



GENUS
BONONIAE
MUSEI NELLA CITTÀ

STURMTRUPPEN 50 ANNI
AN EXHIBITION OF BONVI'S GENIUS, HALF A CENTURY AFTER THE BIRTH
OF THE MOST FAMOUS ARMY IN THE WORLD

**Over 250 works from the Bonvicini Archive (most of which unpublished) on show in Bologna from
December 7th to April 7th 2019**

In the middle of the upheavals of roaring 1968, while the wave of anti-system, pacifist, revolutionary protest was rising strong all over the globe from America to Europe to Asia, **Franco Bonvicini**, sitting in a restaurant with friends, created the **debut strip of Sturmtruppen**, destined to become the world's most famous and most ragtag comic book army, a strip that earned Bonvi the *Paese Sera* prize for best new artist in Lucca. Bonvi was intolerant to hierarchy and caustic towards the power of "men in uniform" ever since his compulsory military service in the army: at that time he was often punished for amazing misdeeds like having his broken down Fiat 500 car towed by a tank, and all the while he exchanged letters with his friend Francesco Guccini about definitely nobler "battles" engaged in the conquest of young women. The Exhibit ***Sturmtruppen 50 anni***, dedicated to the irreverent genius of Bonvi and to the **50th birthday of his soldaten** organised by **Genus Bononiae. Musei nella Città** and **Fondazione Carisbo** in partnership with Eredi Bonvicini will be hosted December 7th, 2018 to April 7th, 2019 at Palazzo Fava. This project has been developing for over two years in the thoughts of Bonvi's **daughter Sofia, curator of the exhibition together with Claudio Varetto**, who opened the Bonvi archives to design and build up a true path of almost 600 square metres right in the heart of Bologna, the artistic homeland of Bonvi who used to create and work in a studio in Via Rizzoli, just a short walk away from the seat of the exhibit, up until his untimely death on December 9, 1995.

The exhibit features over 250 works, all from the Bonvicini Archive and mostly unpublished: although the heart of the exhibition are the **Sturmtruppen**, there are plenty of digressions in the vast artistic production of the author, from the serial comics like **Cattivik** and **Nick Carter**, to the more artistic ones, including also some paintings never exhibited before and the "For adults only" comics of Play Gulp, the erotic parody of the whole comic strip world. From the reconstruction of the studio, with materials and tools that show the creative process, a non-chronological path that highlights the works and thought of Bonvi, an artist who has profoundly influenced the twentieth-century Italian pop culture, and who is as central and important now as before: not just a cartoonist, but a complete artist, capable of stirring the interest and enthusiasm of the broader public as well as the intellectuals, from Umberto Eco to Oreste del Buono.

Bonvi's *Sturmtruppen* is a comic with no fixed protagonist, a stage where a colourful host of characters roam, from the basic Soldaten (private) to the Sergenten (Sergeant), Capitanen (Captain), Generalen (General) and Cuoken (Cook) and last but not least the Fiero Alleaten (proud ally) Galeazzo Musolesi, the only character with a name and surname. *Sturmtruppen* soon became **the anti-militarist comic par excellence**, capable of denouncing with a razor-sharp, caustic humour the stupid bestiality of war. However, despite being set in a precise moment in time - the Second World War - and in space - the German army trenches, where everyone speaks in an unmistakable "Germanese" slang, the **Sturmtruppen** became **allegories of the humanity of all times and places**, true archetypes with their manias and solitude, their fears and vices.



Locked into their claustrophobic universe, Bonvi's characters tread on a borderline made of rubble and death, beyond which stands an enemy invisible to the eyes (and heard only through the thunderous gunfire and cannons), but they never lose the opportunity to ridicule the pettiness of power and to make fun of the human weaknesses, now with a caustic spirit, now with tenderness.

Sturmtruppen 50 anni

Bologna, Palazzo Fava (via Manzoni, 2), from December 7 2018 to April 7, 2019

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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