

## Postcards and leaf insects

“The real vacations are the ones you go on when you’re little. Without a care in the world.  
We signed our postcards - tanti saluti from Ronchi.  
Children have no interest in landscape though.

Every now and then I drop in on Luca at his studio. To look around, have a chat, try to see what he’s doing.

He tells me: ‘For months I’ve been thinking I want, *I have to* say something about this country at the end of its dreams...’

I watched ambitious landscapes emerge slowly. Or maybe oversized postcards. Intense, accurate, melancholic. The Italy you see in old postcards brims with confident optimism. Nowhere near worry or revolution.

But just when everything seems nearly complete, approaching its zenith, comes a violent gesture that claims the scene. At this point, words fail.

The landscape, the excuse to do some painting, retreats in time and space.

Now the painting is really *finished*.

It moves forward and sinks back down below the surface at the same time.  
I cannot decide if there are several different planes or if everything comes together in just one alone.  
It’s always color, anyway.

Some marks seem to float over the canvas and do not resemble anything at all; others shift and assume shapes human eyes recognize as familiar, things already seen. But it’s all the same.

I resume thinking about the value of the copy.  
Copies can transcend the original, copies can devour originals.

The leaf insect.

Georges Didi-Huberman stood in front of a glass case at the Jardin des Plantes and gazed for a long time without seeing anything at all. He slowly realized that the copy of the leaf – the insect – had turned its own body into the subterfuge in which it was concealed. The scenery becoming the subject itself. Where it lives, and what it eventually eats, making it slowly disappear.

Along with every other certainty.

My grandfather wrote postcards when he was away on military service. My grandmother learned how to delicately remove the postage stamps. His tenderest words were hidden there.”

Chiara Camoni, August 2011