathered his inspiration from German Jugendstil models.

At a young age, he worked as assistant-lithographer in a printing shop in Udine; he then moved to Milan where, in 1892, following a brief stint at the Tensi firm, he was hired by Ricordi Lithographic Shops as technical director in charge of the transfer

of drawings onto lithographic stone. His training as poster designer was greatly inspired by the presence at Ricordi of Adolf Hohenstein, who had been its artistic director since 1889, and of two other great pioneers of the medium: Giovanni Maria Mataloni and Aleardo Villa.

To Casa Ricordi, one of the first Italian printing shops specialized in the printing of posters, Metlicovitz would remain attached for most of his career, creating his first posters around 1896/97. In 1897 he invited another artist from Trieste to collaborate with the firm: Marcello Dudovich, who was not yet 20 but was destined to become one of the unparalleled masters of poster design.

From the series of posters made for the Mele clothing store in Naples between 1899 and 1915 and for many other companies, to those created for the music world, and the opera world in particular, to the many designed for exhibitions, expositions and





other events, Metlicovitz's production for Ricordi was truly remarkable.

Of all these works, many have become famous and are considered milestones in the Italian (and not only) history of the poster.

Many important brand images are linked to his name to this day: for example, the one he created in 1899 for Fernet Branca which is still used today, depicting a majestic eagle clutching the liquor bottle while in flight over the terrestrial globe.

He was also a busy illustrator for magazines, among which Ars et Labor, La lettura and Almanacco Italiano.

In 1907 and 1910, Giulio Ricordi sent Metlicovitz to Argentina, where the publisher apparently wanted him to manage a graphic firm created in that country. From 1911, and for many years to come, he also devoted himself to the designing of film posters: the most famous of these is the one created for Cabiria, a landmark silent film of 1914 for which Gabriele D'Annunzio wrote the story and title cards.

In 1915, having lived there for long periods, Metlicovitz moved permanently into his house of Ponte Lambro with his family. He devoted himself mainly to painting, particularly landscapes and portraits, while continuing to design posters; his work in the Twenties and especially in the Thirties was heavily influenced by the "Novecento" Fascist Regime style.

After decades of intense collaboration, Metlicovitz had a falling-out with Ricordi, and largely withdrew from public life, cultivating his passion for painting during his remaining years. He died in Ponte Lambro in 1944.



This page, clockwise from top left: *Mostra del ciclo e dell'automobile* (detail, 1905), *Inaugurazione del Sempione - Esposizione Internazionale Milano* (detail, 1906), *Cabiria* (1914)

Farmers, the Country and the Great War

THE “ALMANACS” OF ANONIMA GRANDINE

Coverage for damages from hail started at Generali in 1836, initially limited to certain areas of Lombardy, Veneto and Emilia. In 1889, after some years of heavy losses, the company decided to discontinue this type of coverage; in March 1890, however, they promoted the creation of the “Joint-Stock Fixed-Premium Insurance Company against Hail” in Milan, an independent organism which could make use of the vast agency network of the parent company.

Though the new company, later known as Anonima Grandine, used (as we have seen) posters to promote its image and services, from the early years of the XX Century it favored another new promotional medium which would prove successful for many years to come: illustrated “almanacs” (thus called in the company’s tradition, but actually wall calendars) depicting the world of farmers and the work in the fields. Until 1914, the central illustrations of the calendars, printed by the Gustavo Modiano shop in Milan, were created by various uncredited artists; then, for about 15 years and with the exception of a few designed by Osvaldo Ballerio, they were commissioned to Achille Beltrame, famous illustrator of the weekly *La Domenica del Corriere*. In his calendars for the years 1916, 1917, 1918 and 1920, Beltrame often drew pictures dealing with war, though sweetened by the idyllic atmosphere of the farmers’ world; his second series from 1923 on concentrated exclusively on the countryside and agricultural activities.

The discovery of an autograph diary in which the artist listed his works year by year, often citing titles, clients and fees, was instrumental in helping with the cataloguing of Beltrame’s paintings and posters, including the sketches he made for calendars and other promotional materials.





Facing page: detail of an unsigned oil sketch (circa 1910) probably used for an Anonima Grandine calendar

This page: 1903 calendar illustrated by L. Fontana



focus

The Universal Exposition of 1900 took place in Paris from April 14 to November 10, with a total of more than 50 million visitors (a number matched only by the 1970 Osaka Expo). Many monuments were built for the occasion in Paris, including the Gare de Lyon, the Gare d'Orsay (now Musée d'Orsay), the Alexander III bridge, the Grand Palais, La Ruche and the Petit Palais. The event witnessed the triumph of the cinematograph of the Lumière brothers and of the II Olympic Games of the modern era, also hosted by Paris. Anonima Grandine was visible at the Exposition (left, the frontispiece of the budget report presented at the event), and in the following years adorned its "almanacs" with a picture of the medal won in Paris and of another medal won at the 1898 national Turin Exposition.

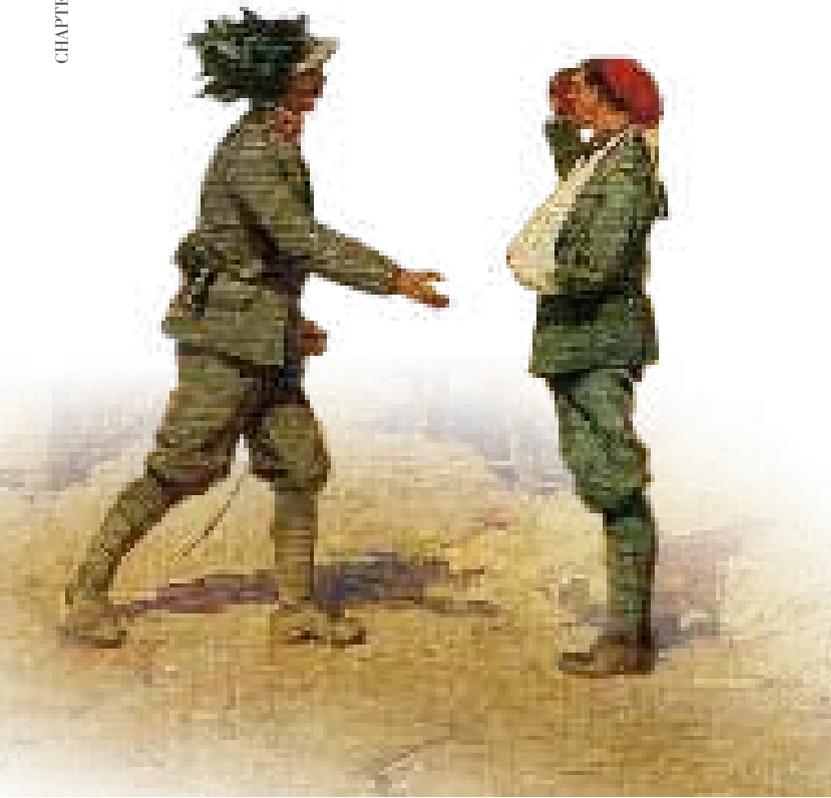


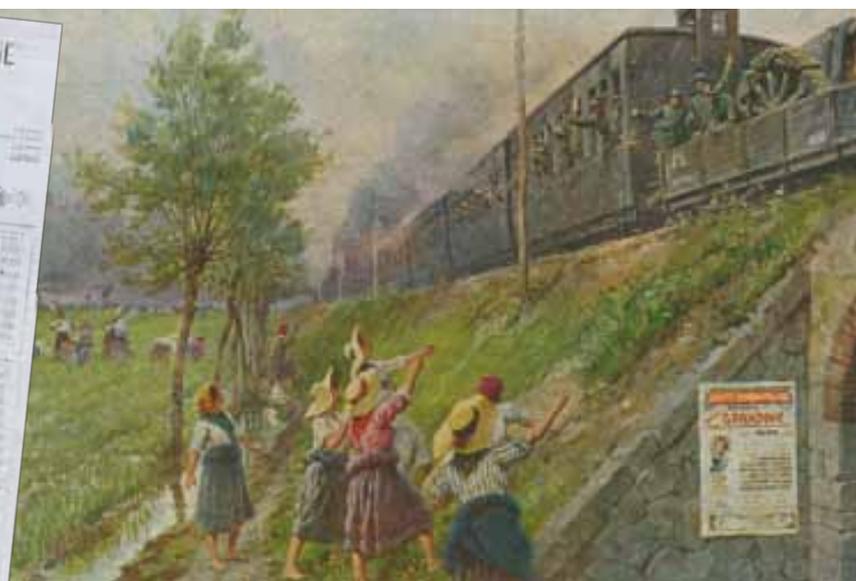
Facing page, from left:
1905 and 1908 calendars,
both by uncredited artists

This page: calendars
for 1910, 1913
with illustration by
L. Bacorigi, and 1914



Right, from top: calendars for 1916, 1917 and 1918 with illustrations by Beltrame which were also used for publicity postcards





Above, from left: 1920 calendar illustrated by Beltrame and oil sketch by the same author used by Anonima Grandine for postcards and, probably, for a calendar

Right: detail of the sketch above



“But in My Heart No Cross Is Absent”

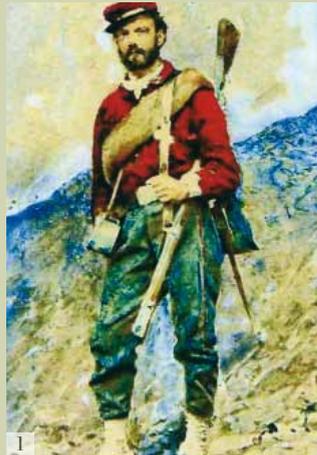
Four famous texts, one for each year of WWI: four images spanning half a century of Italian history, from Garibaldi's battles to D'Annunzio's heroic undertakings.



2 “Nothing remains of these houses save rubble/
Not even that remains of those whose kinship I
treasured/But in my heart no cross is absent/
My heart is the most devastated country of all”
(Giuseppe Ungaretti, from *San Martino del
Carso*, 1916)

3 “But this is no time for regrets. This is the time
for duty, for sacrifice, for action. Nothing is lost
if the spirit of insurrection is ready, if the will
does not bend” (General Luigi Cadorna, from
the orders of the day on November 7, 1917, after
the battle of Caporetto)

4 “We are flying over Vienna, we could drop tons
of bombs. Instead, we drop nothing but our
three-colored salute” (Gabriele D'Annunzio,
from the flier for the raid of August 9, 1918)



1 “Comrade from Bezzecca,
my old flag-bearer, go to the
Podgora, and carry my flag!”
(Giulio Camber-Barni, from
Lavezzari's Song, in honor
of Giuseppe Lavezzari,
former soldier in Garibaldi's
army and war volunteer who
died on the Podgora in
1915, aged 66)





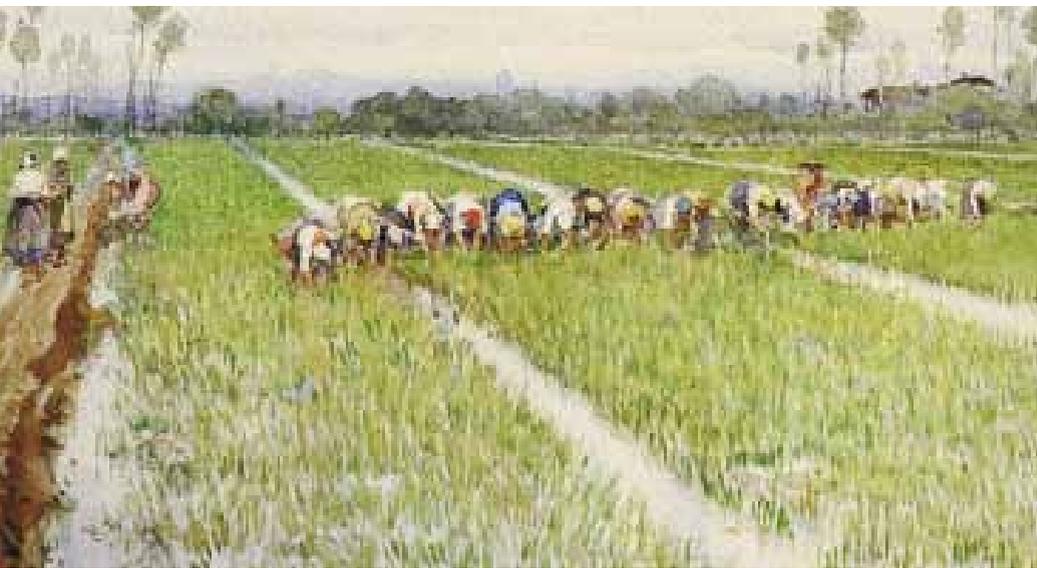
Calendars for 1921
(Hemp) and 1922
(Wheat) illustrated
by Osvaldo Ballerio





Above, from left: oil sketch by V. Polli, probably used by Anonima Grandine for a calendar or for other promotional material; 1923 calendar illustrated by Beltrame (*Rice Fields*)

Facing page: detail of the 1923 calendar and water-color by Beltrame for Anonima Grandine of the same year (*Grape-Harvest*) and used for promotional material





SOCIETÀ ANONIMA ITALIANA
DI ASSICURAZIONE **GRANDINE** RIASSICURAZIONI

S. S. R. L. S. MILANO PIAZZA CORDUSOLA 2

Capitale Autorizz. 100.000.000
 Rend. annuo e riserva profitti 10.000.000
 1925 Rend. annuo agli Assicurati 10.000.000
 Rend. ann. profitti 10.000.000

Capitale 100.000.000
 Rend. annuo e riserva profitti 10.000.000
 1925 Rend. annuo agli Assicurati 10.000.000
 Rend. ann. profitti 10.000.000

Direzione via MEDAGLIA D'ORO 106 - Oppenheim - Corredo - Milano - Tel. 4111 - 4112 - 4113 - 4114 - 4115
 e via CROCE VERDE 1 - L'Espresso - International - A. Milano - 1926

Capitale 100.000.000
 Rend. annuo e riserva profitti 10.000.000
 1925 Rend. annuo agli Assicurati 10.000.000
 Rend. ann. profitti 10.000.000

Capitale 100.000.000
 Rend. annuo e riserva profitti 10.000.000
 1925 Rend. annuo agli Assicurati 10.000.000
 Rend. ann. profitti 10.000.000

1926

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1926

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

La Società è rappresentata in **TREVISO** dal Sig. *Ugo de Roberto*
 che rappresenta anche le **ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI DI VENEZIA**

This page, above:
 1926 calendar illustrated
 by Beltrame (*Wheat-Winnowing*)

Left: detail of the 1927 calendar

Facing page: calendars
 by Beltrame for 1927
 (*Grape-Harvest*), 1928
 (*Tomato-Harvest*) and detail
 of a sketch the artist made
 in 1928 (*Tobacco-Harvest*),
 probably used for a calendar
 the following year





Left and below:
oil sketches by Beltrame,
1929 (*Wheat-Harvest*)
and 1931 (*Tilling*), probably
used for calendars in
the following years



From Frescoes to Advertising Graphics

After his academic studies in Milan, where he was born in 1870, Ballerio soon started working as painter and decorator, becoming relatively well-known for his frescoes, decorations and altar-pieces in several churches of Val d'Intelvi. His activity as graphic designer for advertising, which began in Milan for the publisher Fumagli and for Fraschini Lithographic Printers, was fairly intense, along with his work as book and postcard illustrator. Some of his political satire cartoon series achieved great notoriety over time.

Around 1920, he began a collaboration with Chappuis publishers in Bologna, where he worked for many years.

He produced posters and other promotional material for several industries, companies, exhibitions and events; his style, initially in the Art Nouveau vein and influenced by Adolf Hohenstein's work, in some cases displays technical solutions and pictorial atmospheres vaguely reminiscent of the graphic design of the American William Bradley who was working during those same years. Ballerio died in Azzate in 1942.



Clockwise from top right: *Biciclette* marca "Milano" (1912); *Esposizione Internazionale di Automobili* (1908); Right: *Ch. Lorilleux & C.ia* (circa 1895)



...Or, *La Domenica del Corriere*, “Italy’s First Video”



Above: covers for
*La Domenica
del Corriere* (1931)

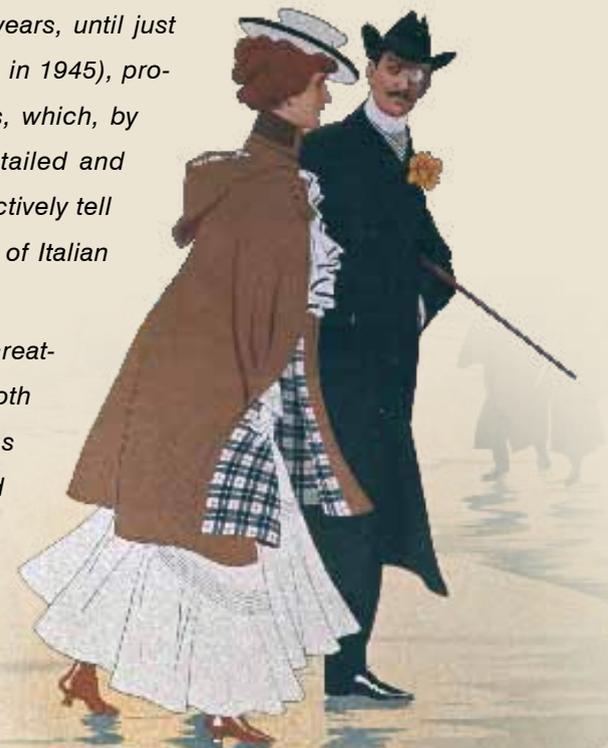
Right: Loden Dal Brun
(detail of the poster, 1902)

The name and fame of Achille Beltrame, born in Arzignano near Vicenza in 1871, are fundamentally linked with his long activity as illustrator for the magazine *La Domenica del Corriere*, where he was hired at 28 by Luigi Albertini. He worked for *La Domenica* for 45 years, until just before his death (in Milan in 1945), producing over 4,600 covers, which, by means of wonderfully detailed and colorful illustrations, collectively tell the story of half a century of Italian news and history.

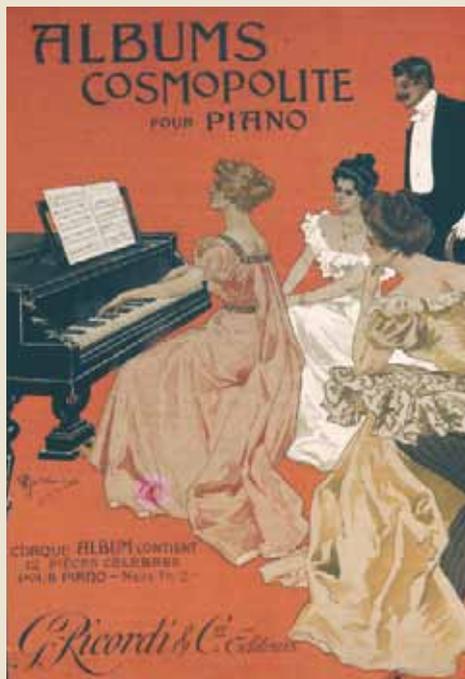
“Through the images he created,” wrote Dino Buzzati, “both the great and the curious

events of the world traveled to every isolated country house, to every valley or mountain, to every humble home, furnishing entire generations of Italians with an avalanche of knowledge they might otherwise never have been aware of.”

Educated at the Milan Fine Arts Academy under Giuseppe Bertini, between 1891

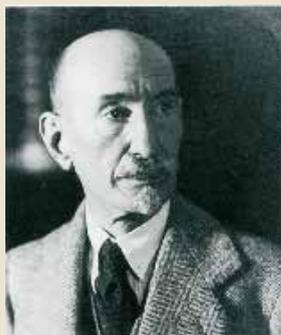


MILANO VIA DANTE 4
FIGLI ALI ROMA VIA NAZIONALE 113
NAPOLI PIAZZA DELLA BORSA 22
CATALOGHI-CAMPIONI GRATIS
SCRIVERE LODEN DAL BRUN - SCHIO.



and 1898 he entered some Brera Triennali (art exhibitions spaced three years apart) and the National Turin Exposition, distinguishing himself especially for his murals and for his historical- and sacred-themed paintings. Paintings of his are housed at the Gallery of Modern Art in Milan and other museums. He worked on the decorations of Villa Bernocchi in Stresa and of the church of Arzignano, his home town.

Early on in his career, he also worked as poster designer, and from the early 1900s collaborated with Casa Ricordi, where he was inspired by some of the greats working there, such as Metlicovitz, Malerba and especially Villa.



Beltrame was fairly impervious to the Art Nouveau style, which dominated early-XX-Century advertising. His most celebrated creations are those for the Mele department store in Naples. He designed posters for many companies and events, but never abandoned his main activity as illustrator, for which he is mostly remembered.

**Above: Albums
Cosmopolite Pour Piano
(1900), E. & A. Mele & Ci.
(circa 1900)**

Below: Achille Beltrame

Dudovich's "Sign"

ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI AND ADVERTISING IN THE 1920S AND '30S

After the hardships of WWI and of the period immediately following it, in the mid-1920s Generali took on an extensive administrative and financial reorganization of the company. The new situation in politics, society and the market demanded new and aggressive choices, both in business and in advertising. To achieve the latter goal, the company hired one of the top names in poster design: Marcello Dudovich, who collaborated with Generali for over a decade.

The great artist from Trieste, who in those years was branching out to embrace new artistic trends and styles in the field of poster design, specifically the new trend of the "Novecento" style promoted by Fascist Regime aesthetics, produced several important works for Generali: some focusing on Venice and its lagoon, some for the 100th Anniversary in 1931, some depicting the agricultural world, and some evoking the heroic deeds of the Fascist Regime.

In the early Thirties, while continuing to work with Dudovich, Generali also began another collaboration, with Modiano, the innovative paper manufacturer in Trieste, whose modern techniques had placed it at the forefront of poster, postcard and calendar production. In the course of ten years or so, through the masterly graphic touch of designer Pollione Sigon, the Modiano factory produced posters for Generali's exhibitions and fairs, as well as other miscellaneous promotional material.

Right: the lion in the smaller square of Saint Mark in Venice, from a Generali poster designed by Dudovich and reproduced on page 86

Facing page: posters from the years 1924/26; two by uncredited artists, one, bottom right, a late '30s reprint of a Dudovich poster from circa 1926



A. D.
1831

ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI VENEZIA

SOCIETÀ ANONIMA FONDAZIONE 1831

VITA · INCENDI · TRASPORTI · FURTI

CAPITALE SOCIALE INTERAMENTE VERSATO L. 40.000.000

ASSICURAZIONI VITA IN VIGORE: OLTRE DUE MILIARDI DI LIRE

DANNI PAGATI: DUE MILIARDI ED OLTRE 300 MILIONI DI LIRE

ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI VENEZIA

SOCIETÀ ANONIMA ISTITUITA NEL 1831
PREMIATA ALLE PRINCIPALI ESPOSIZIONI NAZIONALI

Capitale sociale interamente versato L. 40.000.000.-

ASSICURAZIONI DELLE GRANAGLIE IN COVONI

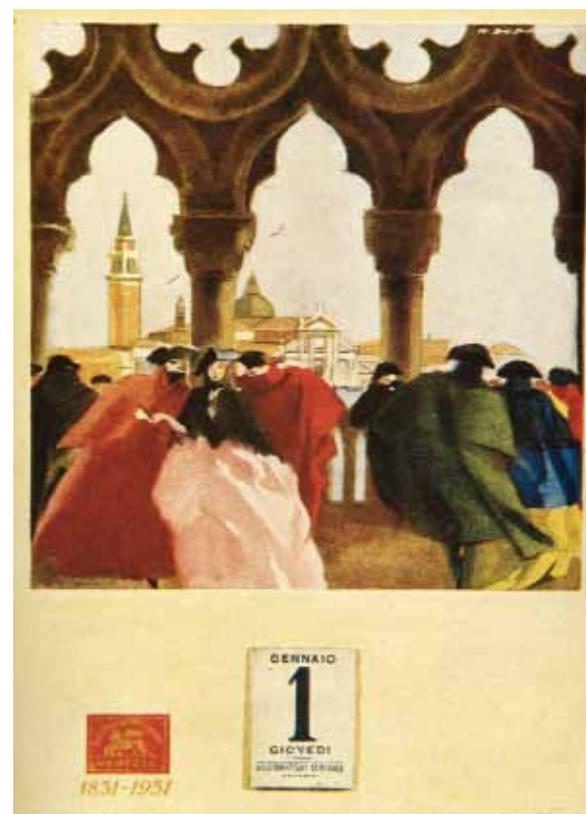
Fondi di garanzia oltre L. **MEZZO MILIARDO** — Danni pagati oltre L. **DUE MILIARDI**

La Compagnia in
e rappresentata dal Sig

ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI VENEZIA

FONDI DI GARANZIA L. UN MILIARDO e 900 MILIONI

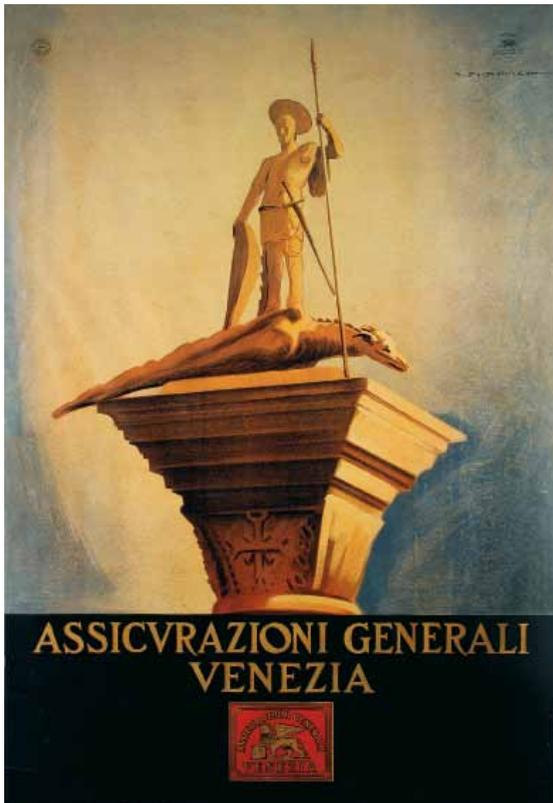
ASSICURAZIONI CONTRO GLI INCENDI DELLE GRANAGLIE IN COVONI



These two pages: works by Dudovich for Generali: from left, detail of a wall calendar (1933), poster (1928), calendar (1931), poster (circa 1930)

The Last “Doge” of Venice

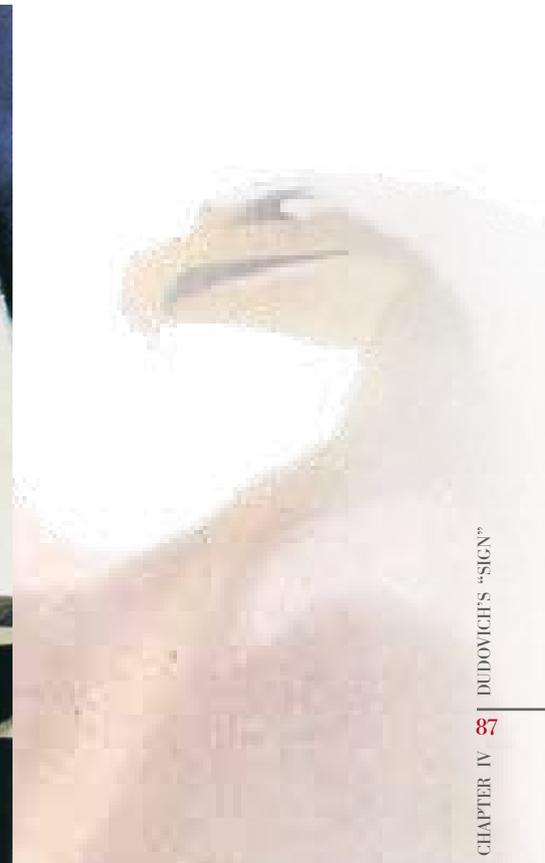
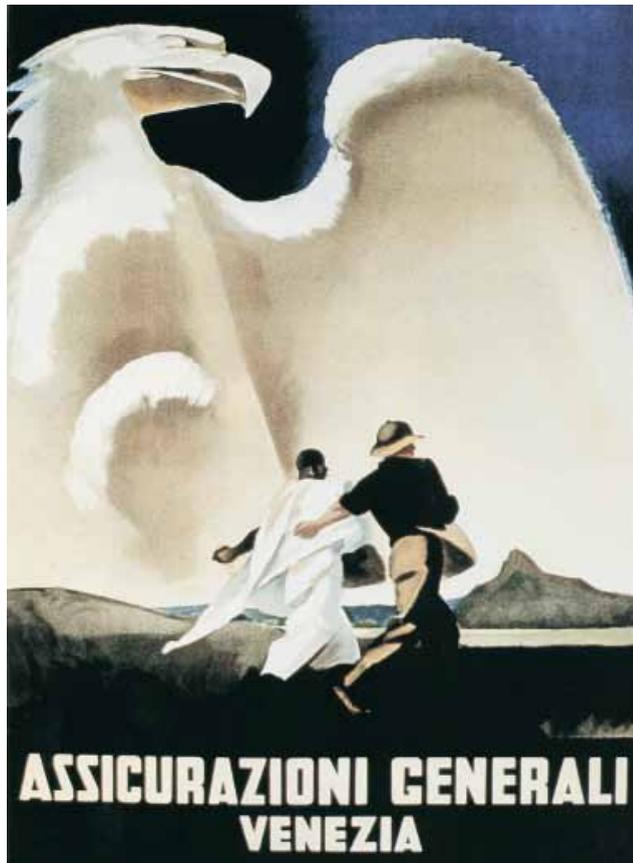
At the beginning of the XX Century, Venice enjoyed a period of development, both economic and cultural. This was largely due to the entrepreneurial skills of Count Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata, who from 1938 to 1943 was also Chairman of the Board for Generali.



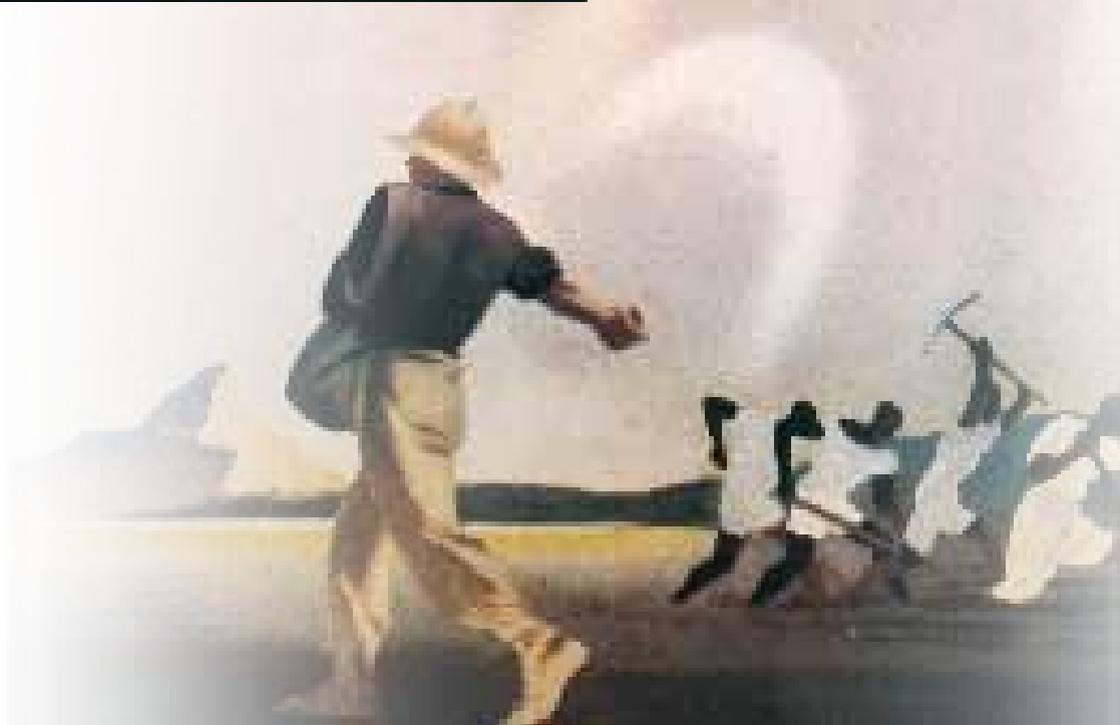
- 1 A close-up of Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata
- 2 The poster for the first International Exposition of Cinema Art (Venice Film Festival, 1932)
- 3 Count di Misurata and the then-Minister of Corporations Bottai during a visit to the industrial area of Porto Marghera (1932)
- 4 Bicycle race on the new Ponte Littorio, to these day the only bridge connecting Venice to the mainland (1933)







These two pages: more works by Dudovich for Generali: from left, a poster and a wall calendar (both 1935); two posters (1938 and circa 1937) and a detail of a 1937 calendar





These two pages: Generali wall calendars illustrated by Pollione Sigon (the three on this page were made for the company's 100th Anniversary in 1931)





focus

The centenary medal is the work of artist Gigi Supino. The Latin inscription *servat et aucta redonat* (preserve and give back increased) synthesizes the function of life insurance; the central figure, with the Saint Mark lion at its feet, represents Generali gathering premiums from the figure on the left and paying off policies reaching maturity to the figure on the right. At the bottom, the halberd, symbol of Trieste. On the flip side, the captions “a ricordo del primo centenario” (in remembrance of the 100th anniversary) and, between two Roman fasces, “Assicurazioni Generali di Trieste e Venezia.”



Above: posters designed by Sigon for exhibitions and fairs

Raised in a World of Art

Continuing in the family tradition of his father Giuseppe, Pollione Sigon was an important graphic designer in advertising, an illustrator and the artistic director at Modiano where he also designed works for Generali; he began to collaborate with the Trieste paper manufacturer very early, and was hired permanently after World War I, soon becoming its star designer.

Born in Trieste in 1895 and extremely talented, trained in Trieste at the Art Masters section of the “Royal Industrial School,” Pollione drew a bit of everything in his fifty years at Modiano, despite the amputation of his left arm: posters, half-sheets, calendars, labels, playing cards, boxes for products. He produced many works for advertising, some of which became famous and were used for many years both by Modiano to promote its own products and by other companies, Assicurazioni Generali included.

He also devoted himself to easel painting and, occasionally, to teaching.

After leaving his permanent job, Pollione continued to collaborate with Modiano until just before his death in Trieste in 1971.



Clockwise from top:
Biscottificio Tergeste
(1925/30), Vero estratto
di carne Arrigoni (1924),
Centauro – La carta da
sigarette preferita
(circa 1925)



In the circle: artist's self-portrait (circa 1954)

Below: *Convegno Turistico* (1899)

Below right: *E. & A. Mele & Ci.* (circa 1907)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: *Agfa film* (circa 1922), *La Rinascente* (1931), *Persil* (detail, circa 1952), *Mostra Nazionale di Agricoltura* (1934)

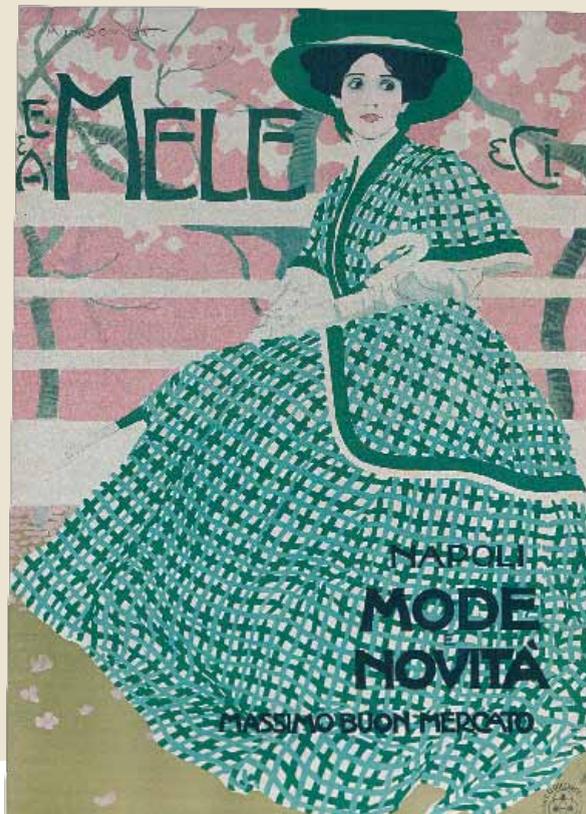


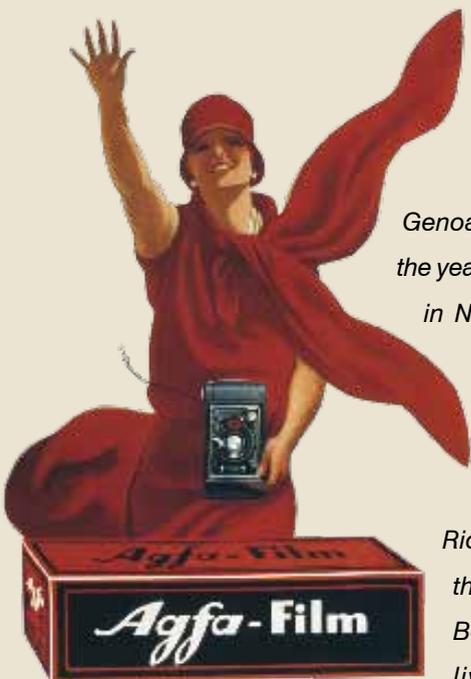
The Great Master

“It is the prodigious Marcello Dudovich, one who was to the history of the Italian poster what Federico Fellini was to the history of cinema”: thus Giampiero Mughini, in an essay on poster design, offers one of the sharpest and most original definitions among the hundreds that have been used to praise the great poster artist, and points out Dudovich’s ingeniousness and uniqueness within the history of advertising graphics, and not only.

Originally from Trieste, like Leopoldo Metlicovitz (who in 1897 welcomed young Dudovich at *Officine Ricordi* and guided him in his early forays in the field), Dudovich was born in 1878; in his sixty-year career, he experienced all the shifting phases of poster design and always left an original and unforgettable mark with his works, uniquely absorbing the many styles of the different periods: from Art Nouveau to Art Deco, to “Regime” rationalism with its penchant for big volumes.

The professional life of the artist from Trieste was rich in collaborations, commissions and initiatives that saw him active and admired as poster designer, illustrator for magazines, books, music scores and postcards, and as painter. After his early stint at *Ricordi* under Metlicovitz and Hohenstein, in 1899 Dudovich worked for the *Chappuis* studio in Bologna, where he designed some celebrated posters through 1905 (*Fisso l’idea*, F.lli Sanguinetti, *Buton* among others) that cinched his fame as promising poster designer. In 1906, after a brief job in





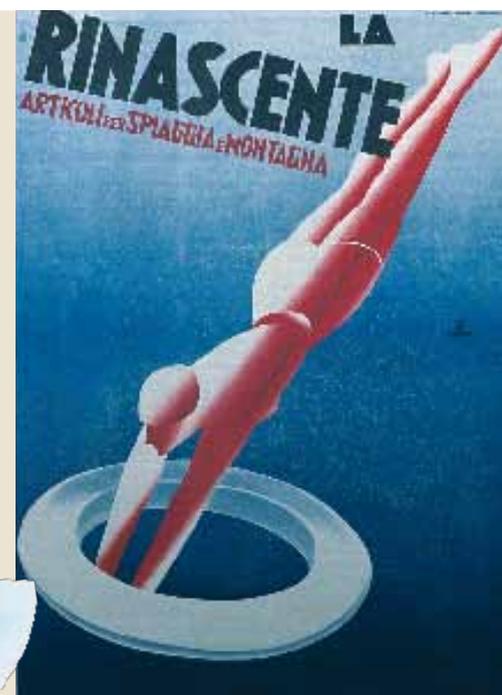
Genoa, he again worked for Ricordi in Milan; those were the years of his famous posters for the Mele department store in Naples, of the Borsalino Zenit poster (1910), and of many other brilliant creations. In 1911 he moved to Munich to work for the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, a collaboration that lasted many years. Meanwhile, he continued to produce posters for Ricordi and in particular for the Mele firm.

Between 1915 and 1920 he lived and worked in Turin,

where he also produced posters for the cinema. He returned to Milan in 1920 and founded, together with a lawyer friend, *Star* publishing house, where he created many posters, distributed by *Igap* (General Company for Posting and Advertising), where Dudovich worked as artistic director between 1922 and 1936. In the early 1920s, he began a long and productive collaboration with Milan's *La Rinascente* department store (through the Fifties), but he also created posters and promotional material for many industries all through the 1920s and 1930s, while still working as magazine and book illustrator. In the 1930s, the artist designed several posters for events and activities of the Fascist Regime, using a style that accentuated volumes and sculptural shapes, in conformity with the aesthetic ideals of Fascism.

During World War II and through the 1940s, Dudovich devoted more and more time to painting, particularly using tempera, and displayed his works in many exhibitions, both solo and with other artists. In this period he also did mural decorations in the houses of many of his friends.

From the end of the Second World War through the mid-Fifties, his activity as advertising designer was limited to a few dozen posters, some of them still showing his strong personal style (e.g. the knotted kerchief for Persil or a few posters for *La Rinascente*), but in the last years of his life his main activities were painting and mounting exhibitions. He died in Milan in 1962.



The Italian Companies between the Two Wars

INA AND CONTROLLED COMPANIES, TORO: ADVERTISING IN THE 1920S AND '30S

Among the great Italian insurance companies acquired by the Generali Group, INA occupied a very important position as far as advertising is concerned: from its very early years, the company was very active in promoting its image in a capillary way.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a time of intense development for its activities, the Roman company offered and promoted a wide range of insurance coverage products, some of which had existed prior to the period.

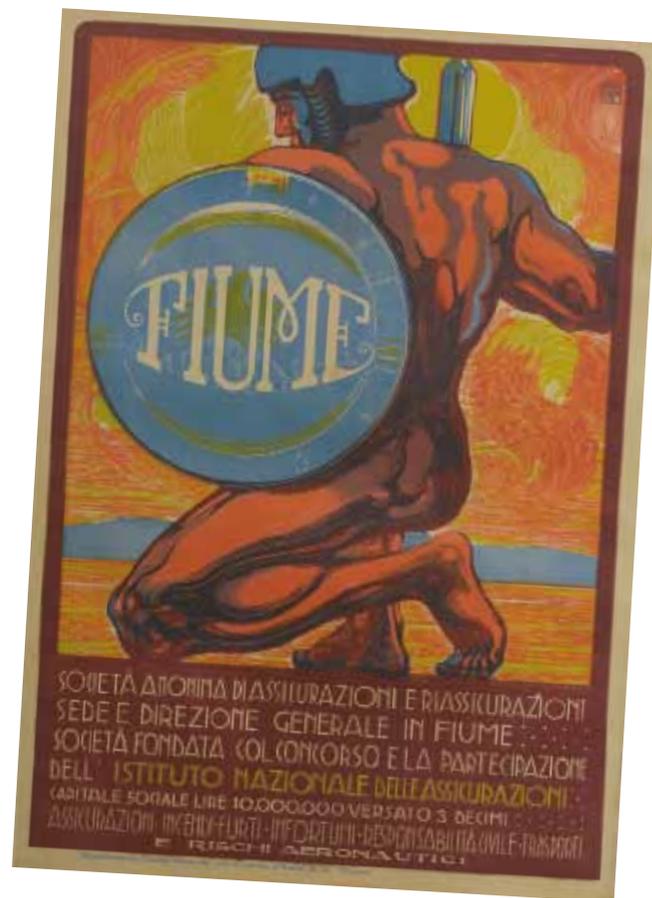
Family, work, savings, social insurance and other protections covered by INA policies in those years were regularly depicted in the company's advertising, particularly through the posters of famous artists: Tito Corbella, who worked for INA for many years, Severo Pozzati (Sepo), Marcello Dudovich, Gino Boccasile, Adolfo Busi and others.

In the Twenties, other controlled companies added their publicity to that of the parent company: Le Assicurazioni d'Italia (Assitalia), founded in 1923, promoting their products designed specifically for agriculture; Fiume, created in 1924 in the city of the same name and active in various insurance sectors.

Few works survive today of the promotional activities of Toro, a company which significantly increased its coverage offerings in those two decades: a beautiful example is a poster by Osvaldo Ballerio, publicizing coverage for hail damage, a service the Turin company launched in 1929.

Detail of a calendar for
the Fiume company
illustrated by Boccasile
(see pg. 102)





Left: INA poster
 by Corbella (1924)

Above: Fiume poster designed
 by U. Terzoli (1925)

ISTITVTO NAZIONALE DELLE ASSICVRAZIONI
 CAPITALE ASSICVRATO CIRCA SETTE MILIARDI E MEZZO
 POLIZZE GARANTITE DALLO STATO

PRESTITO DEL LITTORIO
 ITALIANI, SOTTOSCRIVENDO AL PRESTITO PORTATE
 IL VOSTRO CONTRIBVTO ALLA GRANDEZZA E ALLA
 POTENZA DELLA PATRIA -- GIOVATE ALLA RIVALVTAZIONE
 DELLA LIRA -- REALIZZATE VN OTTIMO AFFARE .



ISTITVTO
 IONALE
 DELLE
 SICV-
 IONI

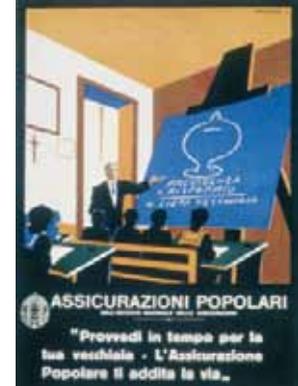
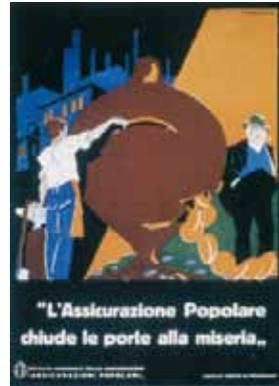
CAPITALI ASSICVRATI
 NOVE
 MILIARDI
 POLIZZE GARANTITE
 DALLO STATO
 CAPITALI e RENDITE
 IN SEQVESTRABILI



ISTITVTO
 NAZIONALE
 DELLE
 ASSICV-
 RAZIONI

CAPITALI ASSICVRATI
 OLTRE DIECI
 MILIARDI
 POLIZZE GARANTITE
 DALLO STATO
 CAPITALI e RENDITE
 IN SEQVESTRABILI

This page, from left: 1928 poster and 1929 and 1930 wall calendars illustrated by Corbella



Series of half-sheet posters for INA's *Assicurazioni Popolari* designed by G. Tanozzi (1924/26)





LE ASSICURAZIONI D'ITALIA
SOCIETA' COLLEGATA CON
L'ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DELLE ASSICURAZIONI

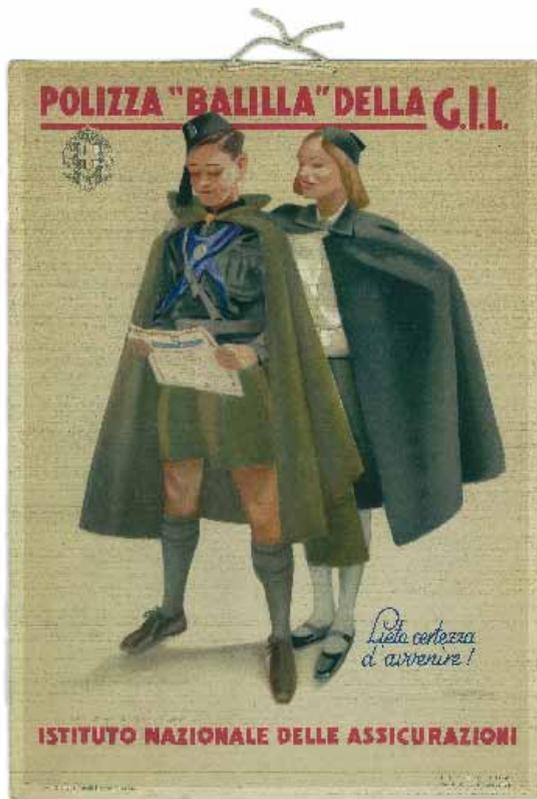
GRANDINE

ISTITUTO NAZIONALE
DELLE ASSICURAZIONI

CAPITALE
ASSICURAZIONI
OCCO **SEI**
MILIARDI

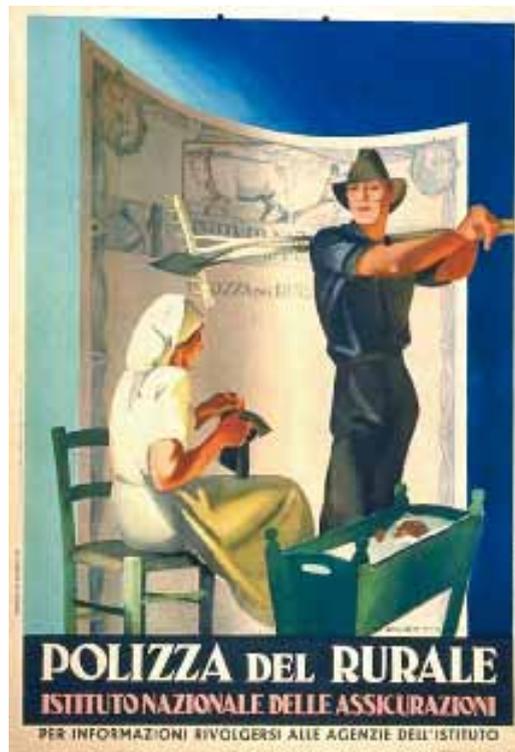
POLIZZE
GARANITE
DALLO STATO
CAPITALI E
RISERVE INSE-
QUESTRABILI

ISTITUTO NAZIONALE ASSICURAZIONI



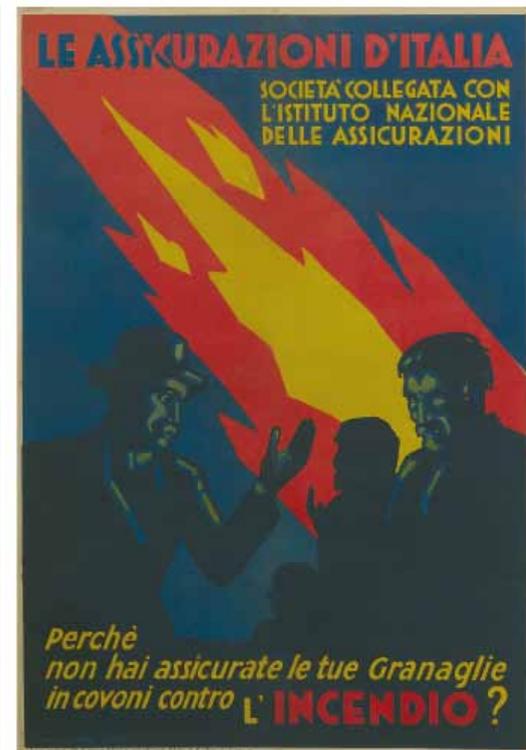
Facing page, from left: detail of a poster for INA's *Polizza del rurale* (farmer's policy) designed by Busi (1935), poster for Assicurazioni d'Italia (Assitalia) created by Capizzano Santamaria (1932) and INA calendar with illustration by Corbella (1930)

This page: half-sheet posters by Dudovich for INA policies (circa 1935)



focus

Besides creating sketches for large posters, which were then often used for other promotional formats, famous artists also drew illustrations specifically meant for calendars, postcards, trading cards, brochures, labels, and catalogues. Above, a drawing by Marcello Dudovich featuring wheat harvest for a brochure by INA publicizing a farmers' policy of 1934.



From left: two INA posters,
 one designed by Sepo for
Assicurazioni Popolari (1936),
 the other by L. Dolfini (1935);
 poster for *Assicurazioni d'Italia*
 by A. Scorzon (1934)

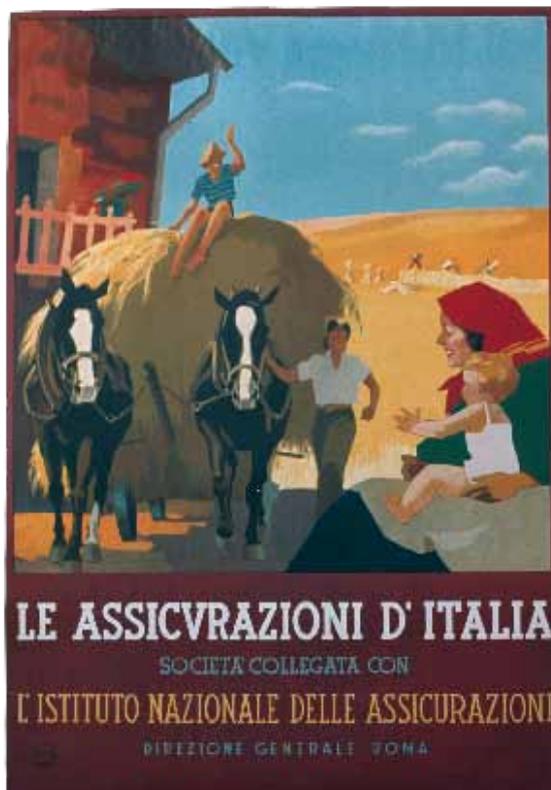


Two 1938 half-sheet posters for INA: one by Resentera publicizing *Buoni del Tesoro Novennali 5%* (Nine-year Treasury Bonds 5%), the other by Boccasile

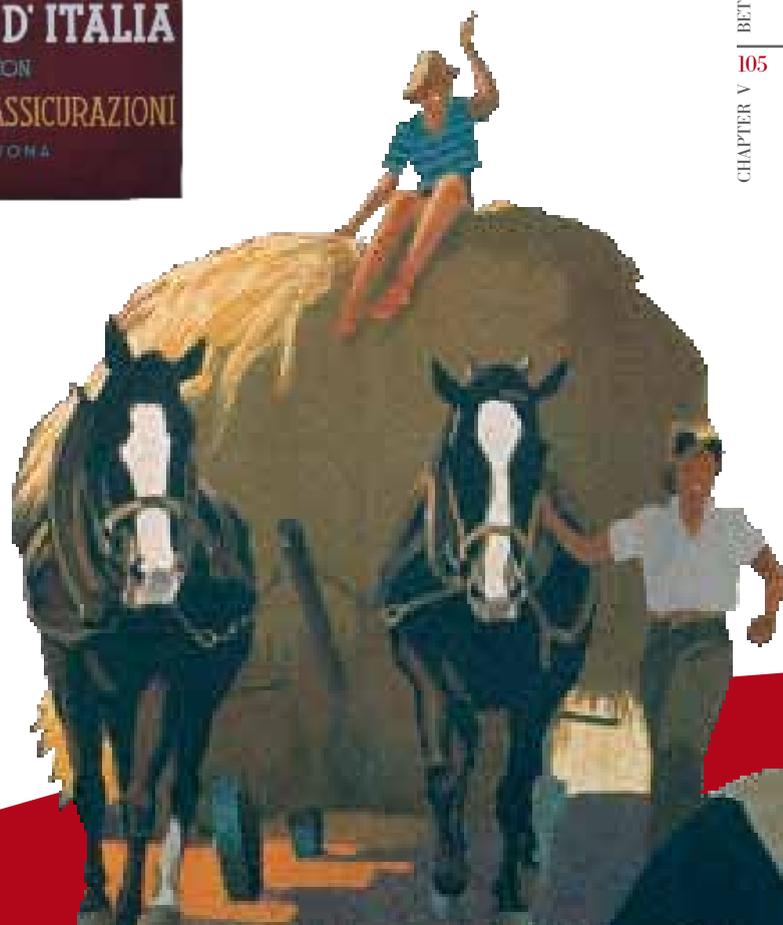




"FIUME" SOCIETÀ ANONIMA DI ASSICURAZIONI E RIASSICURAZIONI



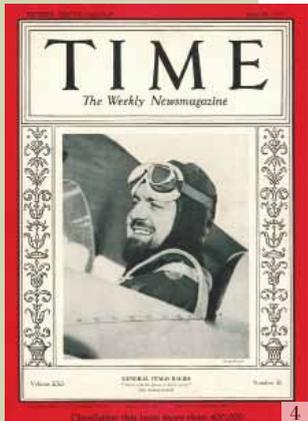
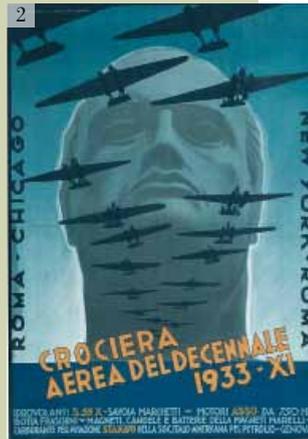
Above: posters for Assicurazioni d'Italia (Assitalia), the first designed by Busi (1938), the other by uncredited artist (1930s)



Italo Balbo's Transatlantic Flights

The growth of the Italian Air Force fostered by the Fascist Regime produced two memorable collective flights in the early '30s; these were widely publicized, with posters, postcards, and postal stamp issues. The main promoter and author of both flights was Italo Balbo, the lead pilot in both cases.

- 1 The "7.70" issued for the Transatlantic Cruise of 1931: Rome – Rio de Janeiro with 12 hydroplanes
- 2 Luigi Martinati's poster for the 10th-year-anniversary Air Cruise (a.k.a. The North-Atlantic): 25 hydroplanes reached the United States in 1933
- 3 July 13, 1933: the S.55s that reached Longueil (Quebec) fuel up before heading for Chicago and New York
- 4 The *TIME* cover dedicated to Italo Balbo on the occasion of his 1933 transatlantic flight



Above: INA wall calendar with the famous portrait of Mussolini aviator designed by Boccasile (1938)

Advertising, Film and Postcards

Born in Pontremoli in 1885, he honed his artistic craft by attending the Venice Fine Arts Academy under Guglielmo Ciardi and Ettore Tito. Initially known as painter, particularly of portraits and still lifes, he soon worked as advertising designer, creating posters for important companies and events.

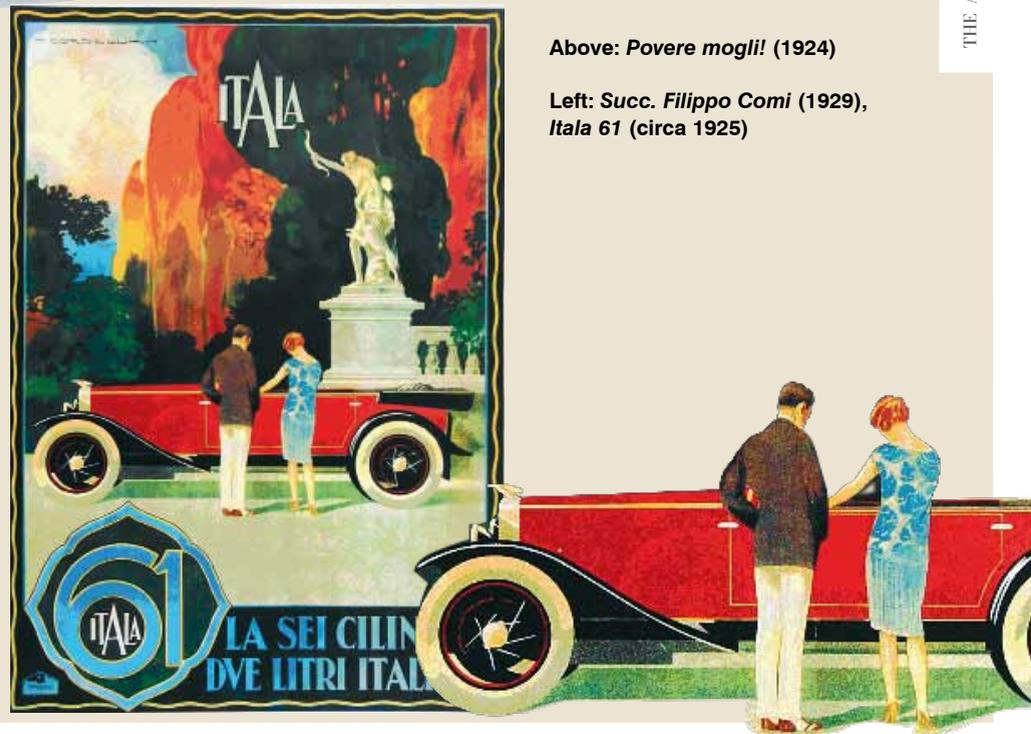
For many years he also designed film posters, a genre in which he was a forerunner from the very early decades of the XX Century. He produced some remarkable portraits of popular actresses of the Thirties and Forties.

He was well-regarded as illustrator, of books but especially of postcards, producing many series depicting female figures and young couples. He died in Rome in 1966.



Above: *Povere mogli!* (1924)

Left: *Succ. Filippo Comi* (1929), *Itala 61* (circa 1925)



Italy, France and Innovation

Going by the pseudonym of Sepo, with which he signed practically his entire production, Severo Pozzati was one of Italy's most important advertising designers of the first half of the XX Century, very well-regarded abroad, especially in France, where he lived and worked for many years. Along with other great poster artists of his generation, he was instrumental in establishing a new graphic style and a new language for advertising in the 1920s and 1930s. Advertising, in fact, was well on its way to becoming something of an exact science.

Born in Comacchio in 1895, he studied at the Fine Arts Academy of Bologna; he soon became known as sculptor and subsequently as painter, and won some important awards.

His activity as advertising designer began at the well-known Bologna agency Maga, where his brother worked, and where he himself would work for a few years, while also making an avant-garde film as writer-director: *Fantasia Bianca* (*White Fantasia*). In 1920 he decided to move to Paris, where he lived for many years; there, he became known first as sculptor and painter, and eventually in the field of advertising, working in the Paris branch opened by Maga.

Within a few years, his considerable skill

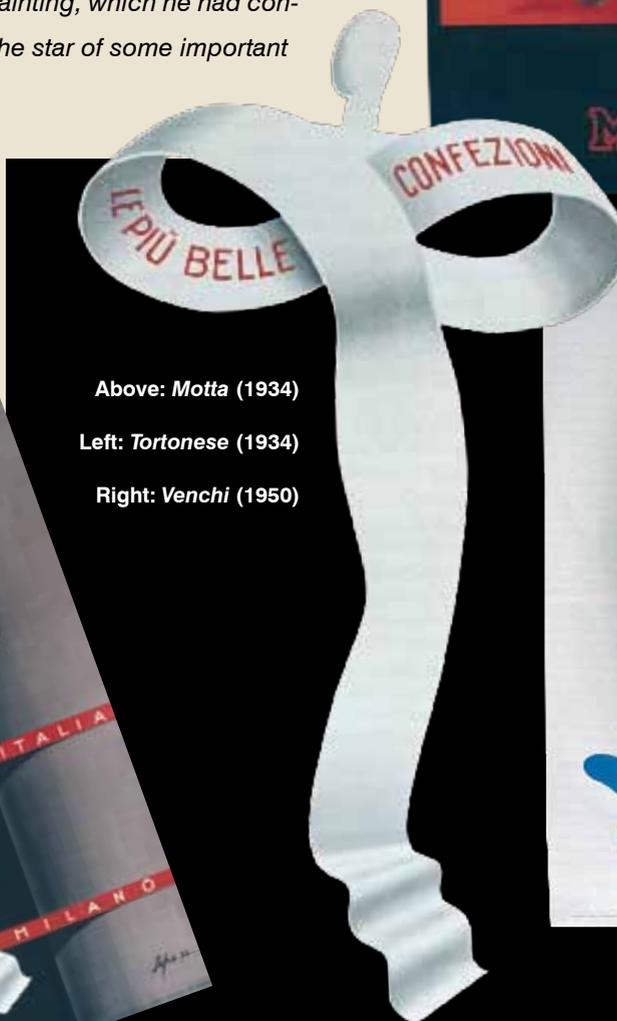
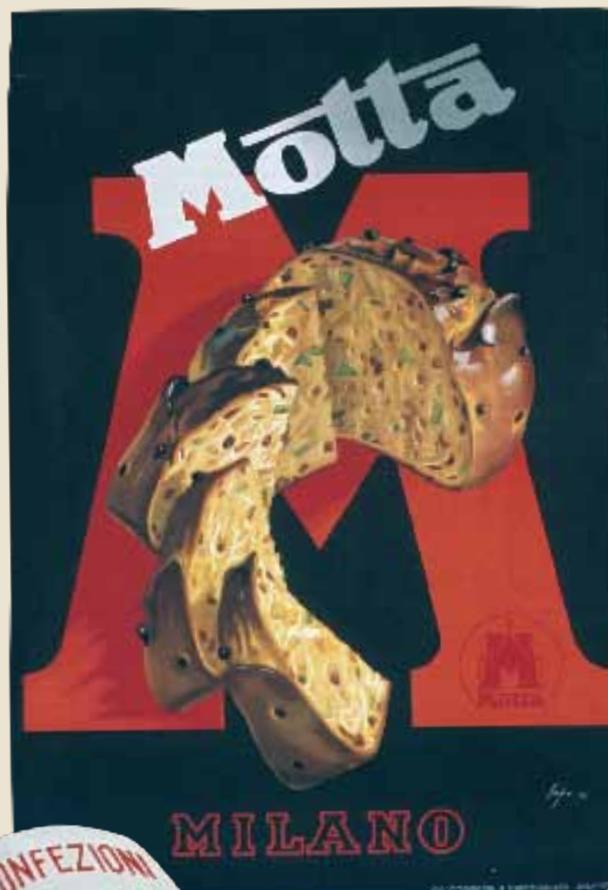


This page: *Il Lavoro d'Italia* (1928) and *Noveltex* (1928)



in poster design allowed him to collaborate with important French, Swiss, and Italian agencies (Dorland, where he became artistic director, Publivox, Star, Ricordi and Chappuis); for them he produced many posters, some of which became famous for their innovative style and message: an example is his poster for Noveltex dated 1928, where the scene is dominated by its one and only protagonist: a shirt collar floating at the center of the poster: this creation received an award at the New York International Exposition. In 1932 he opened his own advertising agency, Idea, where he created some of his best and most celebrated posters over some fifteen years of work.

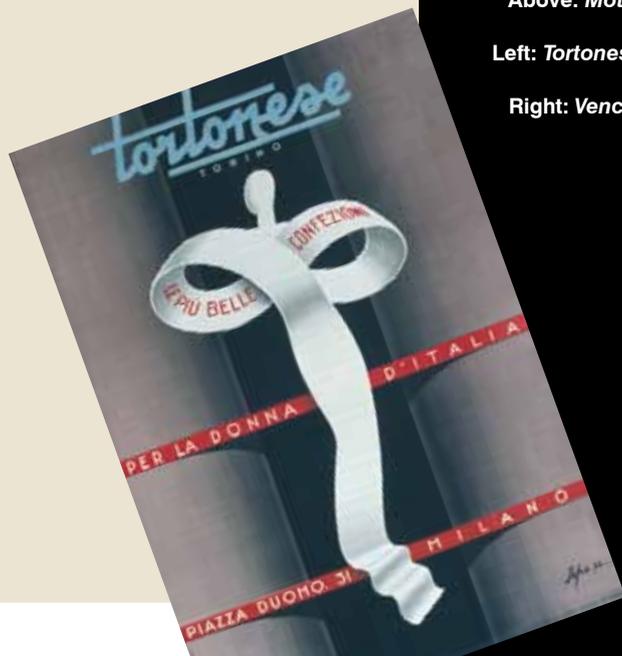
In 1957 the artist returned to Bologna, where, after only a few years, he abandoned advertising to devote himself to painting, which he had continued to practice and which had made him the star of some important exhibitions, solo and collective. In 1983 he also rediscovered sculpture, one of his early passions. He died in Bologna in 1983.



Above: Motta (1934)

Left: Tortonese (1934)

Right: Venchi (1950)



Boccasile and Others

ANONIMA GRANDINE IN THE 1930S

Not long after its founding, brought about by Generali in 1890, Anonima Grandine expanded both its coverage for agricultural products and the geographical scope of its activity, significantly increasing its business volume in a short time. Even though it worked in a very risky sector of insurance, the company emerged more or less unscathed from the difficulties of World War I; in 1926 it created, with six other companies, the Consorzio Italiano Grandine (Italian Hail Consortium), and then, in 1933, the Concordato Italiano Grandine (Italian Hail Pact).

Boosted, probably, by the creation of the Pact, in the late 1930s Anonima, following its calendar series created in the early 1900s and produced for about thirty years, began another period of intense advertising.

In that period many artists collaborated with the company: Osvaldo Ballerio, Aldo Raimondi and especially Gino Boccasile, one of the greatest and most celebrated Italian poster designers, author of some wonderful sketches for both posters and calendars.

The setting of these posters was the idyllic rural world, represented by smiling families of farmers, secure because of the company's coverage of their harvests. References to the historical period, however, were not absent, particularly references to the colonial venture in Africa, a recurrent theme in the advertising of those years.

After World War II, Anonima Grandine continued to operate autonomously until 1947, when it was absorbed, together with Anonima Infortuni (Accident Joint-Stock Company) by the parent company.



Facing page, clockwise from top left: poster with drawing by Ballerio (1935); wall calendar and poster with illustration by Boccasile (1936)

FONDATA NEL 1890



CAPITALE SOCIALE L.6.000.000

L'Anonima Grandine

SOCIETA ANONIMA ITALIANA DI ASSICURAZIONI CONTRO LA GRANDINE E DI TRASICURAZIONI

SEDE IN MILANO PIAZZA CORDUSIO N. 2

GARANZIE (CAPITALE SOCIALE) DENTRO L.43.347.000
 CAPITALI ASSICURATI (DALLA FONDAZIONE) DENTRO 9 MILLIARDI 500 MILIONI
 DANNI PAGATI (DALLA FONDAZIONE) DENTRO 319 MILIONI
 PARTECIPAZIONE UTILI AGLI ASSICURATI L.5.000.000

L'ANONIMA GRANDINE E AFFILIATA ALLE ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI - VENEZIA



FONDATA NEL 1890

CAPITALE SOCIALE L.6.000.000

L'Anonima Grandine

SOCIETA ANONIMA ITALIANA DI ASSICURAZIONE CONTRO LA GRANDINE E DI TRASICURAZIONI

SEDE IN MILANO PIAZZA CORDUSIO N. 2

GARANZIE (CAPITALE SOCIALE) DENTRO L.47.347.000
 CAPITALI ASSICURATI (DALLA FONDAZIONE) DENTRO L.10.590.500.000
 DANNI PAGATI (DALLA FONDAZIONE) DENTRO L.3.343.800.000
 PARTECIPAZIONE UTILI AGLI ASSICURATI CIRCA L.3.000.000

L'ANONIMA GRANDINE E AFFILIATA ALLE ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI - VENEZIA



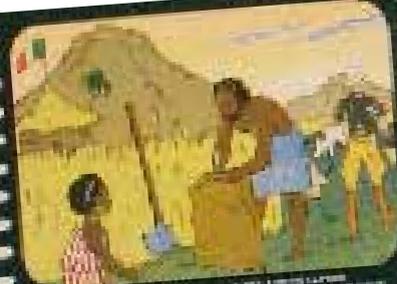
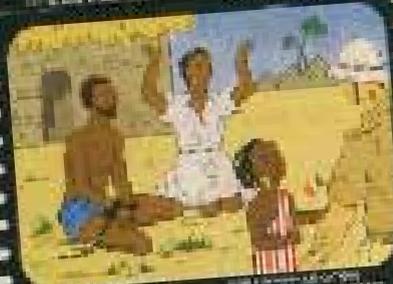
L'ANONIMA GRANDINE

SOCIETA ANONIMA ITALIANA DI ASSICURAZIONE CONTRO LA GRANDINE E DI TRASICURAZIONI

MILANO

DICEMBRE 31 GIOVEDI

ASSICURAZIONI GENERALI - VENEZIA



focus

Taken from the title of a 1935 song written during the Fascist propaganda extolling the virtues of the Ethiopian campaign, the “Little Black Face” of the “Beautiful Abyssinian” (“Facchetta nera... Bella Abissina”) was often used in the advertising of the period. The Generali pamphlet reproduced on this page is an example. Accompanied by Orio Vergani’s captions, the cartoons of the pamphlet were then exploited for exhibitions and fair stands, and in some cases displayed inside a screen such as the one visible in the photograph above left.



Above, from left: wall calendar with illustration by Boccasile celebrating the Africa campaign (1937); poster with central image designed by G. Mossa, with an African setting

New Land to Farm

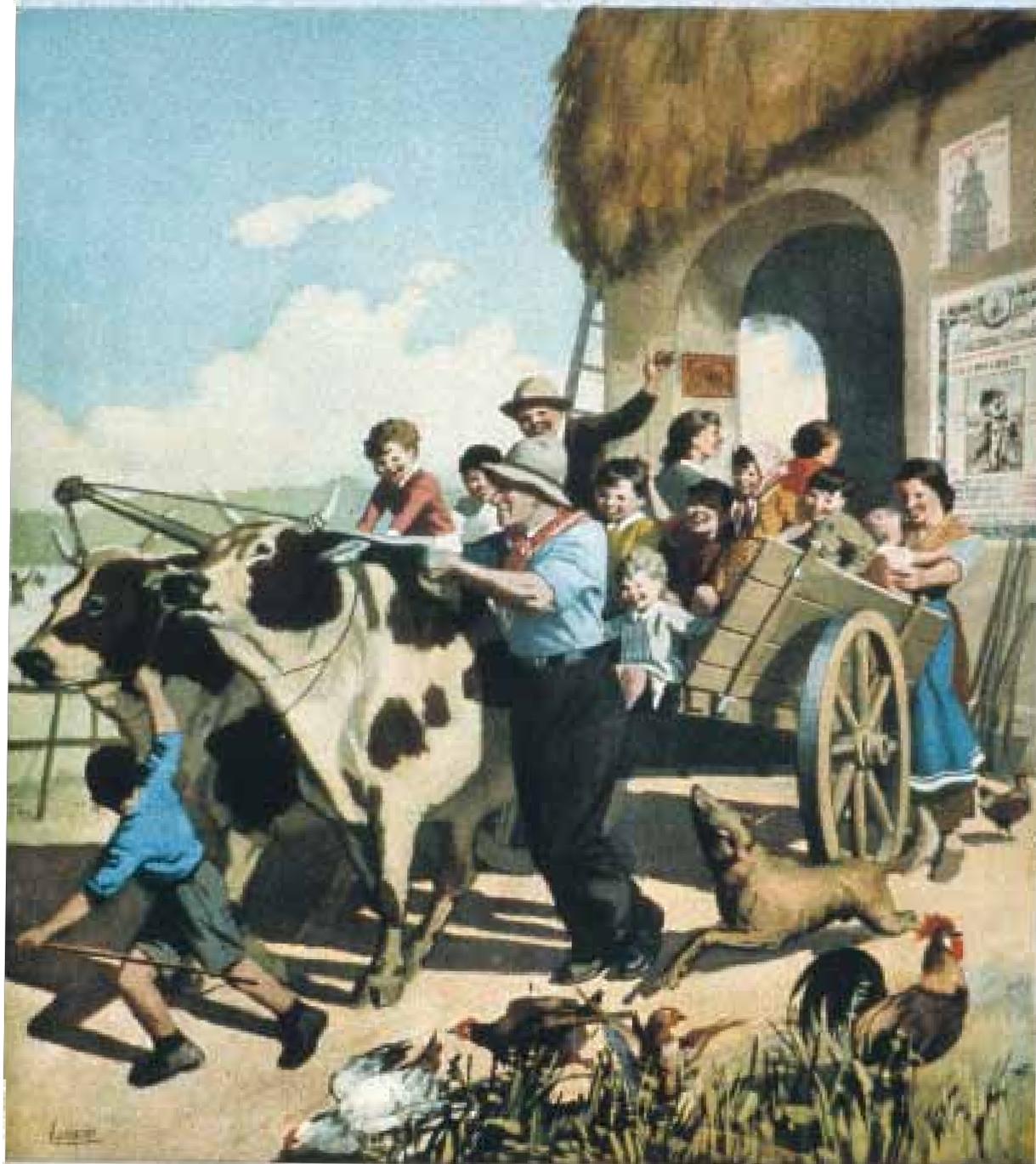
In the mid- and late-Twenties, the Fascist Regime, among other economic measures, introduced two important projects for the agricultural sector: the wheat battle and the drastic reclaiming of lands; both projects were aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in grain-growing, and at increasing land surface usable for farming.



- 1 The “wheat battle” began in 1925; “victory” was proclaimed in 1931 when wheat production managed to almost fulfill domestic needs
- 2 Mussolini at the threshing in the 1930s. News-reels of the time waxed poetic about the personal example of the Duce, “indefatigable thresher”
- 3 On June 30, 1932, the foundation stone is laid for Littoria (today Latina), first city of the reclaimed Agro Pontino area; the city is inaugurated less than six months later, on December 18
- 4 Italian farmers found land and jobs also in the African colonies, where it was necessary, first of all, to bring water



In the circle: detail of the wall calendar illustration reproduced on the facing page (Boccasile, 1938)



L'ANONIMA GRANDINE

SCHEDE ANONIME PAGARE IN ASSICURAZIONI
CONTRO LE GRANDINE E DI INCENDIO



MILANO

SEDE SOCIALE: VIA S. PIETRO 10, MILANO - TELEFONO: 02/23111111



Capitale Sociale	1.000.000.000
Reserva Generale	1.000.000.000
Reserva per Grandine	1.000.000.000
Reserva per Incendio	1.000.000.000
Reserva per altri rischi	1.000.000.000

L'ANONIMA GRANDINE è COMPAGNIA ITALIANA
DI ASSICURAZIONI SOTTOPONIBILI

SEDE SOCIALE: VIA S. PIETRO 10, MILANO

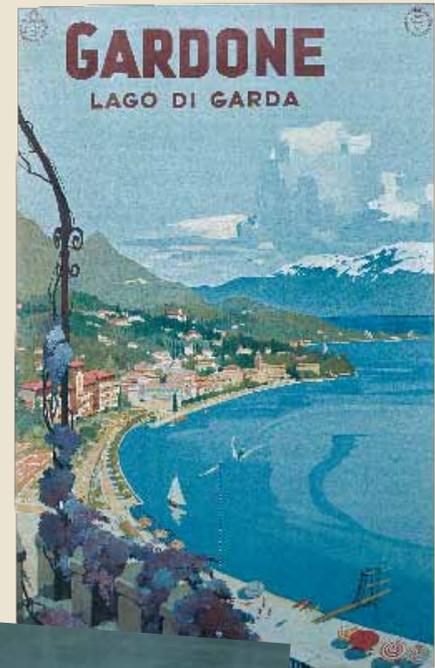


Above: 1939 poster with illustration by Aldo Raimondi (detail on the left)

Master Watercolorist

Raimondi entered the world of art at a very early age and attended the Fine Arts Academy in Rome, the city where he was born in 1902. He then moved to Milan; his works were exhibited both in Italy and abroad: his first personal exhibition took place in Parma in 1930.

He specialized in watercolor painting, and became one of Italy's best and most celebrated exponents of the technique in the XX Century, cultivating it throughout his life and painting a large number of works, especially depicting Italy's cities, villages, and countryside. Though easel painting remained his passion, in the Thirties he began to work as advertising designer, creating posters for tourist resorts and companies. Many of his watercolors were used for postcard series, brochures and other publicity material. He provided illustrations for postcard series, books and magazines, as well as cover art for *La Domenica del Corriere* for many years. He died in Erba (near Como) in 1998. During the last years of his life, many galleries dedicated exhibitions to his watercolors.



From the top:
Gardone (1934),
Esso (1930),
Benzina Super
Lampo (detail, 1930)

GINO BOCCASILE



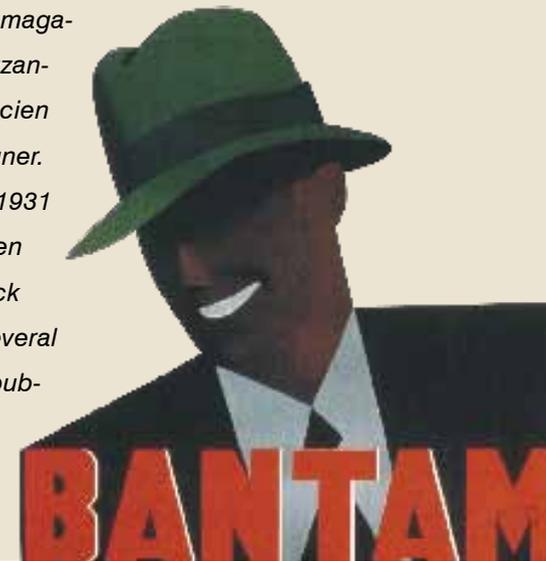
“Miss Great Authors, with Your Novecento Ways...”

Born in Bari in 1901, Boccasile was one of the masters of Italian advertising graphics, one of the most famous and well-regarded names in the fields of posters and illustration in general.

His activity in graphics and in art was supported by a great versatile talent that enchanted entire generations and continues to have its estimators to this day; he worked especially in the 1930s and

1940s, and was sadly interrupted by his untimely demise in Milan in 1952. Despite the brevity of his career compared to that of some of his peers, and despite the loss of one eye in his infancy, Boccasile produced a remarkable body of work, both in terms of quantity and quality.

He moved to Milan at a young age, and, after some initial setbacks, was able to gain a good reputation; in the 1920s he began to collaborate with art studios and fashion magazines; for a period he worked in the Mauzan-Morzenti studio, created by Achille Lucien Mauzan, the great French poster designer. After a brief stint in Buenos Aires, in 1931 Boccasile returned to Milan briefly, then moved to Paris. In 1932 he moved back to Milan permanently and started several collaborations with magazines and publishing houses as well as an intense period of poster production for





well-known companies and events. With a friend, he founded Acta advertising agency in Milan; in a short time, he became one of the most sought-after illustrators and graphic advertising designers. Fame, however, came to him in 1937 with “Miss Great Authors” (“Signorina Grandi Firme”), a character created for the covers of the periodical *Le Grandi Firme* by Pitigrilli: a cheerful, enterprising, sensual woman who became a household name. Her success was instantaneous; a popular song was even composed for her: “Miss Great Authors/With your Novecento ways/You have bothered every heart,” the chorus goes.

With the onset of World War II, under the aegis of the Fascist Regime, of which he was always a staunch supporter, the artist produced many war and political propaganda posters; then, after September 8, 1943, posters supporting the Italian Social

Republic (which Boccasile joined with the title of Lieutenant of the Italian SS Legion) and the alliance with the Germans.

At the end of the war, such radical choices cost him prison time for collaborationism and subsequently a trial – where he was acquitted – and temporary blacklisting from his profession.

He resumed his activity as illustrator and graphic designer in 1946/47, creating some famous posters, but the renaissance was short-lived: in 1952 he died after a prolonged illness. At the time of his death he was working on the illustrations for an edition of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, which was completed by other designers and published in 1955.



Facing page: Gino Boccasile; *Pagliari* (1950, in the two versions, original and “modest”); *Bantam* (detail, 1934) This page, clockwise from top left: cover of the magazine *Le grandi firme* (“Great Authors,” April 21, 1938), *Onore Fedeltà Coraggio* (Honor Loyalty Courage, 1944), *Yomo* (1952)

The War and Its Aftermath

GENERALI AND ITS GROUP COMPANIES FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE 1950S

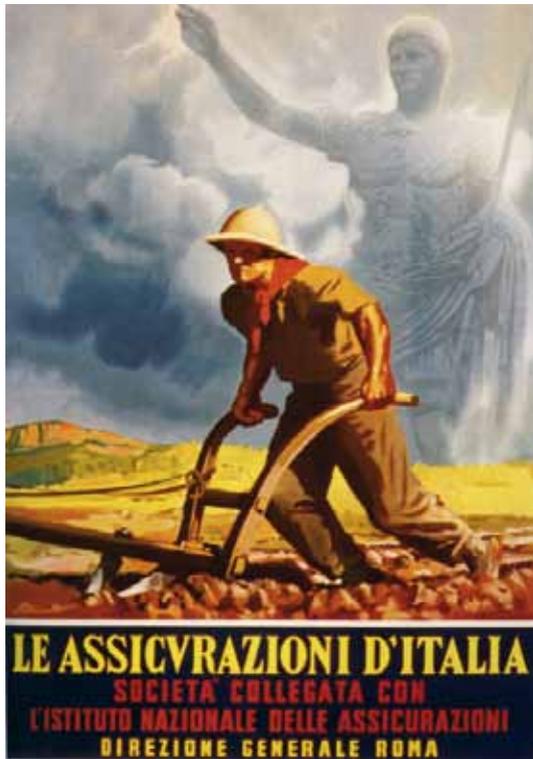
The Second World War caused a period of dire difficulties for Generali too, with consequences both on the Italian and foreign markets; in Central and Eastern Europe, in particular, the company lost its business network and properties to forfeitures and nationalizations. In the late 1940s, however, Generali began a capillary reconstruction job which laid the foundations for its future development, thanks also to the acquisition of new markets.

The consequences of the war also affected Generali's promotional activities, which, judging from the material found, was reduced significantly, especially in the production of posters. In the period of recovery that followed, a 1953 poster in particular is interesting, in that it shows the use of a medium that would eventually become of capital importance in the field of advertising: photography.

In that same period, the situation of other insurance companies acquired by the Group was not very different: a notable exception was Assitalia, a company connected to INA, with its 1939/40 posters created by important artists. FATA – which INA acquired in 1994

– also produced many posters between the late 1940s and the following decade, a period when the fashion of printed posters and of advertising graphics was gradually coming to an end, displaced by the advent of new techniques and strategies in the field of business communication.





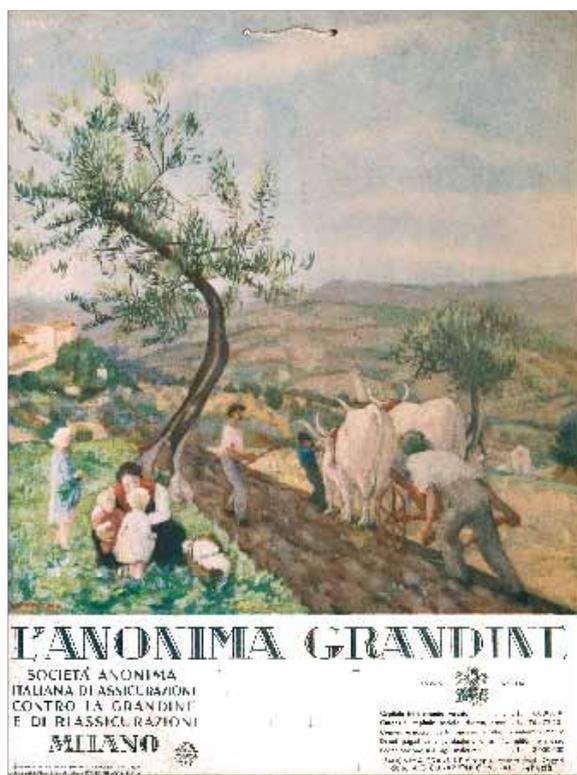
Facing page: details of the
Generali posters reproduced
on pages 124 and 125

This page: Assicurazioni
d'Italia (Assitalia) posters by
Boccasile (above, 1939) and
Ballester (right, 1940)





Above, from left: INA poster designed by D. Fortuna (circa 1940), wall calendar for Fiume illustrated by Bianchi (1940), Assicurazioni d'Italia poster by Studio Ima (1940)

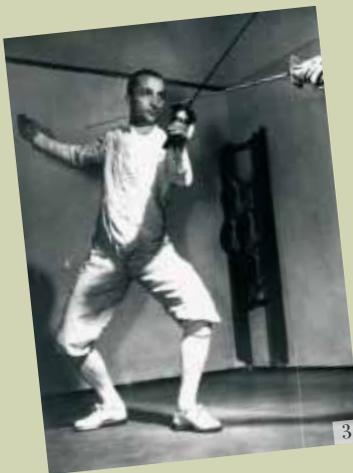


Above and right: wall calendar for Anonima Grandine illustrated by G. Prada (1941)



Legendary Champions

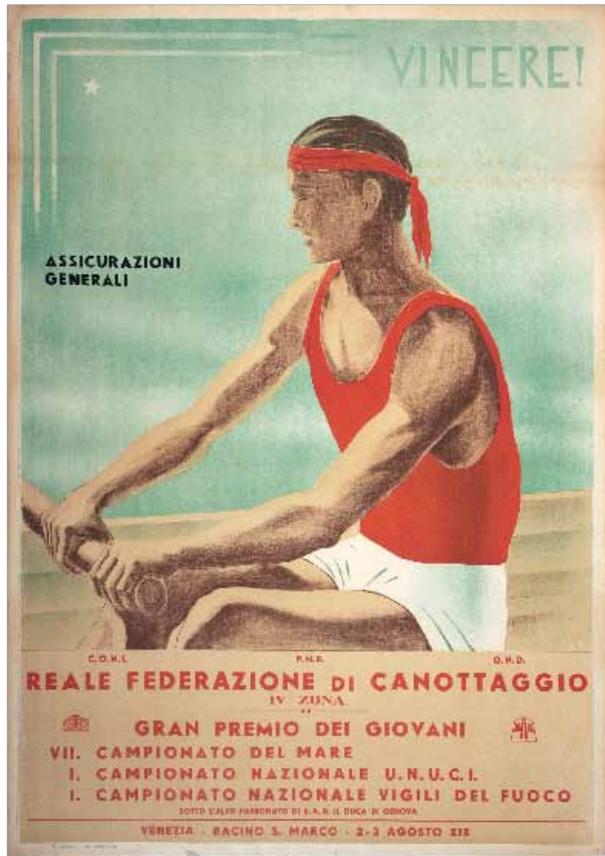
In the 1930s, sports became increasingly important for Italian society, boosted also by great successes such as the championship titles won by the national football team and by cyclists Binda and Guerra. Other champions made Italians dream, before and after World War II.



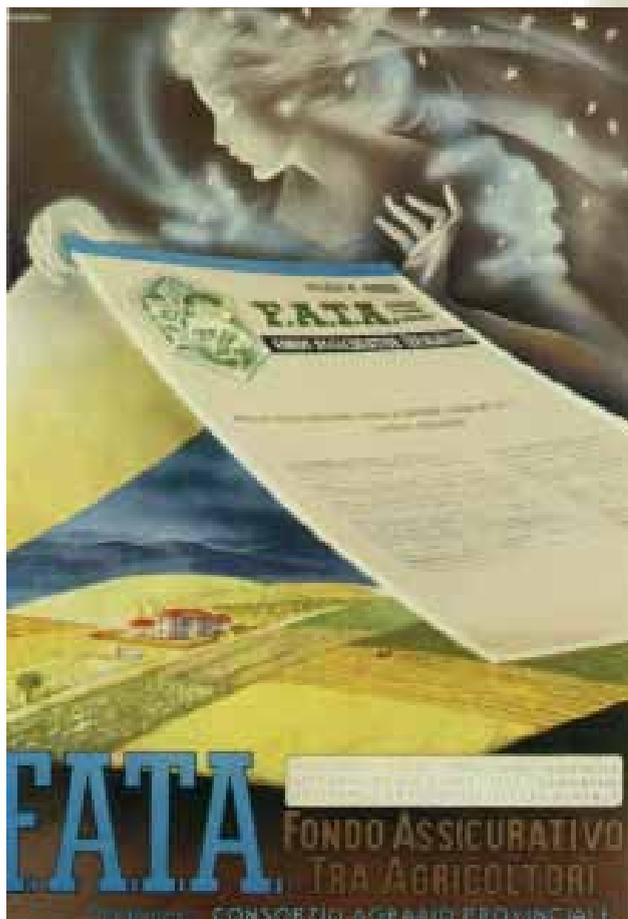
- 1 Valentino Mazzola with his son Sandro: the captain of the "Grande Torino" died with his entire team in Superga on May 4, 1949
- 2 Zeno Colò, gold medal in downhill and giant slalom at the World Championship of 1950 in Aspen, Colorado, repeated his downhill success at the 1952 Olympics
- 3 Edoardo Mangiarotti, 13 medals (6 golds) at the Olympic Games between 1936 and 1960, as well as 13 gold medals at the World Fencing Championship
- 4 The famous exchange of canteens between Fausto Coppi and Gino Bartali at the 1952 Tour de France, won by Coppi



Above and facing page: two posters by Giuseppe Rosa Salva dated 1940 and 1941 for the boat-racing championship *Gran premio dei giovani* sponsored by Assicurazioni Generali



Above: photographic poster for Assicurazioni Generali (1953)



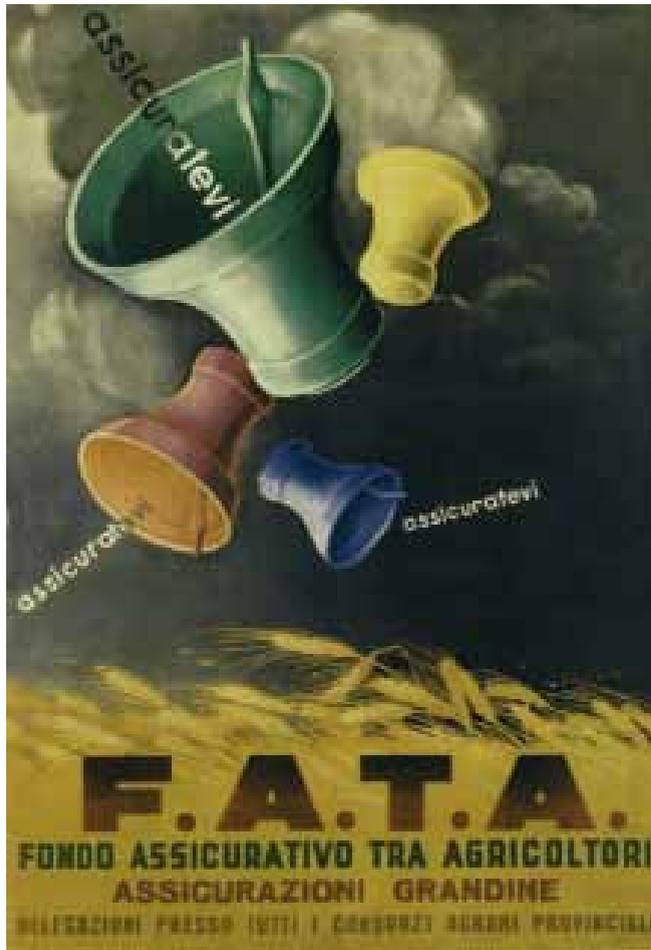
Facing page, from left: poster for Compagnia Anonima d'Assicurazione di Torino (later Toro) designed by Puppo (circa 1947) and sketch for a FATA poster (1950s)

This page, from left: FATA posters by Manciola (1949/50) and by uncredited artist (circa 1955)

focus

The INA House Plan, a public service inaugurated after WWII, following a proposal by the then-Minister of Labor Fanfani, aimed at rebuilding Italian housing through funding from a dedicated organization created by INA. 350,000 housing units were built between 1949 and 1963, which entailed the institution of 20,000 construction sites and the creation of 40,000 new jobs a year; great artists such as Burri, Cambellotti, Cascella, and Dorazio created signature tiles for each building.

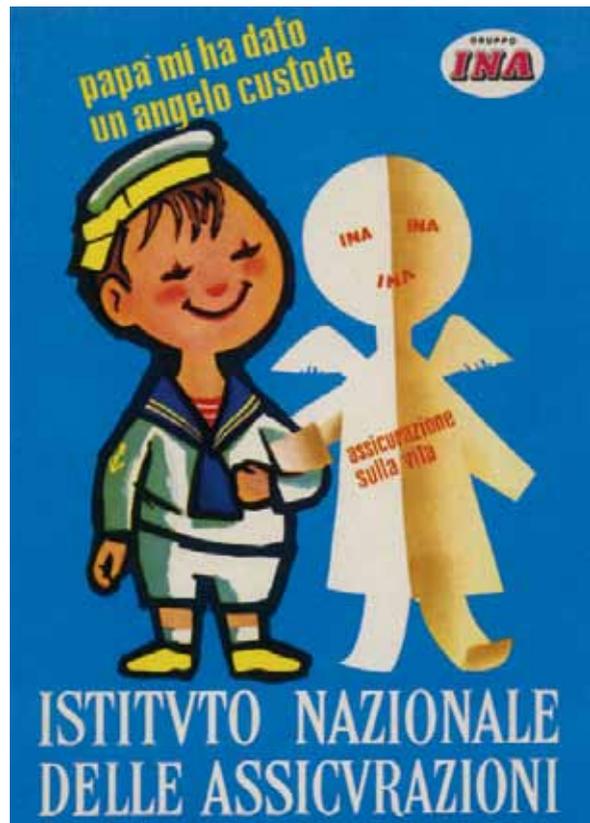




Facing page: INA poster
by A. Mercuri (1952)

This page, from left: FATA
posters created by Busi
(circa 1955 and 1959)

INA half-sheets of the 1950s, by Dante Manno (right) and by its Publicity Department (below)



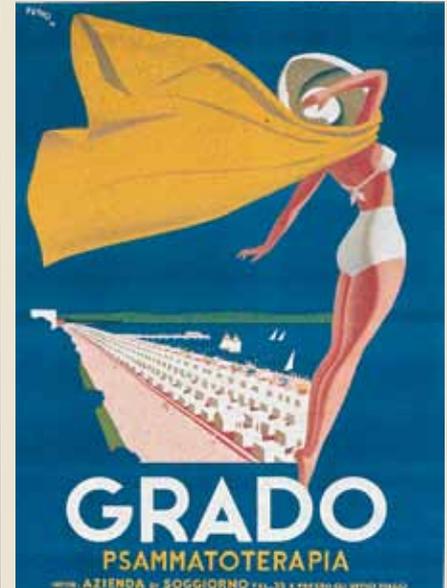
The Artist of Tourism

Though he also created works advertising various products, services and events, Puppo (Levanto, 1905 – Chiavari, 1977) was especially famous for his posters for tourism, most of which were commissioned by the Italian Agency for Tourism. Many series were dedicated to well-known mountain resorts, many to famous Italian beaches, Rivas, islands, and towns.

His style – often ironic and very original, as in the image of the fish in sunglasses smoking a cigar while relaxing in his rubber boat in front of the beach of Finale Ligure – was

susceptible to the influence of the new advertising graphics fashions succeeding each other throughout his

thirty-year career. At any rate, the artist received many awards in the course of his career.



**Cortina (1938),
Grado (1948),
Finale Ligure (1954)**



Cinema's "Painter"

Born in Rome in 1897, Ballester was a trend setter and top exponent of film poster art, a sector in which he started in the early decades of the XX Century and remained active for over forty years, creating countless posters and lobby cards.

The son of Federico Ballester, himself a well-known painter and poster designer, Anselmo was interested in painting from a very early age, studying at first with his father and subsequently honing his talent in academia.

While still very young he also began to draw sketches for posters, increasingly specializing in the field of film, where he soon displayed an original style coupled with great creativity. These skills allowed him to work extensively for Italy's most important film studios from the time of



Above: *Aldebaran* (1935)

Right: *Ombre rosse* (1950 – original title of the film: *Stagecoach*), *Roma città aperta* (1945)





Left: *Trinidad* (1951 – original title of the film: *Affair in Trinidad*), *Fronte del porto* (1954 – original title of the film: *On the Waterfront*)

silent movies. Later on, he also worked for American Majors such as MGM, Columbia, Warner Bros., and Paramount.

In the 1920s, to cope with the large number of assignments he received from Italian and foreign studios and distributors, he collaborated with Alfredo Capitani and Luigi Martinati, two well-known designers of posters for film and advertising: with them he founded Bcm.

Given the huge number of great works he created for the cinema, it is difficult to synthesize his career by choosing one or two works: with his posters he created dreams for entire generations of moviegoers, even before the actual films were projected, and whether those films were masterpieces or not.

He produced posters and other promotional material for sectors other than film, though not as copiously. A versatile artist, he was also a set designer and a decorator, as well as a painter, in particular of portraits and landscapes; painting in fact occupied most of his time during the last years of his life.

He worked as graphic designer and illustrator through the 1960s. He died in Rome in 1974.



Small... but Effective

“OTHER” PUBLICITY: POSTCARDS, CALENDARS, TRADING CARDS, BROCHURES...

Facing page, clockwise from top left: note-pad produced by Generali for soldiers (circa 1915); discount coupons by Anonima Infortuni (1911); Generali diary *Le spese di casa* (Household Expenses, 1897); publicity postcard by Anonima Infortuni (1923)

From the end of the XIX Century on, companies promoted products and activities through notices posted on walls, posters, and ads printed in newspapers and magazines; they also used a whole series of other means, most of them printed on paper, meant especially for the private homes: postcards, trading cards, date books, letter seals, pamphlets and brochures.

Classified in various ways (“small publicity,” “minor illustrations,” “poor papers”), this printed matter, delivered free together with products of many kinds, was very common in the past, when commercial information entering the home was scarce prior to the advent of radio and television.

Insurance companies too used these formats extensively, as demonstrated by the period documentation about Generali, its affiliates and its acquired companies, between the late 1800s and the 1950s/1960s.

These materials targeted a range of social classes, events and activities and were sometimes illustrated by the greats of advertising. They are of capital importance as documents, to fully understand the evolution of insurance products and of the strategies employed to promote them in precise, capillary ways.





Left: letter seals produced by Generali (1920s/1930s)

Below: Assitalia publicity postcard illustrated by Ballerio (circa 1925); publicity blotting papers produced by Generali and by Anonima Infortuni (1915-20)





- 1 Postcard for the Trieste Lega Nazionale designed by Argio Orell (1911)
- 2 Happy children holding Barilla products in this postcard by F. Th. Würgel (circa 1927)
- 3 Designed by Mario Gros, a promotional postcard for the football World Cup of 1934 which took place in Italy
- 4 Famous publicity image by Boccasile for Chlorodont toothpaste, here in postcard format (1950)

Publicity Postcards

Created in the late 1800s, publicity postcards have played a role of some importance, especially in earlier years, in the promotion of products, services and events. The small size, the low production costs and the catchy graphics, often scale reproductions of posters signed by great designers, have made the medium easy to produce and distribute.

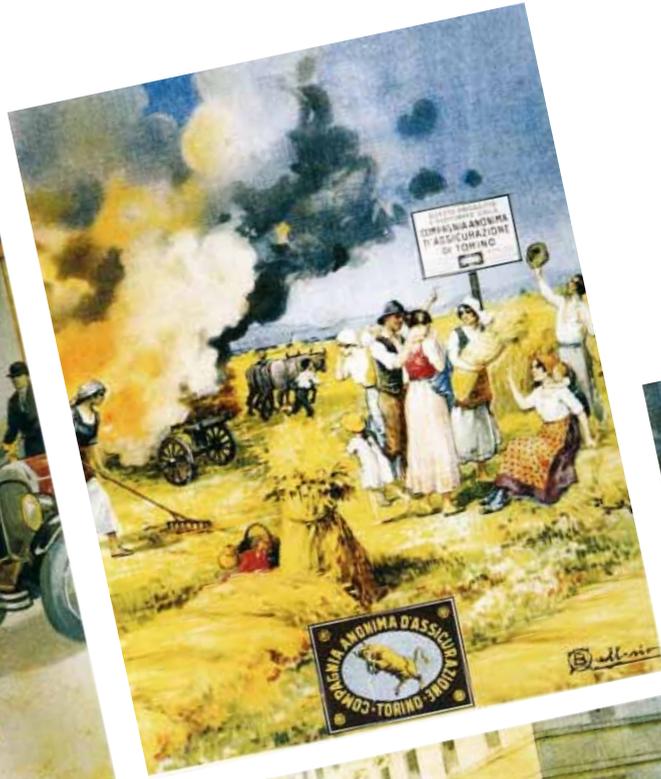






Facing page: Generali pocket calendars (1910s/1920s)

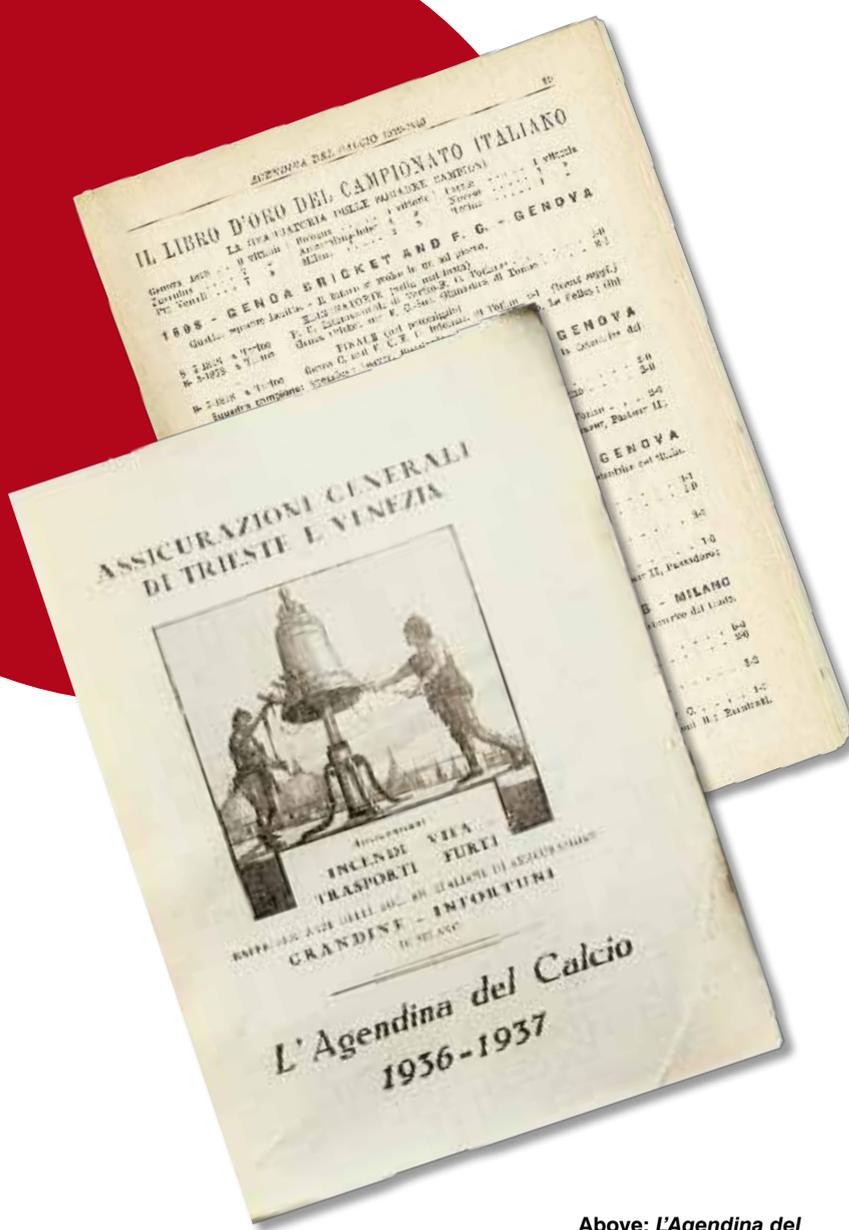
Above, from left: *Piccola agenda per famiglie* (Little Family Planner) by INA, 1931; booklet published by Generali for the 100th Anniversary (1931); *Assicurazioni d'Italia* publicity postcard designed by Capizzano Santamaria (1934)





These two pages: Compagnia d'Assicurazione di Torino (later Toro) publicity postcards, mid-1930s; the second from top left on the facing page was signed by Ballerio

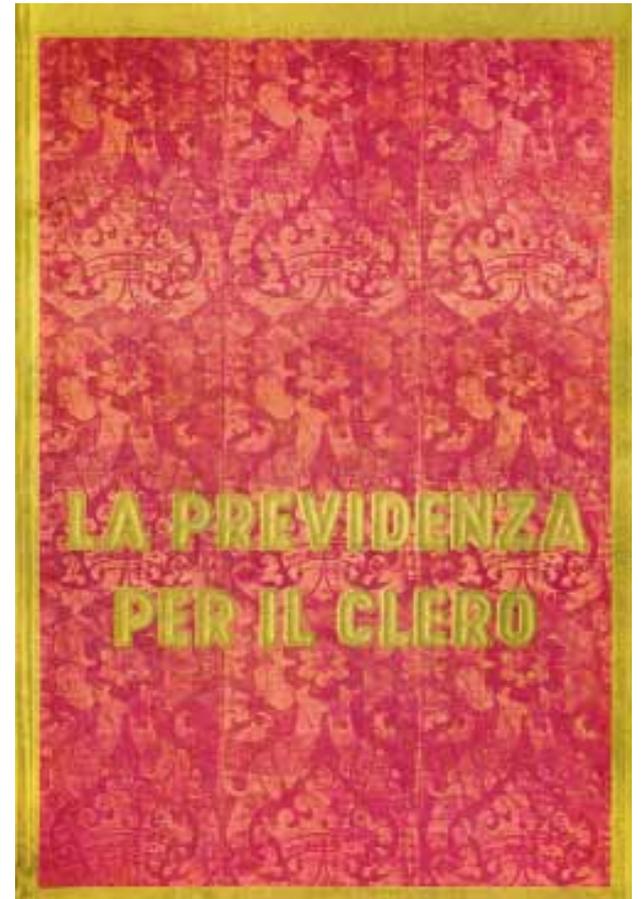


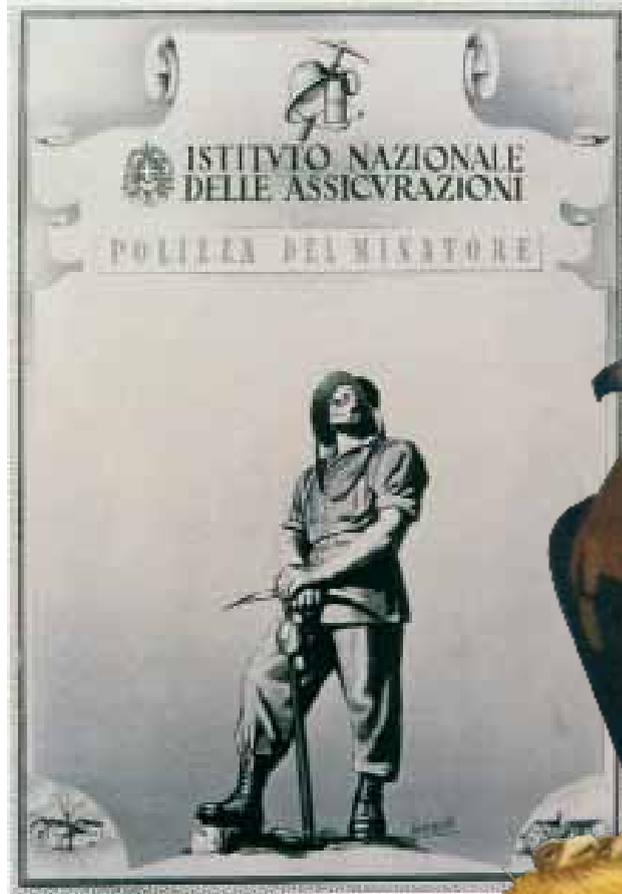
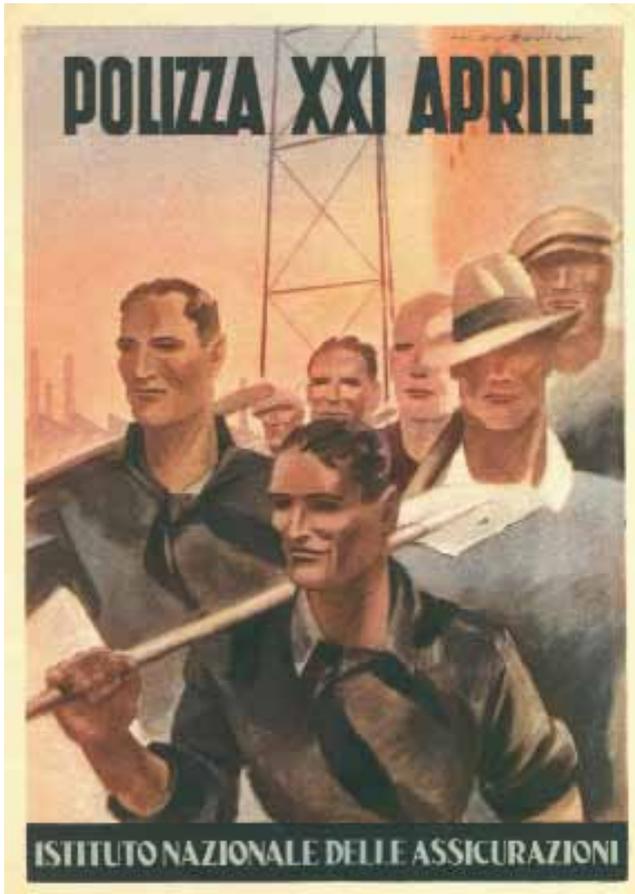


Above: *L'Agendina del Calcio 1936-1937* (Football Planner) published by Assicurazioni Generali

Right: Generali booklet on insurance for the clergy (1934)

Facing page, from left: INA booklet covers illustrated by Dudovich (*Polizza XXI Aprile*, 1936) and by Boccasile (*Polizza del minatore*, 1930s); cover illustration of INA's 1938 pocket calendar







Above: INA's complimentary box of crayons for schools (1930s) and inner page of a *Balilla* policy with company stamps validating the paid monthly premiums (1939/40)

Right: detail of publicity postcard for Fiume (Boccasile, 1930s)

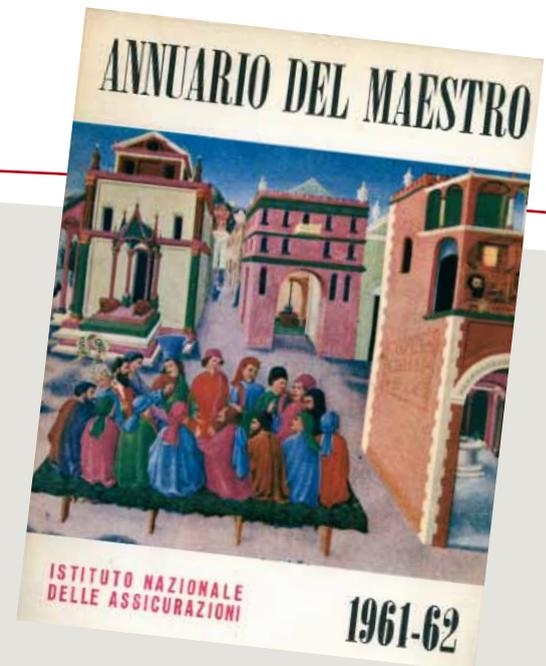




Left and above: publicity postcards of Anonima Grandine (Bianchi, 1945) and of INA (Busi, circa 1940)

focus

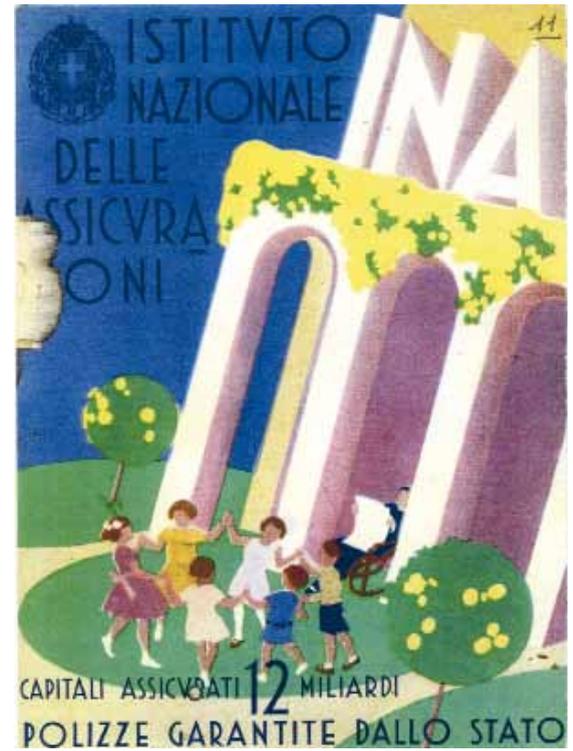
Example of “small publicity material” meant for a specific social category, INA’s *Annuario del maestro* (Teacher’s Yearbook) was distributed free to primary school teachers. The daily planning pages were preceded by short notes about current news regarding schools; the last part of the book contained other “useful information,” for example about insurance policies.

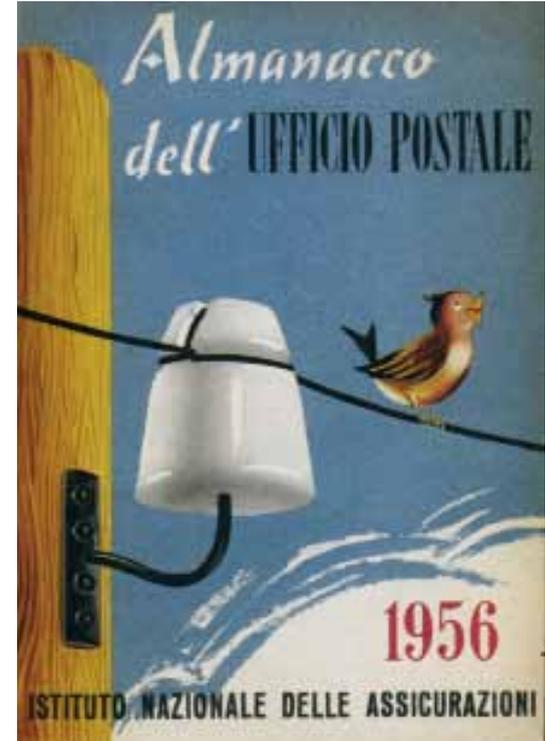
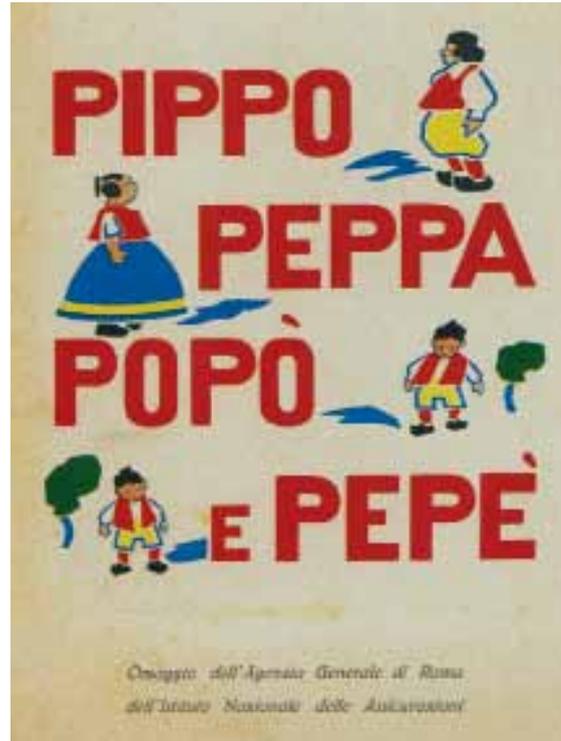




Right: booklet cover for INA (1930s/40s)

Below: detail of INA publicity postcard (Busi, circa 1940)





This page, from left: INA postcard illustrated by Busi (circa 1940), covers of INA booklets about insurance for children (1930s/40s) and of the postal almanac of 1956

Graphic Designer, Illustrator, Portrait Artist

The grandson of the famous Lombard painter Mosè Bianchi and son of Anita Sangiorgi, also an artist and creator of embroideries, Alberto Bianchi was born in Rimini in 1882 and from a very young age showed interest and talent in art.

In 1915 he began an intense collaboration with *Il Numero*, famous humor magazine, for which he designed over 100 cartoons; this was followed by other collaborations with newspapers and magazines. At the end of World War I, he devoted a lot of his time to portrait painting, a genre he was particularly skilled at, working especially in Milan for the aristocracy and the industrial class. He also painted landscapes and still lives while

still working as illustrator for several publishing houses and producing numerous book covers and postcard series.

From the 1920s on, he

devoted himself to advertising and his creations include many famous posters, such as, for example, the Ardita poster for FIAT in 1933.

He continued working until just before his death in Milan in 1969.



Above: *Ardita* FIAT (1933) and *Quinquina Ferrugineux Serravallo* (1940)

Left: *Crociere d'Italia Cosulich* (detail of poster, 1935)

CROCIERE

ITALIA
FLOTTE RIUNITE

COSULICH
S. T. N.

A Pleasant, Effective Graphic Sign

Right: Adolfo Busi

Below: Rimini (1929)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: *Lotteria di Tripoli* (1936); *La vittoria del grano* (circa 1929); *Riccione* (1928); *Biscotti Delser* (detail of poster, circa 1935)

Adolfo Busi (Faenza, 1891 – Bologna, 1977) began designing posters and other publicity material around 1920, while working for Chappuis in Bologna; his works were among the most exciting and effective produced in Italy.

After graduating from the Bologna Fine Arts Academy,

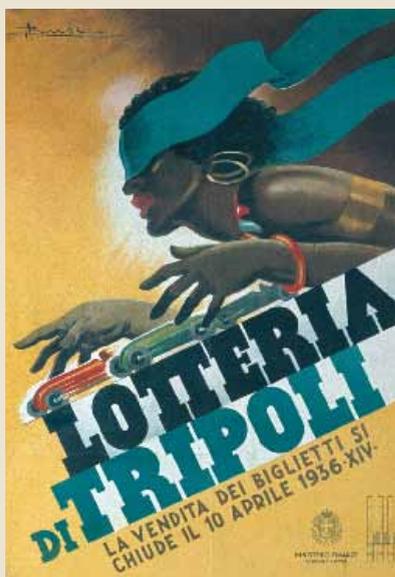
he gained a reputation as a painter, participating in several exhibitions both in Italy and abroad, and mounting

several personal exhibitions from 1914 on. After a period in Alexandria, where he taught drawing, he began working in advertising, producing his first important works for Chappuis immediately after World War I. During that time, he also worked as illustrator, producing especially children's books and postcard series, while never abandoning painting, his first love.

In the 1920s and 1930s he was particularly active in advertising, creating many works for Baroni and Ricordi in Milan: at Ricordi's he opened his own studio in 1932.

His years at Ricordi were intense and productive, making him famous enough to work for many of the most important Italian industries and for various events and expositions.

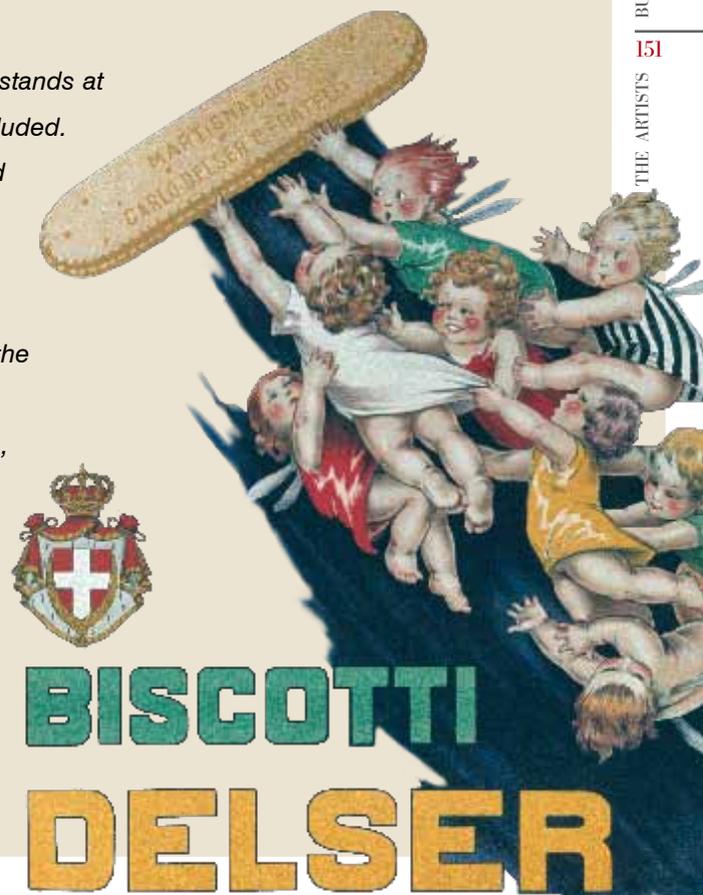
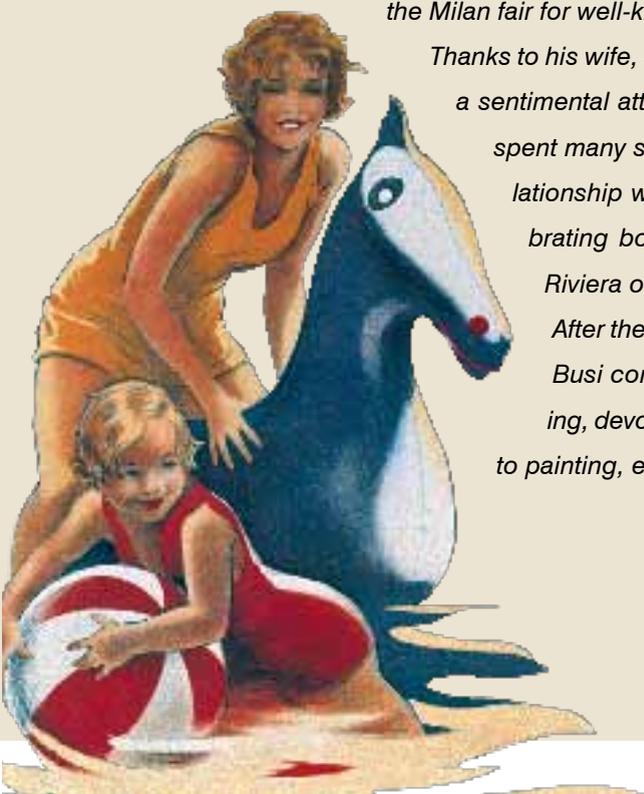




In the years immediately preceding World War II, he also mounted stands at the Milan fair for well-known insurance companies, Generali included.

Thanks to his wife, an artist from a rich family, Busi developed a sentimental attachment to her home town, Rimini, and spent many summer holidays there after 1915; his relationship with the city generated many works celebrating both Rimini and other summer resorts in the Riviera of Romagna.

After the Second World War and through the 1950s, Busi continued to work as designer in advertising, devoting however more and more of his time to painting, especially oil.



Abroad

PERIOD COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING IN GENERALI'S FOREIGN COMPANIES AND AGENCIES

Generali's expansion into international markets began early, prepared by the wide-ranging network of agencies instituted by the company in several countries beginning in the very early decades of its activity. The creation of its first affiliates dates from the 1880s/1890s, with the establishment of companies in Austria, Italy, Hungary and Romania, building blocks of the Group which would later further expand in Europe and world-wide.

At present, the Generali Group, one of the largest internationally, controls hundreds of

foreign insurance companies in all continents.

For some of the European companies created or acquired by Generali at different times, we have been able to retrieve, not without difficulties,

some sample of their promotional and communications activities.

One work stands out: a beautiful poster by Paul Verdussen dated 1897 for Les Patrons Réunis, a company created in Belgium in 1887, acquired by the Group in 1989 and long since absorbed by Generali Belgium. La Concorde, created by Generali in Paris in 1905 and today merged with Generali France, is represented by some half-sheet posters dominated by the written word, framed, in some cases, by architectural and floral decorations. Other material, such as posters, postcards, calendars, and brochures, demonstrates the promotional activities carried out in the past by agencies and by other foreign Group companies, such as Banco Vitalicio de España, La France, La Populaire, and L'Union Générale du Nord.



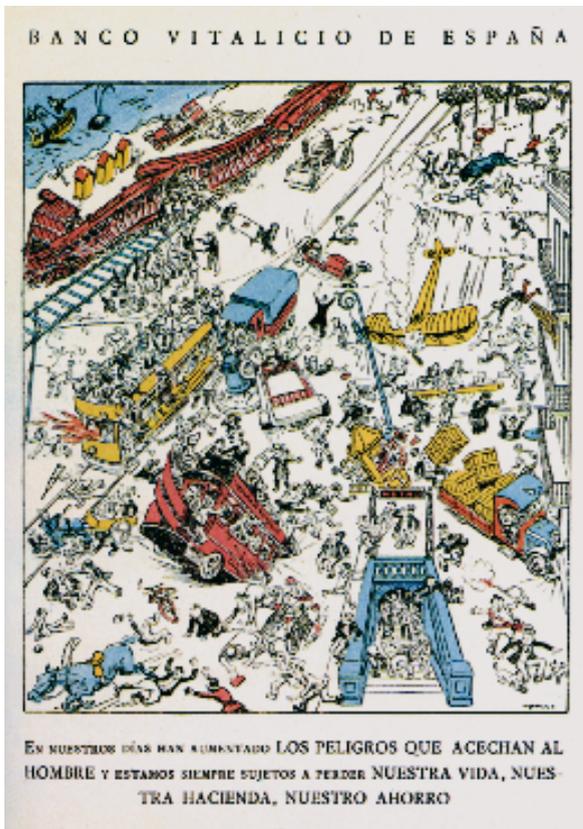
This page: cover
of booklet
published by
Generali
Czechoslovakia
management in
the 1930s



Left: poster designed by Paul Verdussen for Les Patrons Réunis (1897)

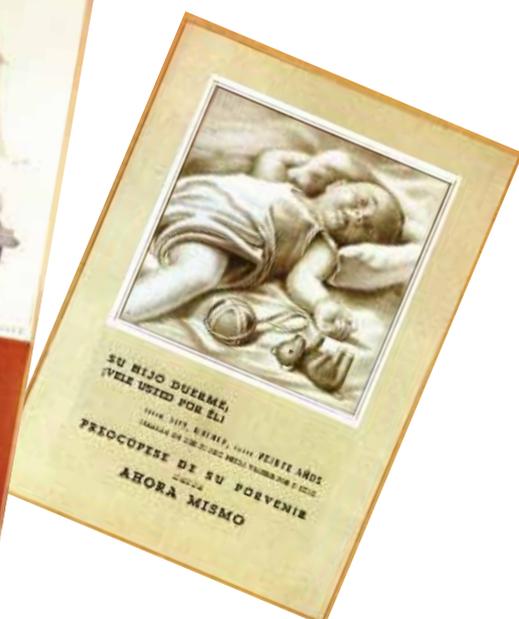
Above: half-sheet for the Belgian company (circa 1925)





Facing page, from left: Luis Escolà poster, winner of a competition sponsored by Banco Vitalicio de España to promote popular insurance (next to it, Escolà's drawing used for a commercial for the Banco, to be shown at the cinema); 1887 illustration for Banco de Cataluña, later merged with Banco Vitalicio de España

This page: illustrations from booklet (1925, above), calendar (1943) and publicity leaflet (1940s), all for Banco Vitalicio de España





LA FRANCE

Compagnie Anonyme d'Assurances
 FONDÉE EN 1837

14, RUE DE GRAMMONT - PARIS

Assurances
L'INCENDIE
 la Foudre
 et
 les divers Cas d'explosion
 A PRIMES FIXES

Assurances
SUR LA VIE
 A PRIMES FIXES
 ASSURANCES EN CAS DE DÉCÈS
 ASSURANCES EN CAS DE VIE
 RENTES VIAGÈRES IMMÉDIATES
 ACHAT DE BIENS PROPRIÉTÉS

Capital Social: **10 MILLIONS**
 Directeur: **M. L. TRUELLE**
 Directeur-Agée: **M. A. ALLEMES**

Capital Social: **10 MILLIONS**
 Directeur-Agée: **M. H. POTERIN DE MOTEL**

CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION :

M. DEDYOT (Ch.), Président de JOURVENEL (Hiver), Vice-Président BALGAN (Ch.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris de BIEVILLE (A.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris de LAURENCE (A.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris CHAPUIS (L.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris DUBREUIL (L.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris	M. LABOURET (A.), sans domicile LAURENT (G.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris LEHENDU (H.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris RICHMOND (E. L.) * Agent à la Cour de Paris ROY (Gustave) * Agent THELIER (Ernest) sans domicile
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M. _____ Agent généra à _____

From left: publicity postcard (1932) and half-sheet (1911) for La France

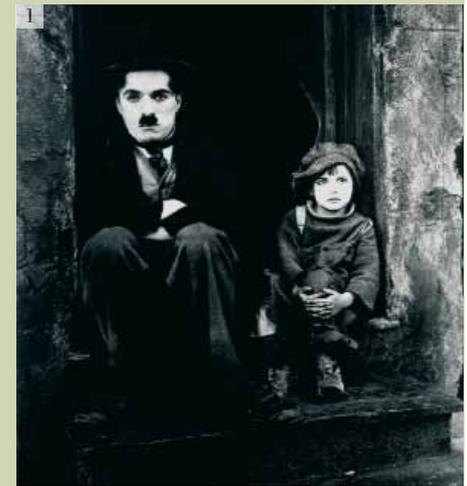
Facing page: publicity leaflets for La Populaire (1940s)

Arts and Culture in the Age of Mass Media



In the years between the two World Wars, the art poster was slowly dying, but at the same time new mass media took hold, born of technological progress and destined to completely revolutionize the concepts of art, culture, and communication.

- 1 One of the masterpieces of silent cinema: *The Kid*, directed by its star, Charlie Chaplin (1921)
- 2 In the 1920s it became possible to broadcast sound to the public: in the picture, Pope Pio XI inaugurates Vatican Radio (1931)
- 3 From 1925 on, more and more experimenting was done with television: in the photograph, a Telefunken set for radio-TV reception (1933)
- 4 Director Leni Riefenstahl during the shooting of *Olympia*, memorable documentary film about the monumental 1936 Berlin Olympic Games



LA CONCORDE

COMPAGNIE ANONYME
D'ASSURANCES À PRIMES FIXES
CONTRE LES

ACCIDENTS
ET CONTRE LE **VOL**

CAPITAL SOCIAL: 6.800.000
(le ¼ versé.)

82, RUE S^t LAZARE
PARIS

CONTROLÉ ET SURVEILLÉ PAR L'ÉTAT (LOI DU 17 JUIN 1908)

POUR TOUS RENSEIGNEMENTS S'ADRESSER
à M.

CYCLISTES
VOUS N'ÊTES PAS SEULS SUR LA ROUTE
À QUOI VOUS SERT VOTRE PRUDENCE

*si vous n'êtes pas
assurés*

LA CONCORDE
36 RUE RAVENSCAMPT BRUXELLES

par
SON ASSURANCE
**ACCIDENTS
DE VELO**
vous garanti
EN CAS DE MORT
D'INVALIDITÉ PERMANENTE TOTALE
DE RESPONSABILITÉ VIS-À-VIS DES TIERS

UN CAPITAL DE
100.000 FR.
POUR UNE PRIME ANNUELLE DE
160 FRANCS
Tous impôts et frais compris

RENSEIGNEZ-VOUS

LA CONCORDE
COMPAGNIE D'ASSURANCES CONTRE LES RISQUES DE TOUTE NATURE
Capital Social : Fr. 10.000.000 (1/4 versé)
72, Rue S^t Lazare, PARIS

GRÊLE

INCENDIE - ACCIDENTS
VOL - TRANSPORTS

POUR TOUS RENSEIGNEMENTS S'ADRESSER
à M.



Facing page: half-sheets for
La Concorde (from left, circa
1910, circa 1930 designed by
Jacques Ricy, and 1930s)

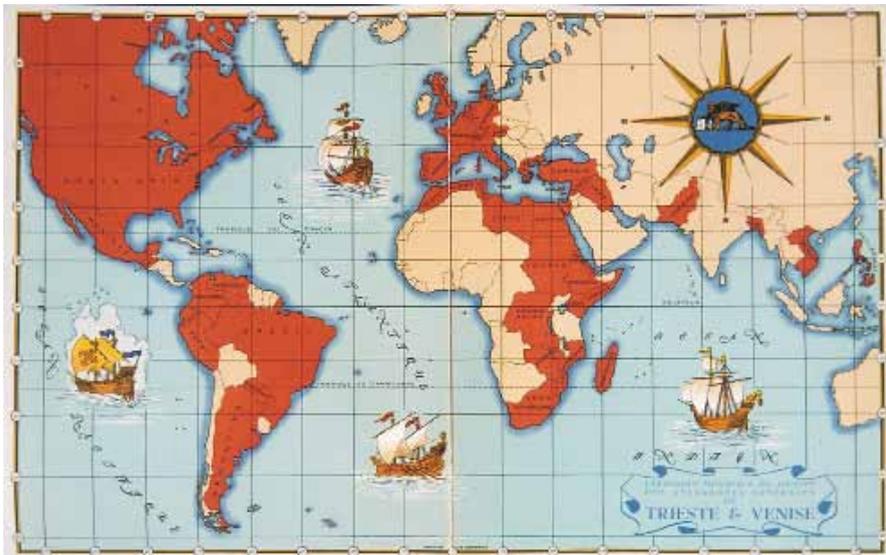
This page: poster for L'Union
Générale du Nord (circa 1930)





Left: poster for Generali's representative in Budapest, designed by Nemes, circa 1925

Facing page: booklet cover, illustrated by Quaiatti, for Generali's Middle Eastern management (1932); in the circle, detail of a 1951 reissue with some changes in the design

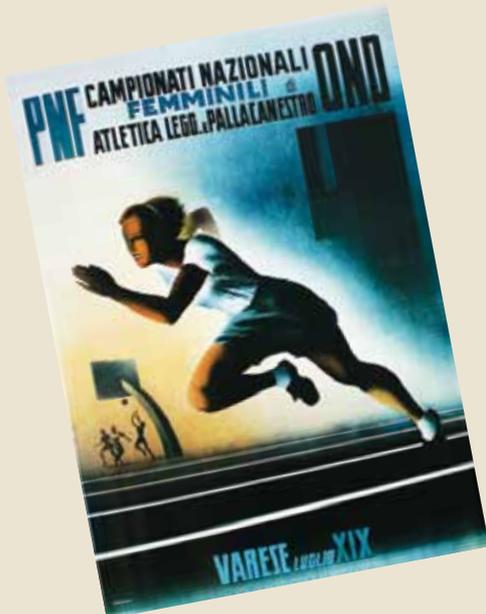


focus

This French-language map is an example of the geographical charts created over the years to publicize the growth of the Group: a single color, often “Generali Red,” highlights the territories where the parent company is present directly or through agencies, branches, or controlled companies. The name Assurances Générales de Trieste & Venise was adopted in 1903 by the Generali branch in France (the first agency had been opened in Bordeaux in 1832) and continued to be used for most of the XX Century.

Other Poster Artists

To complete the biographies of the artists who, between the end of the XIX Century and the middle of the XX Century, created the most important posters for Generali Group companies, here is some brief biographical information on some of the other authors whose works are featured in the nine chapters of the book.



C. Manciola, *Campionati nazionali femminili di atletica legg. e pallacanestro*, 1941

CORRADO MANCIOLI (Rome 1904 – 1968)

Illustrator and poster designer, he opened a studio with his brother Ottorino. He designed advertising and propaganda posters for various events of the Fascist Regime, as well as sports commemorative stamps for Italy and for the Republic of San Marino.

FRANCO MOSCA (Biella 1910 – Milan 2003)

He created posters for many industries and companies; his style was reminiscent of Boccasile's, with whose agency, Acta in Milan, he worked in the mid-1930s. He produced some famous ads in the 1950s/60s characterized by bosomy female figures similar to the American pin-ups of the period.



F. Mosca, *Mosquito*, 1954

ANDREA PETRONI (Venosa 1863 – Rome 1943)

He studied painting at the Fine Arts Institute of Naples, and was soon noticed for his remarkable graphic skills. After moving to Rome, he received the assignment of decorating the "Small parliament building" of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, which he did with a cycle of paintings dedicated in particular to the activities of the agricultural world.

ANTONIO QUAIATTI (Trieste 1904 – 1992)

A student of Wostry and Finazzo Fiori at the Arts Masters section of the “Industrial” School of Trieste, Quaiatti enjoyed a long career as advertising designer. For many years he collaborated with Lloyd Triestino, producing tourist-themed posters, brochures, and magazine covers; he also worked for other companies in Trieste. He worked as book illustrator and interior decorator.

WALTER RESENERA (Seren del Grappa 1907 – Schio 1995)

Inclined towards painting from a very young age, he traveled to Milan with the intention of meeting his idol Marcello Dudovich. He did, worked with him and married his daughter Adriana in 1935. He worked in many sectors besides advertising, and with distinction: mural painting, easel painting, frescoes, and mosaics.



W. Resenera,
Festa delle legioni, 1934



G. L. Sormani, Miccio & Ci., 1910

GIAN LUCIANO SORMANI (Legnano 1867 – 1938?)

Painting and teaching were the primary activities of this artist, who studied at the Academy in Venice under Pompeo Molmenti. Initially specialized in the human figure, he then branched out into landscapes, and occasionally worked as poster designer.

PAUL VERDUSSEN (Bruxelles 1868 – 1945)

A Belgian painter and graphic designer, he painted interiors, landscapes, ships, forests and cityscapes. He was co-founder and secretary of the Brussels Le Sillon arts association (1893). At the end of the XIX Century he further specialized in poster design. For its historical and artistic value, his studio was declared a protected landmark in 1999.

Great Comic Strips and Cartoons

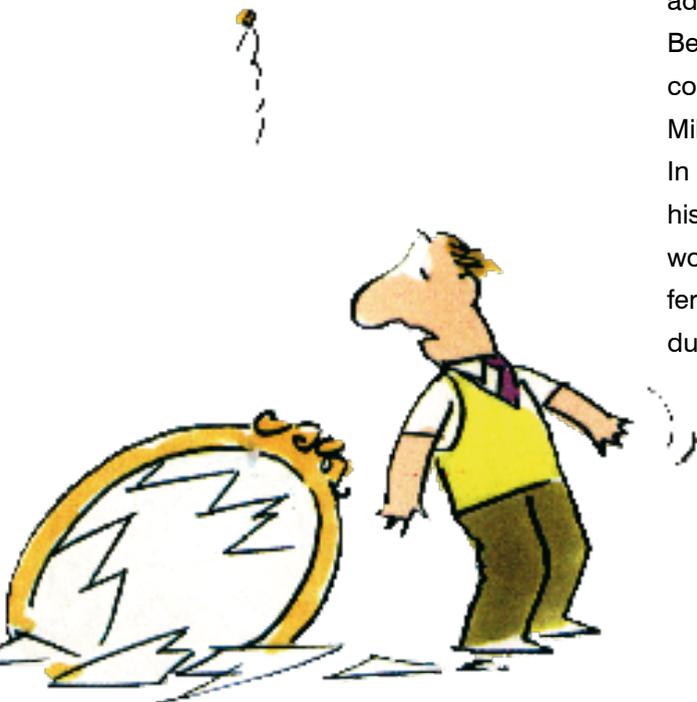
**MILO MANARA
FOR ALLEANZA
AND MARCO BIASSONI
FOR TORO**

There has often been a spillover between advertising and comics. In fact, a great number of comic book artists have been “borrowed” by advertising in the wake of the success of their strips and used to promote various products and services, company brands, and special utility messages.

This is because the nature of the “language” of comics, which is able to condense words and images into direct, incisive visual syntheses, lends itself perfectly to the function of advertising.

Between 1990 and 1995, Alleanza and Toro hired two of Italy’s greatest creators of comic books and illustrations to promote some of their insurance products: namely, Milo Manara and Marco Biassoni.

In the case of Manara, we are dealing with comic strips proper, designed by him with his unique graphic style – which also made him popular abroad; Biassoni, who mostly worked as illustrator and cartoonist for advertising, illustrated policies and services offered by Toro through a series of cartoons with an ironic, witty style typical of his production.





Facing page: cartoon by Biassoni for the *Master* policy of Toro (1995) and comic strip by Manara for the *Denaro rivalutato* policy of Alleanza (1990)

This page: more strips by Manara

Italian Comic Book Masters

Milo Manara is rightfully considered one among the Italian masters of the comic book: great authors and designers who in the second half of the XX Century were able to elevate a “minor” art to the heights of a respected literary genre. We would like to remember some of them.

1



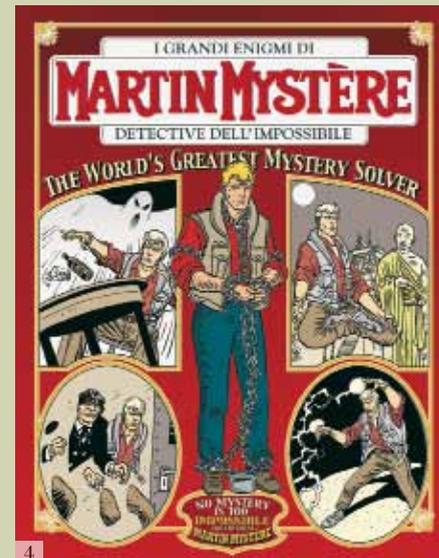
1 Tex was created in 1948 by Gianluigi Bonelli and designed by Aurelio Galleppini (Galep); the latter also designed the first 400 covers of the monthly series (left, the cover art for number 315, *Blood on the River*, of 1987)

2 Mickey Mouse (Topolino in Italy) with Atomino Bip Bip, one of the many characters with which Romano Scarpa enriched the Disney galaxy, here in the adventure that takes the two to Mongolia (1959)

3 The soldiers of Sturmtruppen, the grotesque army created in 1968 by Franco Bonvicini (Bonvi), in a strip dated 1983

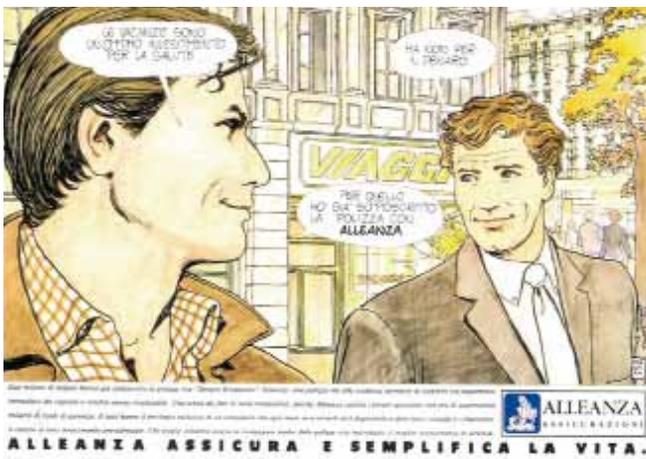
4 Martin Mystère, detective of the impossible, was invented in 1982 by Alfredo Castelli and designed by Giancarlo Alessandrini (right, cover number 285, *Il grande Houdini*, 2006)

3





Strips by Manara for
 Alleanza's *Denaro*
 rivalutato policy (1990)



...



ALLEANZA ASSICURA E SEMPLIFICA LA VITA.



These two pages: cartoons by Biassoni for a booklet illustrating Toro's Doctor policy (1990)



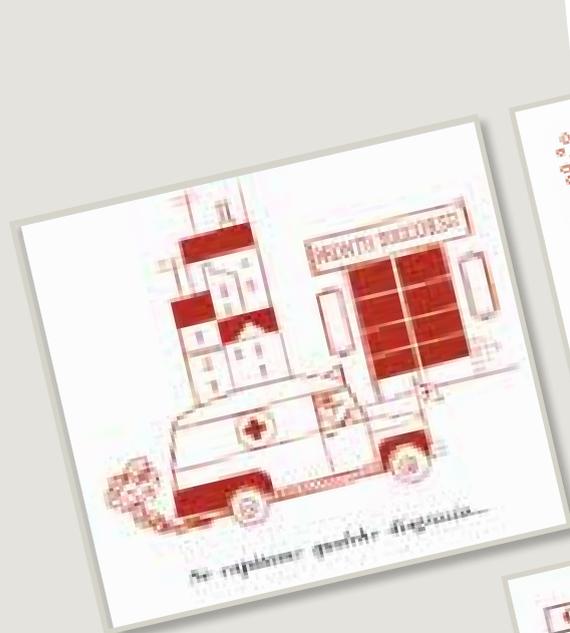
focus

The famous satirical cartoonist Giorgio Forattini also worked for Generali, creating the logo of the "Flying Lion" launched in 1985 as symbol of the agreement of the same name between Generali and Alitalia, which generated a policy customized for air travelers, offering innovative guarantees for the time. The image was displayed in strategic locations, such as travel agency windows, check-in counters at airports, specialized magazines and outdoor displays.



focus

Among the illustrators who collaborated with the Generali Group in the second half of the XX Century, we should remember Omero Valenti (Trieste 1906 – Udine 2001), advertising designer active from the 1920s who also worked as cartoonist for the weekly *Mastro Remo*. Among the works created by him for Generali in the 1960s and '70s, we are presenting here some of his drawings published in the company magazine, *Il Bollettino*, to illustrate articles about risk coverage offered by policies and about sales techniques. The little lion on page 208 was also drawn by him.





These two pages: cartoons by Biassoni for a booklet illustrating Toro's *Master* policy (1995)



The Light Art of Humor

Right: Marco Biassoni

Below: the artist in a 1996 photograph in which, à la Steinberg, he is wearing a paper bag over his head with the face of his most famous character, King Arthur



A key figure on the Italian illustration, comic book and animation scene, particularly in the field of advertising, Marco Biassoni began his career in Genoa, where he was born in 1930. In 1956 he opened Studio Forma with some colleagues, and was soon working for many big companies. His first comic-book character, Lingottino, dated 1959, was followed by Prode Anselmo ("Anselmo the Brave") after the author relocated to Milan to work for the newspaper Il Giorno.

Biassoni's enthusiasm for cinema, theater and animation led him to the field of film and TV commercials, where he worked through the 1960s and '70s; he produced and directed commercials for important brands such as Barilla, Perugina, Knorr, Shell, Cynar, J&B, Bertolli, and Total. Among them, his most famous in Italy was probably the one for Pavesi, featuring King Arthur, which was later spun off into a comic strip for Corriere dei Piccoli, a newspaper for which Biassoni also created the strip Cìà Cìà Pascià.

Among his publications, we should mention Il piccolo cavaliere (The Little Knight) published in the United States in 1968, Una donna chiamata libertà (A Woman Called Liberty), 1969,



NON CON
L'OLIO EXTRAVERGINE!

Al Castel di Camelotto (In Camelot's Castle), 1976, and a series of children's books started in 1998.

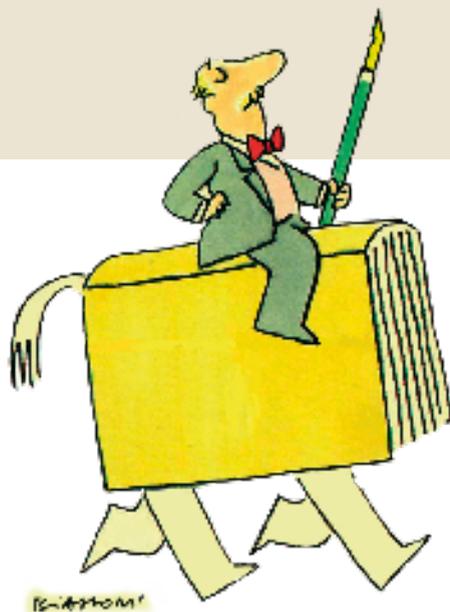
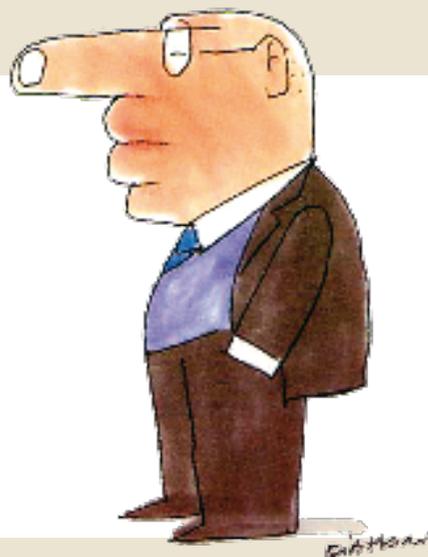
In 1996 he was among the co-signers of the Manifesto of the Writers of the Sign and in 1997 among the co-founders, with Carlo Squillante, of the National Association of Humorists, which helped define and promote the concept of "light art."

He also created social information campaigns for agencies and institutions; his work has appeared in many magazines. Versatile and eclectic, Marco Biassoni was consistent in his style: his direct, incisive sign immediately cut to the essential, thanks to his consummate experience in the art of communication. He was featured in several exhibitions and received important awards, among which, in 1997, the "Silver Price" award from the International Cartoon Exhibition in Kyoto. He passed away in Milan in 2002.



Left: Marco Biassoni in a self-caricature and (above) as portrayed by Carlo Squillante

These two pages: a brief gallery of his drawings



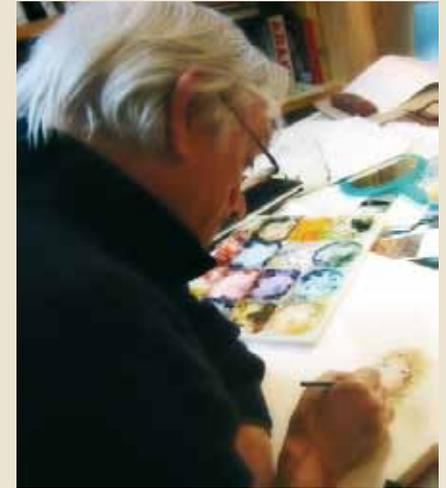
Master of Comic Books

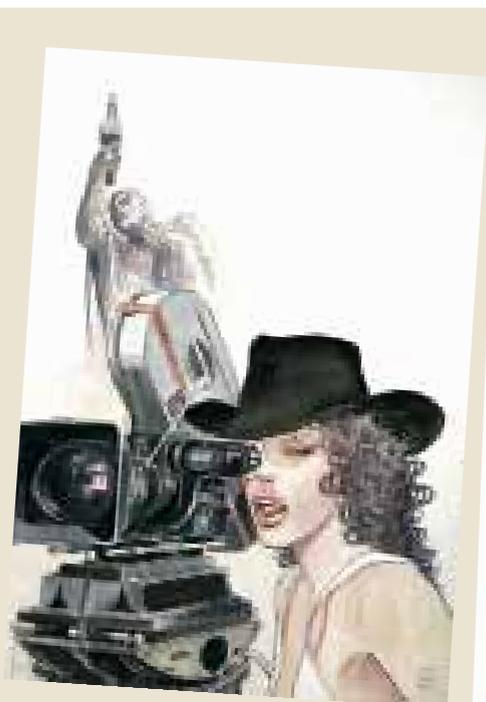
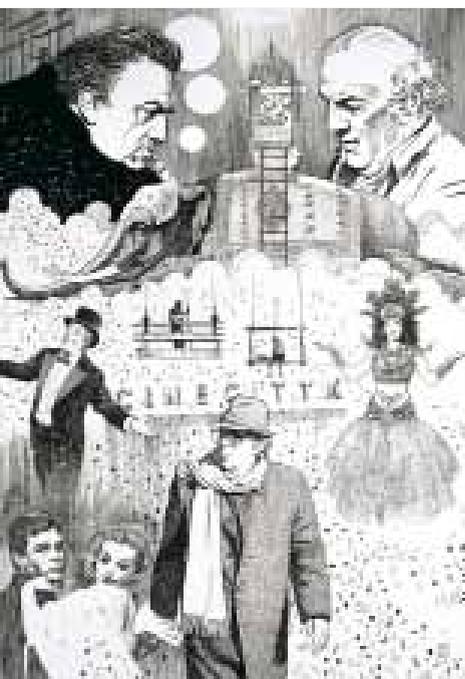


He is one of Italy's greatest designers and creators of comics, with a career that spans 40 years and a prolific body of work that has made him famous and critically acclaimed all over the world.

Born in Luson, near Bolzano, in 1945, Manara, whose real name is Maurilio, has always lived in the suburbs of Verona; he graduated from art school and then from the University of Venice, where he majored in architecture. His career as comic-book author began in the late 1960s with some illustrations for the Genius series, and continued with collaborations with many magazines and well-known publishers; in the mid-1970s, while drawing for Corriere dei Ragazzi, he founded the satirical magazine Telerompo with Saverio Pisu, and created many stories for it. In the same period, he published Lo Scimmiotto on Alterlinus, with script and dialogues by Pisu: this was an adaptation of a Chinese classic story, and his first step towards artistic comics. Many jobs followed, and collaborations, such as the very important ones with Hugo Pratt, whom Manara has always considered his teacher and friend: the first collaboration took place in 1983 on the magazine Corto Maltese for the story It All Started Again with an Indian Summer – text by Pratt for one of Manara's masterpieces – followed in 1992 by El Gaucho.

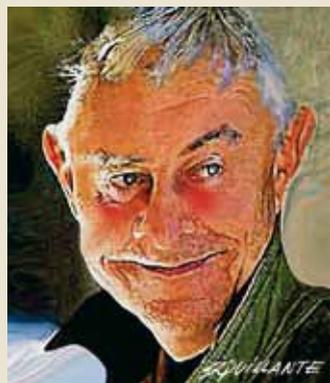
Another great friendship began in the mid-1980s, the one with Federico Fellini; Manara adapted two unproduced screenplays of Fellini's in comic-book form:





Journey to Tulum and The Journey of G. Mastorna called Fernet. The artist also designed posters for two of Fellini's films: Intervista ("Interview") and La voce della luna ("The Moon's Voice"), the director's last film.

Between the 1980s and the 1990s, Manara became a bestselling author with the publication of some successful erotic tales. In particular, *Il Gioco* ("The Game," 1983), his best-known comic, which made his international reputation, and *Il profumo dell'invisibile* ("Scent of the Invisible," 1985), commissioned by a French magazine after the great success of *Il Gioco*. Other important works, also of an erotic nature, are *Storie brevi* ("Short Stories"), featuring Miele, one of his most fascinating and best-loved heroines.



Among his most recent works, we can mention *Tre ragazze nella rete* ("Three Girls in the Net," 2000), *Fuga da Piranesi* ("Escape from Piranesi," 2002), and *Quarantasei* ("Forty-six," 2007) with a script by Vincenzo Cerami. He has also worked in advertising: a recent commercial (2008) featured Permaflex mattresses. Many films, CD-roms and video games have been based on Manara's works, and in recent times countless exhibitions have featured his works. His activity as designer and comic-book artist continues.



Facing page: left, *Woman on Wicker Chair*, watercolor on paper painted by Milo Manara for Chanel; right, a photograph of the artist at work

This page, from top left: India ink drawing from the series created for the cruise ship *Costa Atlantica*, whose decks were dedicated to Federico Fellini with artwork homaging his films; *Ragazza con cinepresa* ("Girl with Camera") painted for a film exhibition at Cinecittà; a comic strip taken from *Tutto ricominciò con un'estate indiana* ("It All Started Again with an Indian Summer") with a script by Hugo Pratt

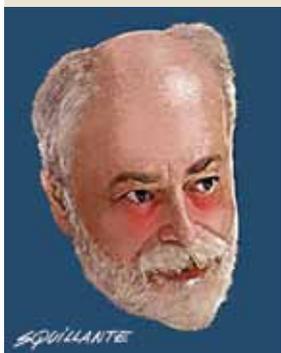
Below: Milo Manara as seen by Carlo Squillante

DRAWN ESPECIALLY FOR US BY



Alfredo Castelli

Born in Milan, he made his debut in the world of the comic strip in 1965, aged 18. As script writer, he has worked at series created by others (*Diabolik*, *Zagor*, *Mister No...*) and has created his own (*Gli Astrostoppi*, *Mister Charade*, *Tilt*, *Zio Boris* and *Gli Aristocratici*, some of which have been translated into some fifteen languages). As editor or director, he participated in the founding of *Tilt* (a sort of Italian *Mad* magazine) and *Horror* (first Italian magazine of the unusual, 1969); he has been editor of *Corriere dei Ragazzi* and co-director, with Silver, of *Eureka*. In 1982 he created his most popular series, *Martin Mystère*, to this day published successfully by Sergio Bonelli publishers and edited by Castelli himself.



Guido Silvestri, in arte Silver

He made his debut in comics in 1971 by collaborating in the creation of *Nick Carter*, key character of the TV program *Gulp! Fumetti* in TV created by Bonvi and De Maria. In 1974 he created for *Corriere dei Ragazzi* the strip *Lupo Alberto*, which in 1976 he took with him into the stables of *Eureka*, a magazine dedicated to quality comic strips. There, the character's popularity escalated, and just two years later *Lupo Alberto* was voted favorite character by a readers' poll. In 1984 Silver and Fattoria McKenzie published a new magazine entirely devoted to *Lupo Alberto*; in time, the character has become a household name through various social and commercial campaigns.



MASTER CARTOONISTS AND HUMORISTS



Carlo Squillante

Born in Naples, he lives and works in Milan. Initially, he collaborated with *Il Travaso*, with the popular mystery book series *Gialli Mondadori*, and with *Il Corriere dei Piccoli*; for *Corriere* he created Gennarino Tarantella, the last character in the history of the newspaper to be narrated in octosyllabic verse. For *Espansione Mondadori* he created Playmanager. Since 1987 his cartoons have appeared in the *Smemoranda* daily planner published every year. Among other newspapers and periodicals, he has collaborated with *La Settimana Enig-*



Note: the cartoon above hinges upon a pun that defies translation, based on the assonance between “assicurato” (insured) and “assai curato” (well-taken-care-of); as is often the case with humor, translation is pointless

mistica, *Topolino*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*. He has created many characters for advertising campaigns of important brands and has published about a dozen books of humor with text and drawings. To celebrate and promote the cultural richness of humor (graphic, pictorial, literary, theatrical, etc.) he founded the National Association of Humorists, whose philosophy could be summarized by two definitions of humor: “the ability to find the amusing or bizarre in life, in order to understand it better and more deeply,” from a well-known dictionary; and “the affection for life seen on the seamy side,” by Thomas Carlyle.

A.N.U.
Associazione Nazionale Umoristi



indexes

In the following pages, some useful information to fully appreciate this book: the essential data about Group companies that commissioned posters; the list of artists and of the pages where their works appear; description and credits for all the images published; a selected bibliography; and a list of well-deserved credits for those who collaborated on the book.

a l e X

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n

GROUP COMPANIES 180

ARTISTS 182

WORKS 183

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 205

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 207



Group Companies

All companies that commissioned works reproduced in this book and that have become part of the Generali Group are cited, including those that were at some point absorbed by other Group companies. Foreign agencies or branches are not included.



Alleanza Assicurazioni – Founded in 1898, it was acquired by Generali in 1934; in 2009 it was merged into Alleanza Toro.



Anonima Grandine – Founded by Generali in 1890, it was absorbed by the parent company in 1947.



Anonima Infortuni – Founded by Generali in 1896, it was absorbed by the parent company in 1947.



Assicurazioni Generali – The parent company was founded in 1831 as Assicurazioni Generali Austro-Italiche (Austrian-Italian General Insurance Company); it adopted its current simplified name in 1848.



Banco Vitalicio de España – Founded in 1897 following the merger of two pre-existing companies, in 1992 it became part of the Generali Group. In 2009 it was merged with Estrella and renamed Generali España.



Compagnia Anonima d'Assicurazione di Torino – Founded in 1833, the company was renamed Toro Assicurazioni in 1974 and, in 2006, it was acquired by Generali; in 2009 its activities were merged into Alleanza Toro.



Fiume – Founded by INA in 1924, it became Fiumeter in 1946 as a result of the merger with Terra; in 1970 it was absorbed by Assitalia.



Fondo Assicurativo Tra Agricoltori (FATA) – Founded in 1927 with the name of Scintilla, it was re-named FATA in 1948; in 1994 it was acquired by INA and in 2000 became part of the Generali Group; since 2007, it has generated two distinct companies: FATA Assicurazioni Danni and FATA Vita.



Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni (INA) – Founded in pursuance of law 305/1912 as a public company to create a life insurance monopoly in Italy, in 1923 it began to operate in a regime of competition; it was privatized by law 359/1992 and acquired by Generali in 2000, together with Assitalia and FATA; in 2007 INA and Assitalia became one company.



La Concorde – Founded by Generali in 1905, it merged with La France in 1997, becoming Generali France Assurances.



La France – Founded in 1837, it entered the Generali Group in 1995, and was absorbed by Generali France Assurances two years later.



Le Populaire – Founded in 1910, it became Groupe des Populaires d'Assurances (GPA) in 1974; it became part of the Generali Group in 1998, and was absorbed by Generali France Assurances in 2006.



Le Assicurazioni d'Italia (Assitalia) – Founded in 1923 with a capital of 20 million, over 10 mil. of which subscribed by INA and the remainder by other important Italian insurance companies; in 1927, the entire capital was acquired by INA, with whom Assitalia merged on December 31, 2006.



Les Patrons Réunis – Founded in 1887, it became part of the Generali Group in 1988 and was absorbed by Generali Belgium in 1993.



L'Union Générale du Nord – Founded in 1867, it became part of the Generali Group in 2003; it was absorbed by Generali France Assurances in 2004.

Artists for the Generali Group

All artists who authored works (both for images and text) for Generali Group companies and whose works are reproduced in this book are cited. The numbers next to their names refer to the pages where their works appear; the numbers in bold italics indicate the specific articles containing biographical information about them.

Bacorigi L.	69	Mercuri Angelo	128
Ballerio Osvaldo	73, 79 , 104, 110-111, 136, 140	Metlicovitz Leopoldo	18, 20, 25, 63, 64-65
Ballester Anselmo	12, 121, 132-133	Mosca Franco	12, 103, 162
Beltrame Achille	11, 61, 70-71, 74-78, 80-81	Mossa G.	113
Bianchi Alberto	122, 145, 149	Nemes	160
Biassoni Marco	164, 168-171, 172-173	Petroni Andrea	58, 62, 162
Boccasile Gino	12, 23, 94, 101-103, 106, 111, 113-115, 118-119 , 121, 137, 143-144	Polli V.	74
Busi Adolfo	13, 98, 105, 129, 145-148, 150-151	Pozzati Severo (Sepo)	22, 100, 108-109
Capizzano Santamaria	98, 139	Prada G.	123
Castelli Alfredo	166, 176	Puppo Mario	126, 131
Chiurlo F.	52	Quaiatti Antonio	161, 163
Codognato Plinio	53, 56-57 , 62	Raimondi Aldo	116, 117
Corbella Tito	95-96, 98, 107	Resentera Walter	101, 163
Dolfini L.	100	Ricy Jacques	158
Dudovich Marcello	11-12, 19-20, 25, 38-47 , 82-87, 92-93 , 99, 143	Rosa Salva Giuseppe	120, 124-125
Escolà Lluís	154	Scorzon Amos	100
Fontana D.	122	Sigon Pollione	88-90, 91
Fontana L.	67	Silvestri Guido (Silver)	176
Forattini Giorgio	169	Sormani Gian Luciano	10, 52, 163
Guerrini L.	60	Squillante Carlo	173, 175-176, 177 , 206-207
Manara Milo	164-165, 167, 174-175	Supino Gigi	89
Mancioli Corrado	127, 162	Tanozzi Gorgone	97
Manno Dante	130	Terzoli Ugo	95
		Valenti Omero	170, 208
		Verdussen Paul	153, 163
		Vergani Orio	112

Works

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS AND PHOTO CREDITS

To describe the types of work, we have adopted the following criteria: any work larger than 70 by 100 cm (approx. 27 by 40 inches) is called a poster; smaller works are called half-sheet posters or half-sheets.

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pg. 6

G. Pividor

lithography, circa 1850

Civici Musei di Storia e Arte, Trieste



pg. 8

metal plate, 1833/1848

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 9

watercolor

Fondazione Besso Collection, Rome



pg. 6

policy (detail), 1867

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 8

life policy, circa 1840

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 9

poster, 1860

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 6

plate (detail), 1833/48

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 8

policy against fire damages, 1839

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 10

poster, 1901

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 7

metal plate, 1920s/1930s

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 8

policy against fire damages, 1867

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 10

poster, 1906/09

from *Il Bollettino, rivista del Gruppo Generali*



pg. 7

A. Quadri

print, 1828

Generali Collection



pg. 9

bas-relief, XVI Century

Generali Properties



pg. 10

G. L. Sormani

poster, circa 1910

Generali Collection

Salce Collection (code 10967)



pg. 11

A. Beltrame

oil on canvas, 1931
Generali Collection



pg. 13

poster, 1953

Generali Collection



pg. 15

life policy, 1913

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 11

M. Dudovich

calendar, 1935
Generali Collection



pg. 14

hail policy, 1856

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 15

Francesco Saverio Nitti

it.wikipedia.org



pg. 12

A. Ballester

poster, 1940
INA Assitalia Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 12982)



pg. 14

F. Hayez

Alessandro Manzoni
oil on canvas, 1846
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 15

life policy, 1918

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 12

M. Dudovich

poster, circa 1937
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4088)



pg. 14

fire policy, 1865

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 15

Charles I of Austria

oil on canvas, 1915
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 12

G. Boccasile

poster, circa 1937
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 3076)



pg. 14

Agostino Depretis

it.wikipedia.org



pg. 15

life policy, 1929

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 12

F. Mosca

calendar, 1935
INA Assitalia Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 8541)



pg. 14

life policy, 1897

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 15

Benito Mussolini

it.wikipedia.org



pg. 13

A. Busi

poster, 1959
INA Assitalia Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 12062)



pg. 14

Pio X

oil on canvas
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 15

accident policy, 1934

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 15
Gabriele d'Annunzio
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 18
L. Metlicovitz
 poster, 1914
 Salce Collection (code 20659)



pg. 20
L. Metlicovitz
 poster, 1906
 Salce Collection (code 2694)



pg. 16
A. Pusterla
 poster, 1887
 Salce Collection (code 12319)



pg. 18
L. Metlicovitz
 poster, circa 1912
 Salce Collection (code 2772)



pg. 20
M. Dudovich
 poster, circa 1912
 Salce Collection (code 4033)



pg. 16
J. Chéret
 poster, 1896
 Salce Collection (code 13720)



pg. 18
A. Hohenstein
 poster, 1900
 Salce Collection (code 13387)



pg. 21
A. Mazza
 poster, 1910
 Salce Collection (code 3403)



pg. 16
A. Mucha
 poster, 1896
 Salce Collection (code 8761)



pg. 19
L. Cappiello
 poster, 1903
 Salce Collection (code 12201)



pg. 21
A. Terzi
 poster, 1914
 Salce Collection (code 2493)



pg. 17
H. de Toulouse-Lautrec
 poster, 1892
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 19
F. Laskoff
 poster, 1914
 Salce Collection (code 13531)



pg. 21
A. Terzi
 poster, 1921
 Salce Collection (code 2492)



pg. 17
L. Rhead
 poster, 1900
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 19
M. Dudovich
 poster, 1908
 Salce Collection (code 4032)



pg. 21
L. Cappiello
 poster, 1910
 Salce Collection (code 12128)



pg. 18
A. Hohenstein
 poster, 1899
 Salce Collection (code 1039)



pg. 20
E. Sacchetti
 poster, 1921
 Salce Collection (code 2455)



pg. 22
Sepo (S. Pozzati)
 poster, 1933
 Fondazione Bertarelli (code C202)



pg. 22

F. Depero

half-sheet, circa 1925
Salce Collection (code 9977)



pg. 25

A. Villa

poster, 1902
Salce Collection (code 22154)



pg. 29

Gina and Nando Salce

© Luigi Baldin, art photographer



pg. 22

A. L. Mauzan

poster, 1917
Salce Collection (code 10730)



pg. 25

M. Dudovich

poster, 1907
Salce Collection (code 4025)



pg. 30

G. M. Mataloni

decorative frieze
from the book *Signor Salce*



pg. 23

G. Boccasile

poster, 1944
Salce Collection (code 13086)



pg. 25

L. Metlicovitz

poster, 1909
Salce Collection (code 2647)



pg. 30

B. Fabiano

watercolor
from the book *Signor Salce*



pg. 23

G. Boccasile

poster, circa 1950
Salce Collection (code 3329)



pg. 26

Signor Salce

Celio libri, 1997



pg. 31

L. Cappiello

poster, 1901
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 23

A. Testa

poster, 1960
Gemma De Angelis Testa Collection,
Milan



pg. 27

G. M. Mataloni

poster, 1895
Salce Collection (code 12423)



pg. 32

drawing

from the book *Signor Salce*



pg. 24

A. Villa

poster, 1899
Salce Collection (code 22155)



pg. 28

Regina Gregorj

© Luigi Baldin, art photographer



pg. 32

from the book *Signor Salce*



pg. 24

F. Laskoff

poster, 1901
fondazioneleme.it



pg. 29

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pg. 33

A. Hohenstein

poster, 1898
Salce Collection (code 13381)



pg. 34

A. Villa

poster, 1902

Salce Collection (code 1444)



pg. 35

J. M. Auchentaller

poster, 1922

Salce Collection (code 11045)



pg. 35

Nando Salce

from the book *Signor Salce*



pg. 36

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 36

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 36

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 37

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 37

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 37

Ph. Andrea and Roberto Rosasco



pg. 38

M. Dudovich

poster, 1899

Salce Collection (code 23387)



pg. 38

Antonio and Marcello Dudovich

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 39

Marcello Dudovich

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 39

M. Dudovich

poster, 1900

Salce Collection (code 4002)



pg. 40

M. Dudovich

poster, 1908

Salce Collection (code 4029)



pg. 40

M. Dudovich

poster, 1906

Salce Collection (code 3991)



pg. 41

M. Dudovich

poster, 1910

Salce Collection (code 4042)



pg. 42

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 42

Elisa Bucchi

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 42

M. Dudovich

poster, 1934

Salce Collection (code 3931)



pg. 43

M. Dudovich

poster, 1934

Salce Collection (code 4081)



pg. 44

M. Dudovich

poster, 1955

Salce Collection (code 3943)



pg. 44

letter, 1933

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 45

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 51

calendar, 1892
Generali Collection



pg. 54

poster, 1900
Generali Collection



pg. 45

M. Dudovich
poster, 1928
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4132)



pg. 51

calendar, 1894
Generali Collection



pg. 54

poster, 1914
Generali Collection



pg. 46

A. Orell
Antonio Dudovich
oil on canvas, 1907
Museo del Risorgimento
Civici Musei di Storia e Arte, Trieste



pg. 52

G. L. Sormani
poster, circa 1910
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 10967)



pg. 55

poster, 1923
Generali Collection



pg. 46

Museo teatrale Carlo Schmid
Civici Musei di Storia e Arte, Trieste



pg. 52

F. Chiurlotto
poster, 1911/12
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 10397)



pg. 55

it.wikipedia.org



pg. 47

M. Dudovich
pastels on paper (self-portrait),
circa 1895
Private collection, Schio



pg. 53

tapestry
Generali Collection



pg. 55

G. Gamba
cover of *I pirati della Malesia*
emiliosalgari.it



pg. 47

Private collection, Schio



pg. 53

poster, 1913/15
Generali Collection



pg. 55

FIAT Archives and Historical Center



pg. 47

M. Dudovich
Itala Dudovich Comas
oil on canvas, circa 1930
Casati Cattani collection, Rome



pg. 53

P. Codognato
poster, circa 1920
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 11894)



pg. 55

from *L'Illustrazione Italiana*,
Treves Milano



pg. 56

P. Codognato

poster, 1910/15

Salce Collection (code 11931)



pg. 59

half-sheet, circa 1910

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 61

from *L'Illustrazione Italiana*,

Treves Milano



pg. 56

P. Codognato

poster, 1924

Salce Collection (code 1162)



pg. 59

A. Hohenstein

poster, circa 1900

Salce Collection (code 13382)



pg. 61

A. Beltrame

from *La Domenica del Corriere*,

Dec. 24, 1911

Museo del Risorgimento e della
Resistenza di Vicenza



pg. 56

P. Codognato

lithographed tin, circa 1930

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 59

calendar

Salce Collection (code 8941)



pg. 61

F. T. Marinetti

manuscript

edt.tumblr.com



pg. 57

P. Codognato

poster, circa 1925

Salce Collection (code 8382)



pg. 60

L. Guerrini

poster, 1901

Generali Collection

Salce Collection (code 1871)



pg. 62

A. Petroni

poster, 1912

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 57

P. Codognato

poster, circa 1928

Salce Collection (code 11859)



pg. 60

poster, circa 1905

Salce Collection (code 352)



pg. 62

P. Codognato

poster, 1914

INA Assitalia Historical Archives

Salce Collection (code 11934)



pg. 57

P. Codognato

poster, 1923

Salce Collection (code 11867)



pg. 60

poster, early 1900s

Salce Collection (code 351)



pg. 63

L. Metlicovitz

poster, 1914

INA Assitalia Historical Archives

Salce Collection (code 2621)



pg. 59

half-sheet, 1894

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 61

Giovanni Giolitti

www.giovanngiolitti.it



pg. 64

L. Metlicovitz

poster, circa 1899

Salce Collection (code 2630)



pg. 64

L. Metlicovitz

poster, 1907

Salce Collection (code 2693)



pg. 64

Leopoldo Metlicovitz

sapere.it



pg. 64

L. Metlicovitz

poster, circa 1919

Salce Collection (code 1071)



pg. 65

L. Metlicovitz

poster, 1905

Salce Collection (code 20667)



pg. 65

L. Metlicovitz

poster, 1906

Salce Collection (code 2655)



pg. 65

L. Metlicovitz

poster, 1914

Salce Collection (code 2695)



pg. 66

oil on canvas, circa 1910

Generali Collection



pg. 67

L. Fontana

calendar, 1903

Salce Collection (code 1700)



pg. 68

calendar, 1905

Giovanni Colini collection, Rome



pg. 68

calendar, 1908

Generali Collection



pg. 68

balance-sheet cover, 1900

Generali Collection



pg. 69

calendar, 1910

Generali Collection



pg. 69

L. Bacorigi

calendar, 1913

Generali Collection



pg. 69

calendar, 1914

Salce Collection (code 7542)



pg. 70

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1916

Generali Collection



pg. 70

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1917

Giovanni Colini collection, Rome



pg. 70

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1918

Giovanni Colini collection, Rome



pg. 71

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1920

Generali Collection

Salce Collection (code 7556)



pg. 71

A. Beltrame

oil on canvas

Generali Collection



pg. 72

portrait of Garibaldi army soldier,

circa 1866

it.wikipedia.org



pg. 72

www.grandeguerra.ccm.it



pg. 72

Civici Musei di Storia e Arte, Trieste



pg. 72

finn.it/regia



pg. 73

O. Ballerio

calendar, 1921

Salce Collection (code 8406)



pg. 73

O. Ballerio

calendar, 1922

Giovanni Colini collection, Rome



pg. 74

V. Polli

oil on canvas

Generali Collection



pg. 74

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1923

Salce Collection (code 7555)



pg. 75

A. Beltrame

watercolor, 1923

Generali Collection



pg. 76

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1926

Salce Collection (code 7557)



pg. 77

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1927

Salce Collection (code 7558)



pg. 77

A. Beltrame

calendar, 1928

Giovanni Colini collection, Rome



pg. 77

A. Beltrame

sketch for calendar, 1928

Generali Collection



pg. 78

A. Beltrame

oil on canvas, 1929

Generali Collection



pg. 78

A. Beltrame

oil on canvas, 1931

Generali Collection



pg. 79

O. Ballerio

poster, circa 1895

Salce Collection (code 8398)



pg. 79

O. Ballerio

poster, 1912

Salce Collection (code 11979)



pg. 79

O. Ballerio

poster, 1908

Salce Collection (code 18211)



pg. 80

A. Beltrame

cover of *La Domenica del Corriere*, May 3, 1931

domicinadelcorriere.com



pg. 80

A. Beltrame

cover of *La Domenica del Corriere*, March 1, 1931

domicinadelcorriere.com



pg. 80

A. Beltrame

poster, 1902

Salce Collection (code 1148)



pg. 81

Achille Beltrame

Private collection



pg. 81

A. Beltrame

poster, 1900

Salce Collection (code 7611)



pg. 81

A. Beltrame

poster, circa 1900

arteliberty.it



pg. 83

poster, 1924/26

Generali Collection

Salce Collection (code 11013)



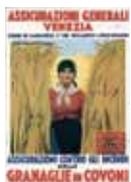
pg. 83
poster, 1924/26
Generali Collection



pg. 85
poster, 1932
Venice Biennale Foundation
Historical Archives of
Contemporary Arts



pg. 87
M. Dudovich
calendar, 1937
Generali Collection



pg. 83
M. Dudovich
poster, circa 1926
reissue, second half of 1930s
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4115)



pg. 85
Bottai family archive
from *L'economia italiana*
tra le due guerre, Ipsa



pg. 88
P. Sigon
calendar, 1931
Modiano Collection, Trieste



pg. 84
M. Dudovich
calendar, 1933
Generali Collection



pg. 85
www.albumdivenezia.it



pg. 88
P. Sigon
calendar, 1931
Generali Collection



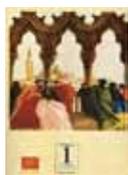
pg. 84
M. Dudovich
poster, 1928
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4132)



pg. 86
M. Dudovich
poster, 1935
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4131)



pg. 88
P. Sigon
calendar, 1931
Generali Collection



pg. 84
M. Dudovich
calendar, 1931
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 23703)



pg. 86
M. Dudovich
calendar, 1935
Generali Collection



pg. 89
P. Sigon
calendar, 1936
Modiano Collection, Trieste



pg. 85
M. Dudovich
poster, circa 1930
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4134)



pg. 87
M. Dudovich
poster, 1938
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4089)



pg. 89
P. Sigon
calendar, 1937
Modiano Collection, Trieste



pg. 85
Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 87
M. Dudovich
poster, circa 1937
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 4088)



pg. 89
G. Supino
medals, 1931
Generali Collection



pg. 90

P. Sigon
billboard, 1935
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 11048)



pg. 92

M. Dudovich
poster, 1899
Salce Collection (code 4011)



pg. 95

U. Terzoli
poster, circa 1925
bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 90

P. Sigon
billboard, 1935
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 11050)



pg. 92

M. Dudovich
poster, circa 1907
Salce Collection (code 4024)



pg. 96

T. Corbella
poster, 1928
INA Assitalia Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 10762)



pg. 90

P. Sigon
billboard, 1935
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 11049)



pg. 93

M. Dudovich
poster, circa 1922
Salce Collection (code 18945)



pg. 96

T. Corbella
calendar, 1929
INA Assitalia Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 10202)



pg. 91

P. Sigon
poster, circa 1925
Salce Collection (code 538)



pg. 93

M. Dudovich
poster, 1931
Salce Collection (code 3934)



pg. 96

T. Corbella
calendar, 1930
INA Assitalia Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 10204)



pg. 91

P. Sigon
tempera sketch, 1925/30
Modiano Collection, Trieste



pg. 93

M. Dudovich
poster, circa 1952
Salce Collection (code 4061)



pg. 97

G. Tanozzi
half-sheet, 1924/26
Salce Collection (code 8669)



pg. 91

P. Sigon
postcard, 1924
Private collection, Trieste



pg. 93

M. Dudovich
poster, 1934
Salce Collection (code 4104)



pg. 97

G. Tanozzi
half-sheet, 1924/26
Salce Collection (code 8668)



pg. 92

M. Dudovich
tempera on canvas (self-portrait),
circa 1954
Marcello Dudovich Archives, Milano



pg. 95

T. Corbella
poster, 1924
INA Assitalia Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 10686)



pg. 97

G. Tanozzi
half-sheet, 1924/26
Salce Collection (code 8670)



pg. 97

G. Tanozzi

half-sheet, 1924/26

Salce Collection (code 8671)



pg. 100

Sepo (S. Pozzati)

poster, 1936

Salce Collection (code 3722)



pg. 103

F. Mosca

calendar, 1935

INA Assitalia Historical Archives

Salce Collection (code 8541)



pg. 98

A. Busi

poster, 1935

Salce Collection (code 12039)



pg. 100

L. Dolfini

poster, 1935

Salce Collection (code 18822)



pg. 104

O. Ballerio

poster, circa 1934

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 98

Capizzano Santamaria

poster, 1932

Salce Collection (code 1352)



pg. 100

A. Scorzon

poster, 1934

bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 104

half-sheet, 1930

bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 98

T. Corbella

calendar, 1930

INA Assitalia Historical Archives

Salce Collection (code 10177)



pg. 101

W. Resentera

half-sheet, 1938

Salce Collection (code 9505)



pg. 104

calendar, circa 1937

bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 99

M. Dudovich

half-sheet, circa 1935

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 101

G. Boccasile

half-sheet, 1938

Salce Collection (code 3086)



pg. 105

A. Busi

poster, 1938

Salce Collection (code 12046)



pg. 99

M. Dudovich

half-sheet, circa 1935

Salce Collection (code 7728)



pg. 102

G. Boccasile

calendar, 1938

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 105

poster, 1930s

Salce Collection (code 1355)



pg. 99

M. Dudovich

booklet, 1934

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 103

G. Boccasile

calendar, 1930

Salce Collection (code 3083)



pg. 106

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 106

L. Martinati

poster, 1933

Salce Collection (code 20584)



pg. 108

Sepo (S. Pozzati)

poster, 1928

Salce Collection (code 3731)



pg. 111

G. Boccasile

calendar, 1936

Generali Collection

Salce Collection (code 3077)



pg. 106

finn.it/regia



pg. 108

Sepo (S. Pozzati)

poster, 1928

umacredeverde.blogspot.com



pg. 112

cartoon with captions

di Orio Vergani, 1936

Generali Collection



pg. 106

finn.it/regia



pg. 109

Sepo (S. Pozzati)

poster, 1934

Salce Collection (code 3704)



pg. 113

G. Boccasile

calendar, 1937

Salce Collection (code 3076)



pg. 106

G. Boccasile

calendar, 1938

INA Assitalia Historical Archives

Salce Collection (code 3121)



pg. 109

Sepo (S. Pozzati)

poster, 1934

Salce Collection (code 3708)



pg. 113

G. Mossa

poster, 1939/40

Salce Collection (code 4848)



pg. 107

T. Corbella

poster, 1924

Private collection



pg. 109

Sepo (S. Pozzati)

poster, 1950

Salce Collection (code 3710)



pg. 114

M. Gros

poster, circa 1932

Salce Collection (code 3278)



pg. 107

T. Corbella

half-sheet, 1929

Salce Collection (code 10190)



pg. 111

O. Ballerio

poster, 1935

Generali Collection

Salce Collection (code 11986)



pg. 114

digilander.libero.it/trombealvento/
vari/grano.htm



pg. 107

T. Corbella

poster, circa 1925

Private collection



pg. 111

G. Boccasile

poster, 1936

Generali Collection

Salce Collection (code 3139)



pg. 114

comune.latina.it



pg. 114
paolocason.it



pg. 118
G. Boccasile
half-sheet, 1950
Salce Collection (code 3168)



pg. 121
A. Ballester
poster, 1940
Salce Collection (code 12982)



pg. 115
G. Boccasile
calendar, 1938
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 3075)



pg. 118
Gino Boccasile
galleria.thule-italia.com



pg. 122
D. Fontana
poster, circa 1940
Fondazione Bertarelli (code A598)



pg. 116
A. Raimondi
poster, 1939
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 5848)



pg. 118
G. Boccasile
poster, 1934
Salce Collection (code 3058)



pg. 122
A. Bianchi
calendar, 1940
Salce Collection (code 8465)



pg. 117
A. Raimondi
poster, 1930
Salce Collection (code 5844)



pg. 119
G. Boccasile
cover of *Le Grandi Firme*, 1938
lankelot.eu



pg. 122
Studio Ima
poster, 1940
Salce Collection (code 6520)



pg. 117
A. Raimondi
poster, 1934
Salce Collection (code 5005)



pg. 119
G. Boccasile
poster, 1944
Salce Collection (code 13084)



pg. 123
G. Prada
calendar, 1941
Generali Collection



pg. 117
A. Raimondi
poster, 1930
Salce Collection (code 5843)



pg. 119
G. Boccasile
poster, 1952
Salce Collection (code 3213)



pg. 124
Valentino and Sandro Mazzola
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Archives of the city of Turin



pg. 118
G. Boccasile
poster, 1950
Salce Collection (code 3165)



pg. 121
G. Boccasile
poster, 1939
Salce Collection (code 3192)



pg. 124
Zeno Colò
markrage.it



pg. 124

Edoardo Mangiarotti
it.wikipedia.org



pg. 127

V. Mancioi
poster, 1949/50
FATA Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 12534)



pg. 130

half-sheet, 1950s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 124

Fausto Coppi and Gino Bartali
gazzaspace.gazzetta.it



pg. 127

poster, circa 1955
FATA Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 4847)



pg. 131

M. Puppo
poster, 1938
Salce Collection (code 5016)



pg. 124

G. Rosa Salva
poster, 1940
Generali Collection
Salce Collection (code 13306)



pg. 128

polychrome ceramic plates
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 131

M. Puppo
poster, 1948
Salce Collection (code 4426)



pg. 125

G. Rosa Salva
poster, 1941
Generali Collection



pg. 128

A. Mercuri
poster, 1952
Salce Collection (code 4840)



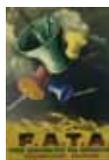
pg. 131

M. Puppo
poster, 1954
coolmag.it



pg. 125

poster, 1953
Generali Collection



pg. 129

A. Busi
poster, circa 1955
FATA Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 9836)



pg. 132

A. Ballester
poster, 1935
Private collection



pg. 126

M. Puppo
poster, circa 1947
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 129

A. Busi
poster, 1959
FATA Historical Archives
Salce Collection (code 12062)



pg. 132

A. Ballester
poster, 1950
comanducci.it



pg. 126

poster, 1950s
FATA Historical Archives



pg. 130

D. Manno
half-sheet, 1950s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 132

A. Ballester
poster, 1945
cinemadelsilenzio.it



pg. 133

A. Ballester

poster, 1951

Salce Collection (code 10675)



pg. 136

O. Ballerio

postcard, circa 1925

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 139

planner, 1931

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 133

A. Ballester

poster, 1954

cinemadelsilenzio.it



pg. 136

blotting papers, 1915/20

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 139

booklet, 1931

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 135

note pad, circa 1915

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 137

A. Orell

postcard, 1911

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 139

Capizzano Santamaria

postcard, 1934

INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 135

discount coupons, 1911

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 137

F. Th. Würgel

postcard, circa 1927

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 140

postcard, 1930s

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 135

diary, 1897

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 137

M. Gros

postcard, 1934

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 140

O. Ballerio

postcard, 1930s

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 135

postcard, 1923

Augusto Traina collection,

Viareggio



pg. 137

G. Boccasile

postcard, 1950

Private collection, Trieste



pg. 140

postcard, 1930s

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 136

letter seals, 1920s/1930s

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 138

pocket calendars, 1910s/1920s

Generali Historical Archives



pg. 140

postcard, 1930s

Toro Historical Archives



pg. 141
postcard, 1930s
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 144
complimentary packet, 1930s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 146
booklet, 1930s/1940s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 141
postcard, 1930s
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 144
policy inner page, 1939/40
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 147
A. Busi
postcard, circa 1940
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 142
diary, 1936
Generali Historical Archives



pg. 144
G. Boccasile
postcard, 1930s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 147
booklet, 1930s/1940s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 142
booklet, 1934
Generali Historical Archives



pg. 145
A. Bianchi
postcard, 1945
Augusto Traina collection, Viareggio



pg. 147
almanac, 1956
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 143
M. Dudovich
booklet, 1936
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 145
A. Busi
postcard, circa 1940
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 148
board game,
1950s/1960s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 143
G. Boccasile
booklet, 1930s
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 145
yearbook, 1961
Archivio Bruna Grion



pg. 148
pamphlet, 1949/50
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 143
pocket calendar, 1938
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 146
A. Busi
postcard, circa 1940
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 148
A. Busi
cartoon, 1949/50
INA Assitalia Historical Archives



pg. 149
A. Bianchi
 poster, 1935
 Salce Collection (code 11569)



pg. 151
A. Busi
 poster, 1928
 Salce Collection (code 12059)



pg. 154
 leaflet, 1887
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



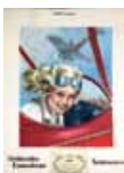
pg. 149
A. Bianchi
 poster, 1933
 Salce Collection (code 11570)



pg. 151
A. Busi
 poster, circa 1935
 Salce Collection (code 12052)



pg. 155
 booklet, 1925
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 149
A. Bianchi
 calendar, 1940
 Private collection, Trieste



pg. 152
 company newsletter, 1930s
 Generali Historical Archives



pg. 155
 booklet, 1925
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 150
A. Busi
 poster, 1929
 Salce Collection (code 12060)



pg. 153
P. Verdussen
 poster, 1897
 Generali Collection



pg. 155
 calendar, 1943
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 150
 Adolfo Busi
 Private collection



pg. 153
 half-sheet, circa 1925
 bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 155
 leaflet, 1940s
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 151
A. Busi
 poster, 1936
 Salce Collection (code 12045)



pg. 154
L. Escolà
 poster, 1934
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 156
 postcard, 1932
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 151
A. Busi
 poster, circa 1929
 Salce Collection (code 12034)



pg. 154
 film ad, 1934
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 156
 half-sheet, 1911
 bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 157
 leaflet, 1940s
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 158
J. Ricy
 half-sheet, circa 1930
 Generali Collection



pg. 162
C. Manciola
 poster, 1941
 Private collection



pg. 157
 leaflet, 1940s
 Vitalicio Seguros Archives



pg. 158
 half-sheet, 1930s
 bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 162
F. Mosca
 poster, 1954
 Salce Collection (code 12545)



pg. 157
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pg. 159
 poster, circa 1930
 bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 163
W. Resentera
 poster, 1934
 Private collection



pg. 157
 commons.wikimedia.org



pg. 160
Nemes
 poster, circa 1925
 Generali Collection



pg. 163
G. L. Sormani
 poster, 1910
 Salce Collection (code 10694)



pg. 157
 commons.wikimedia.org



pg. 161
A. Quaiatti
 booklet (detail), 1951
 Generali Collection



pg. 164
M. Biassoni
 cartoon, 1995
 Toro Historical Archives



pg. 157
 commons.wikimedia.org



pg. 161
A. Quaiatti
 booklet (detail), 1932
 Generali Collection



pg. 164
M. Manara
 comic strip, 1990
 Alleanza Collection



pg. 158
 half-sheet, circa 1910
 bibliotecamansutti.it



pg. 161
 map
 from *Il Bollettino*,
Generali Group magazine



pg. 165
M. Manara
 comic strip. 1990
 Alleanza Collection



pg. 165

M. Manara

comic strip, 1990
Alleanza Collection



pg. 167

M. Manara

comic strip, 1990
Alleanza Collection



pg. 168

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1990
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 166

Galep (A. Galleppini)

cover of *Tex*
G. Bonelli – A. Galleppini, 1987
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pg. 167

M. Manara

comic strip, 1990
Alleanza Collection



pg. 169

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1990
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pg. 166

R. Scarpa

cartoon, 1959
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pg. 168

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1990
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 169

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1990
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 166

Bonvi (F. Bonvicini)

cartoon, 1983
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pg. 168

M. Biassoni

booklet, 1990
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 169

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1990
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 166

G. Alessandrini

cover of *Martin Mystère*
A. Castelli – G. Alessandrini, 2006
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pg. 168

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1990
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 169

G. Forattini

logo sticker, 1985
Generali Historical Archives



pg. 167

M. Manara

comic strip, 1990
Alleanza Collection



pg. 168

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1990
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 170

O. Valenti

cartoon, 1960
from *Il Bollettino*, rivista
del Gruppo Generali



pg. 170

O. Valenti

cartoon, 1960
from *Il Bollettino*, rivista
del Gruppo Generali



pg. 172

Ph. Alberto Roveri, 1996
Luca Novelli Archives



pg. 173

C. Squillante

Marco Biassoni
caricature-portrait
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pg. 170

O. Valenti

cartoon, 1960
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pg. 172

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pg. 170

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pg. 170

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1995
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pg. 172

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pg. 171

M. Biassoni

booklet, 1995
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pg. 173

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M. Manara

watercolor
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Milo Manara

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pg. 171

M. Biassoni

cartoon, 1995
Toro Historical Archives



pg. 173

M. Biassoni

drawing (self-caricature)
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pg. 175

M. Manara

India ink drawing
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pg. 175

M. Manara

collage

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pg. 177

C. Squillante

cartoon, 2010

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M. Manara

comic strip

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pg. 177

C. Squillante

self-caricature portrait

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pg. 175

C. Squillante

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caricature-portrait

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pg. 177

logo, 1997

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pg. 176

A. Castelli - Silver (G. Silvestri)

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pg. 176

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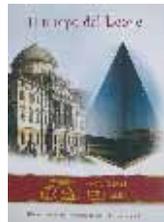
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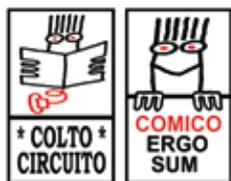
Arte Liberty in Italia

Archivio Marcello Dudovich

Website dedicated to the artist, with a large virtual gallery of works and documents www.marcellodudovich.it
info@marcellodudovich.it

Arte Liberty in Italia

Biographies and works of the main Italian artists of the Art Nouveau period; among them, several advertising graphic designers and poster artists
www.arteliberty.it
massimomatteoni@arteliberty.it



Caricature

Gallery of "caricature portraits" of humorists and of sundry characters drawn by Squillante for the National Association of Humorists, virtual and virtuous
xoomer.virgilio.it/squillante/caricature/semplificissimoblu.htm
umoristi@virgilio.it



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Fondazione Franco Fossati

International research and document center specializing in comics, communication and the image
www.museodelfumetto.it
fondazione@francofossati.eu



Fondazione Mansutti

History of insurance documents, among which some 300 posters
www.bibliotecamansutti.it
biblioteca@mansutti.it



Gino Boccasile

A gallery of his works, visible on the website of Galleria Arte Thule, which displays works, biographies and bibliographies of exiled or forgotten artists
www.galleria.thule-italia.com/ginoboccasile.html
harmwulf2003@libero.it

Acknowledgments

We thank all those who have contributed to this book and in particular:

*Alleanza Toro - Historical Archives: Sergio Bianco, Graziella Pagliano
Alleanza Toro - Marketing Department: Domenico Cordì, Tiziana Varone
Assicurazioni Generali - Historical Archives: Aldo Castellani
Assicurazioni Generali - Central Libray: Ornella Bonetta, Fiorenza Brambati
Assicurazioni Generali - Social Club of Trieste: Executive Commettee
Assicurazioni Generali - Group Insurance Operation: Sissy Sequenzia
FATA - Historical Archives: Alessia Linda Riccobono
INA Assitalia - Historical Archives: Antonio Ratti*

*Generali España: Ana Rosa Andrés Calvo
Generali France: Claire Brossard, Nathalie Vilain*

The photographers: Luigi Baldin, Massimo Goina, Aldo Sperber, Claudio Tommasini

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Ornella Castellini (Sergio Bonelli Editore), Giovanni Colini, Claudio Crechici
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Alessandro Torregrossa (Chiaroscuro), Augusto Traina, Eleonora Vaccari
(Raccolta Bertarelli), Harm Wulf (Galleria Thule)*

*Well-deserved credit to Luca Majoli (BSAE, Venezia)
and Carla Brunello (Salce Collection, Treviso), thanks to whom this book can also
be seen as a little catalogue of the Salce poster collection*

*Special thanks, finally, for the cartoons drawn especially for this book by Alfredo Castelli,
Silver and Carlo Squillante; a thank you to Mr. Squillante also for the cute "caricature-
portraits" of the editors, reproduced below*



Elisabetta Delfabro



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Roberto Rosasco



Publisher



GENERALI
Assicurazioni Generali S.p.A.

Coordination



Edited by

Elisabetta Delfabro, Pietro Egidi, Annamaria Miot, Roberto Rosasco

Proofreading:

Raffaella Zanola

Graphics and Pagination

Work in Progress, Trieste

Printing

Sa.Ge.Print, Pordenone

November 2010

This publication is not for sale

Copies can be requested from:

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e-mail address rossana_flegar@generali.com

Annamaria Miot, tel. +39 040 671-623 (9 am - 6 pm),
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