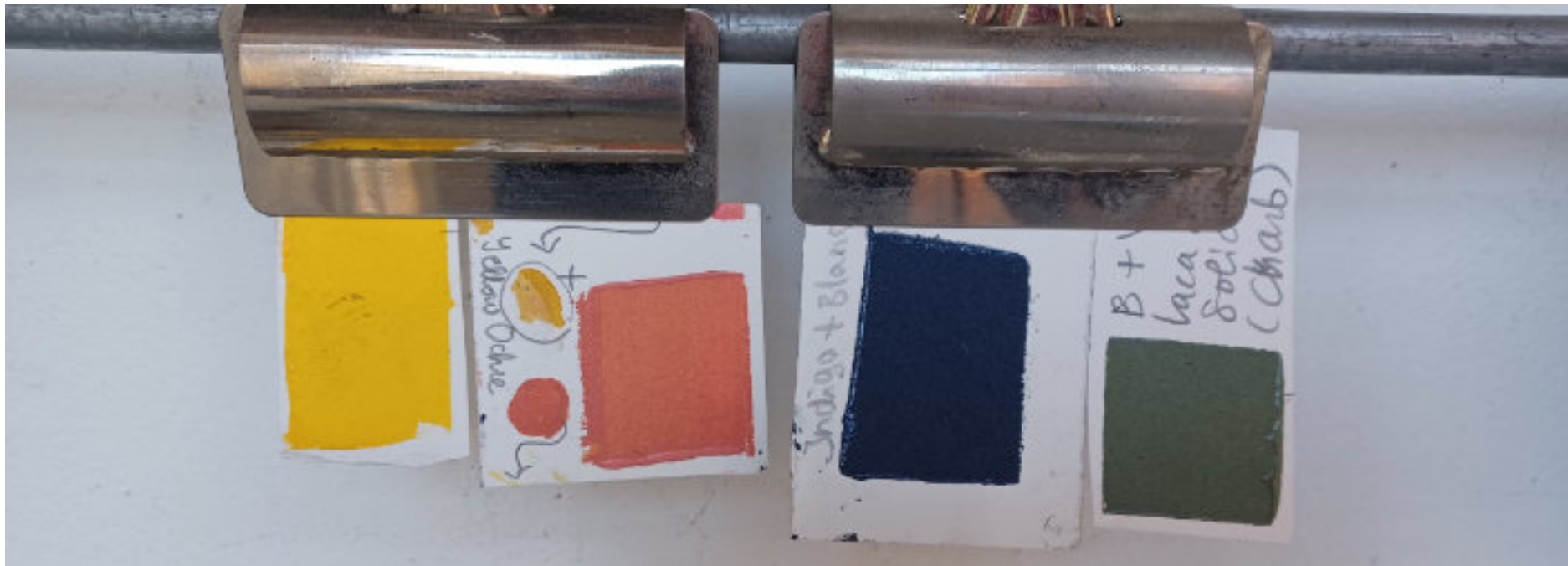


VALERIA BRANCAFORTE - OPERA DEI PUPÌ

Pagg. 3 - 16 Limited edition book in 12 copies

Pagg. 17 - 34 Portraits of the most famous paladins of France + artist proofs from the book



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The Opera dei Pupi is a puppet theatre that emerged in Sicily in the mid-1800s and was proclaimed Intangible Heritage of Humanity by Unesco in 2008.

Puppets differ from other European marionettes in two main characteristics. The first is mechanical, in fact they are manoeuvred not by traditional string wires but by two iron rods - one goes through the head, the other is attached to the hand - that give them more abrupt movements, ideal for the type of performances centred on fighting. The second characteristic is given by the repertoire, based mainly on the chivalrous narratives of the Carolingian cycle of the Chanson de Roland or on Renaissance literature such as Orlando Furioso, in which the vicissitudes of the Christian paladins fighting against the Saracens exalt the sense of honour, loyalty, recklessness and love, responding, historically, to the desire for redemption and justice of a social class that identified with the adventures represented on stage.

The puppet theatre is traditionally family-run. The heritage is passed down from generation to generation, and each member plays a different role: those who build the puppets, those who paint them, those who dress them, those who move them and give them the voice, improvising the text on a track. The youngest member of the family operates the cylinder piano, replacing the violins used in the past.

In the past, the performances, which took place every night for an entire year, were heralded by magnificent hand-painted posters depicting the main scene, with a brief description of the programme.

I wanted to realise this project driven by the desire, after so many years away from my native island, to pay tribute to my roots and to the very rich Sicilian popular culture. It has been an exciting journey, based on in-depth and passionate research: the more I read, the more I visited museums and theatres, the more certain chords resonated deep in my heart.

The result is Opera dei pupi, a limited edition fine book printed on a manual press in 12 copies, each consisting of 15 linocut blocks printed in 1, 2 or 3 colours and on 3 different types of paper. The project also includes a series of portraits of the 10 best-known Sicilian puppets.

A note:

Each print, even if a multiple, is an original work: the inking process and the passage through the press is done entirely by hand, resulting in possible imperfections that make each print unique.



**Opera
dei
pupi**

« ALL'OPRA DEI PUPPI BISO-
GNA CREDERE E NON È UNA
FINZIONE È UNA CELEBRA-
ZIONE, UN RITO, VI SI
ESALTA IL CORAGGIO E LA
L'ALTA, VI SI CONDANNA
IL TRADIMENTO. »
LEONARDO SCIASCIA





**Gran
combattimento
di-Orlando
e-Rinaldo.**



**Combattimento
di-Uzeta
e-Arcibaldo
sotto-l'-Etna.**



**Sfida di
Rinaldo e
Ruggiero
coi pugnali.**



**L'angelo
indica
la strada
a Cladinoro
e Marfisa.**





15 LINOLEUM DI VALERIA
BRANCAFORTE STAMPATI A
TORCHIO-MANUALE IN-12
COPIE: 3 SERIE: 3
3 SOMERSET, 6 MAGNANI,
BARCELONA-02/2024.
ESEMPLARE-N. 4/12
SERIE: Magnani

Magnani
Brancaforte
2024





LEGEND OF TEXTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Opera dei Pupi (2-plate, 2-colour linocut);
2. *One must believe in the opera dei pupi. It is not a fiction: it is a celebration, a rite, courage and loyalty are exalted in it; betrayal is condemned in it.* Leonardo Sciascia (1-plate, 1-colour linocut);
3. Replacement heads (2-plate, 3-colour linocut); (*)
4. Interior of theatre with cylinder piano. On the wall, Orlando's ivory horn, Olifante (2-plate, 3-colour linocut);
5. Group of paladins with Angelica (2-plate, 3-colour linocut); (*)
6. *Great Battle of Orlando and Rinaldo* (caption: 1-plate linocut / illustration: 2-plate, 3-colour linocut); (*)
7. *Battle of Uzeta and Arcibaldo under Mount Etna* (caption: 1-plate linocut / illustration: 2-plate, 3-colour linocut); (*)
8. *Challenge of Rinaldo and Ruggiero with daggers* (caption: 1-plate linocut / illustration: 2-plate, 2-colour linocut); (*)
9. *The angel shows the way to Cladinoro and Marfisa* (caption: 1-plate linocut / illustration: 2-plate, 2-colour linocut); (*)
10. Feet of hanging paladins (2-plate, 2-colour linocut);
11. Colophon: *15 hand-pulled linocuts by Valeria Brancaforte printed in 12 copies and 3 series: 3 Drap, 3 Somerset, 3 Magnani. Barcelona, February 2024. Exemplar nr.: Series:* (1-plate, 1-colour linocut);

(*) = also available as single prints, see following pages

The book in the pictures above is a Magnani exemplar.

Here below, some details on the paper types as a reference for the 3 edition variants.

Magnani incisione 220 gr
Printmaking paper made in Italy
Luminous white colour
Smooth surface, fine grain.
Closed book size: 35,5x26x1 circa

Somerset Velvet White 250 gr
Printmaking paper made in UK
White colour
Smooth surface, velvet grain.
Closed book size: 37x27x1

Drap 250-300 gr
artesanal recycled paper made in Catalonia
Ivory colour
Raw, irregular surface.
Closed book size: 37,5x27,5x1



Legend of the characters

Agolaccio. Son of the Spanish sorceress Juliana and step-brother of Orlando, Agolaccio demonstrated high merits in battle. Among his many exploits is the liberation of the kingdom of Sanseverino from pagan usurpers and, in the best chivalric tradition, he marries queen Balbiana. The marriage is prosperous and happy, and their life long and peaceful. Agolaccio wears a curious Spanish-style hat, to indicate his maternal origin.

Agramante An African king, he is the supreme leader of the Moors and a direct adversary of Charlemagne. His figure is enveloped in a regal dignity and a spirit of justice that make him a great ruler, always ready to intervene and bring peace to the disputes that constantly, now out of jealousy, now out of pride, overwhelm the Saracen warriors.

Angelica The Princess of Catai, arrives at the court of France from the far East and shocks the hearts of the most valiant knights, both Christian and Saracen, who cannot resist her beauty and prodigious charm. Rinaldo and Orlando also fight for her, but Angelica escapes into the woods where she meets the Saracen soldier Medoro, with whom she falls in love, causing grief among the Paladins.

Bradamante Rinaldo's sister, she is a valiant paladin and an emancipated, independent and strong-willed woman who defeats knights, giants and wizards in order to be united in marriage with her beloved Ruggiero, whom a spell repeatedly turns away from her.

Carlomagno the invincible Emperor of France, who gives his name to the Carolingian cycle, is very strong, as tall as a giant, and has sparkling eyes. Yet, he is not very cunning and is deceived by the wicked: he listens, in fact, to Gano di Maganza, bringing about the end of his loyal paladins. He is depicted with or without armour, but always with a clenched fist to indicate his stinginess.

Cladivoro will win the love of Russian princess Rosetta by defeating the fearsome and deformed giant Scapigliato in a duel.

Gano di Maganza, the traitor, is rich and hated. He is so cunning that he wins the total trust of Carlomagno, who accepts his every advice, until Gano, with a cowardly deception, betrays the Kingdom of France by revealing to the Saracens how to take by surprise at Roncesvalles the Frankish rearguard, returning from Spain, led by Orlando. He wears black clothes, an "M" of his lineage is embossed on his shield, and he has a scar on his face.

Sirena. The Opera dei pupi is pervaded by magical and supernatural figures. The Siren, armed with a scimitar, watches over the destinies of human affairs.

Orlando Conte d'Anglante Count of Anglante, strong knight, loyal, serious, invulnerable. Captain of the Paladins, slightly cross-eyed, he is very brave but not very clever. In the ambush set by the Saracens against the twelve paladins at Roncesvalles, Orlando heroically fights, yet sounding his ivory horn Olifante - the signal that would have summoned reinforcements - only at the end of the massacre, thus meeting his death. His sword is the Durlindana, and his emblem - the eagle.

Rinaldo di Montalbano is the second paladin of France. Rebellious spirit, passionate, playful, heartbreaker. A cousin of Orlando, he is his antagonist both in battle and in love. Repeatedly forced to wander in exile, he does not hesitate to embark on amorous adventures with oriental princesses. He symbolises the cunning man, and his emblem is the lion.



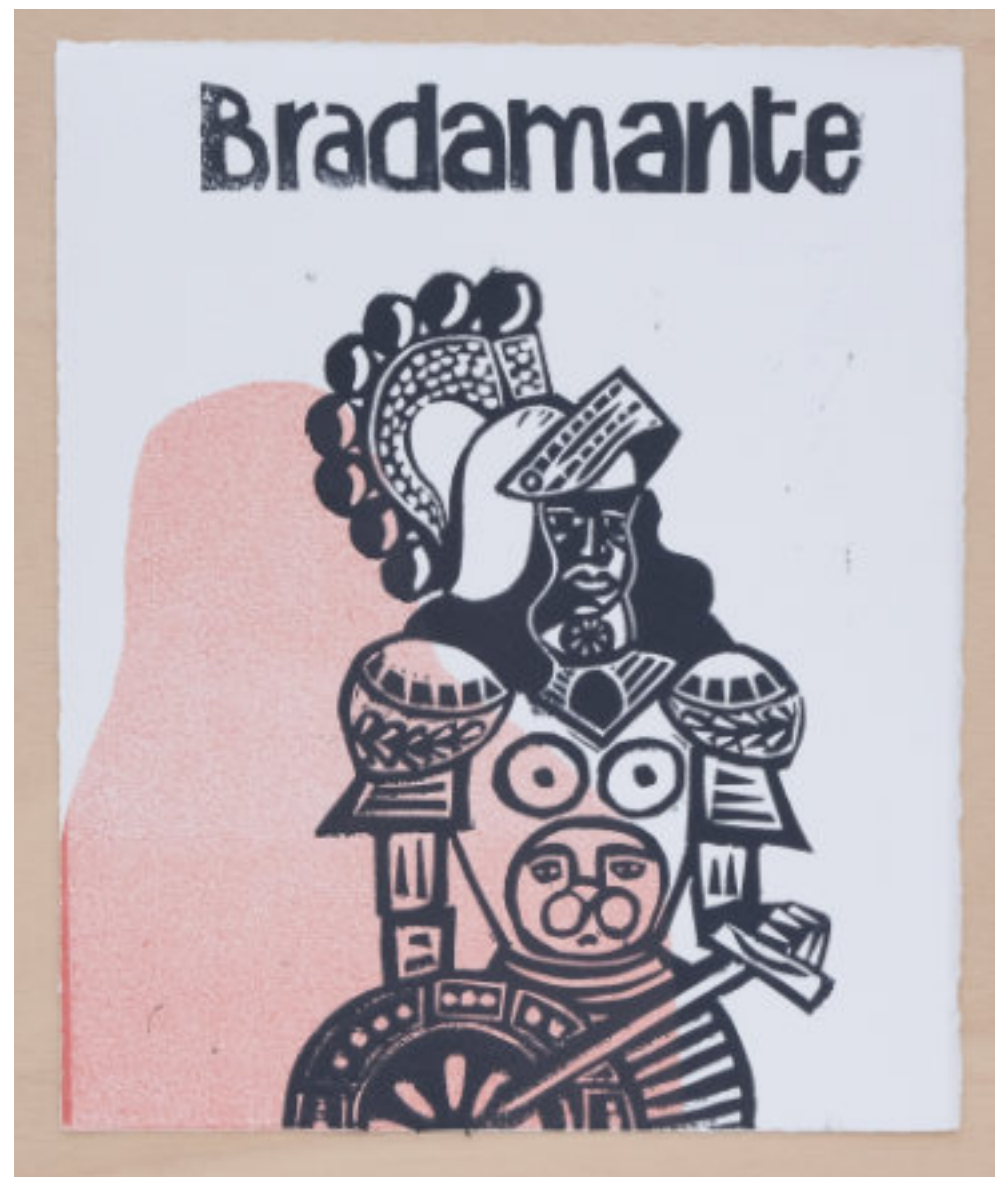
Size: 21,5 x 25 circa, Somerset paper.
Signed and numbered main edition of 26 (13 per shade of colour)



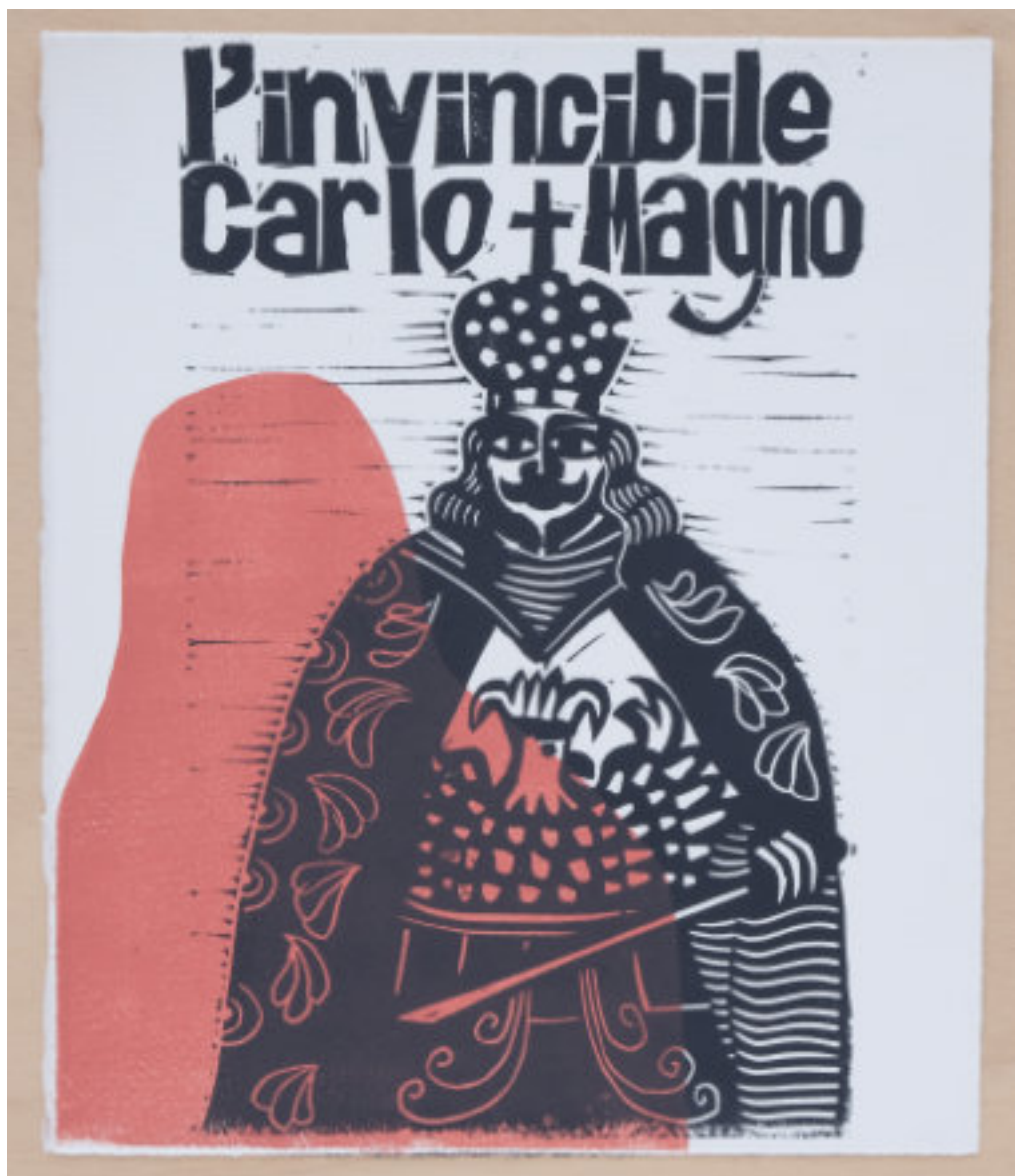
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Signed and numbered main edition of 26 (13 per shade of colour)



Size: 35x50 cm circa. 3-plates. Signed and numbered special edition of only 4 copies printed on hand-made special paper from S. Petersburg, Russia.



Size: 30x40 cm circa.

Combo of two 2-plate linocut blocks printed on hand-made paper from Catalonia and enriched with hand-coloured Sennelier watercolours.



Size: 30x40 cm circa.
Combo of two 2-plate linocut printed on hand-made paper from Catalonia and enriched with hand-coloured Sennelier watercolours.



Replacement heads.

2-plate linocut inked in 3 colours.

Size:

Japanese paper, 40x100 circa

Somerset paper, 30x40 circa



Group of paladins with Angelica. - 25x33 cm circa, 2-plate linocut inked in 3 colours. Artist proof.



Great Battle of Orlando and Rinaldo.
25x33 cm circa, 2-plate linocut inked in 3 colours. Artist proof.



Battle of Uzeta and Arcibaldo under Mount Etna.
25x33 cm circa, 2-plate linocut inked in 3 colours. Artist proof.



Challenge of Rinaldo and Ruggiero with daggers,
25x33 cm circa, 2-plate linocut, artist proofs.



The angel shows the way to Cladinoro and Marfisa
25x33 cm circa, 2-plate linocut, artist proofs.