

The “kiss” that kidnapped Gavirate

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There is a lot of movement around this artist who, with his spray can, is reproducing one of the most romantic paintings of the 1800s. An entire facade of the primary school in Gavirate will become a real work of art, able to surprise even the most distracted passers-by. One can see from a distance that something new is being created on that wall, which overlooks one of the last supermarkets in the town. Moreover, this is the intention of **Andrea Ravo Mattoni**, an artist from Varese, born in 1982, who cut his teeth on the walls of the city and is now one of the most popular writers in Europe.

His agenda at the moment is full of commitments until 2021 but it all started three years ago when he decided to create an open-air art gallery. Thus, the small provincial towns have become “bridges with museum institutions” and its murals a way to “teach art on the street”.

It is not in doubt, in fact, that his works create curiosity and wonder. When the work had not yet been completed in Via Marconi, a street of people was created, who were enthusiastic about that first draft that would materialize in **“Il bacio di Romeo e Giulietta” (The kiss of Romeo and Juliet), created in 1820 by the artist Francesco Hayez.**

Between one thing and another, in fact, so many people stop to see Ravo and his colleague Joel Elbaz (who accompanies him on these occasions) working with cans and there are even those who bring them chocolate bars, coffee, croissants to get by during the day.

To realize this work of eleven meters by seven in fact, it takes technique but also physical fitness. The day starts at eight and ends around seven thirty in the evening, weather permitting. You go up and down from the basket with the harness and the helmet on your head. It takes one and a half days to build the base and divide the wall into a huge grid that will serve as reference points once you start to draw and color. One hundred and ten cans of different colors are available.

The mural will be inaugurated on Friday (5th April) after a week of work. Meanwhile, both students and citizens can participate in guided tours conducted by Paolo Cova, art historian and curator of Andrea Ravo Mattoni (every day, until Thursday from 10am to 3pm and from 3pm to 6pm, hourly, info 0332-748225). On Wednesday (10th April), however, there will be an evening in town to explain in detail the painting on the walls.

“It’s a job I really care about, I couldn’t wait to make a work from that period with spray cans,” says Ravo, with an untidy beard and a hat on his head. “As with the other walls built in the province, I chose a painting that had a connection with the territory, in this case an artist, well known in our area, who comes from Milan. At the Castle of Masnago, for example, one of his most beautiful works is kept, the “Tamara di Giuda”.

After Varese, Angera and Leggiano, therefore, Gavirate also becomes the destination of a broader artistic journey. The works of **Andrea Ravo Mattoni**, in fact, have arrived in France where the street artist has collaborated with the Louvre, for example. On 2nd May, he will take part in the official ceremony in Amboise for the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Leonardo Da Vinci, which will also be attended by Macron and Mattarella. After all, he will be the messenger of that hip hop movement born in Varese in the mid-1990s and which paved the way to many young creatives.

di Translated by Viola Raineri (Reviewed by Prof. Robert Clarke)