

# CORRADO LEONI SPEECH THE ABYSS - LEONIART PROJECT II PORTUGAL > 02.OUT.2021

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, thank you for being there at the exhibition, even if we are living a very hard and critical time for our life and of course, for Art. I have to thank all the Portuguese people who make this event possible:

- The curator Monsenhor enVide neFelibata;
- YZONK;
- All the institutions, like the Minister of Culture, the Municipality of Espinho, the Mandrágora Theatre, DG Artes, Escola da Marioneta, and all the collaborators and sponsors who helped us in this exhibition.

I am Corrado Leoni, LeoniArt, an Italian painter, photographer, and founder of LeoniArt Project, an international exhibition of Visionary Art.

I don't want to talk in detail about my long experience as an artist, but it started when I was only 10 and I won my first international art contest in Venice.



Art has been always part of my life. Art was with me when I worked as a photo reporter for 20 years, publishing my photos on national magazines and books and when I performed the whole ceiling of the theatre "Jupiter" and in the perimeter of the library "Alexandria" in some transatlantics which still travels along the oceans, and when I took part in the international poetry festival in Italy or in the celebrating at the Islip Museum in New York.



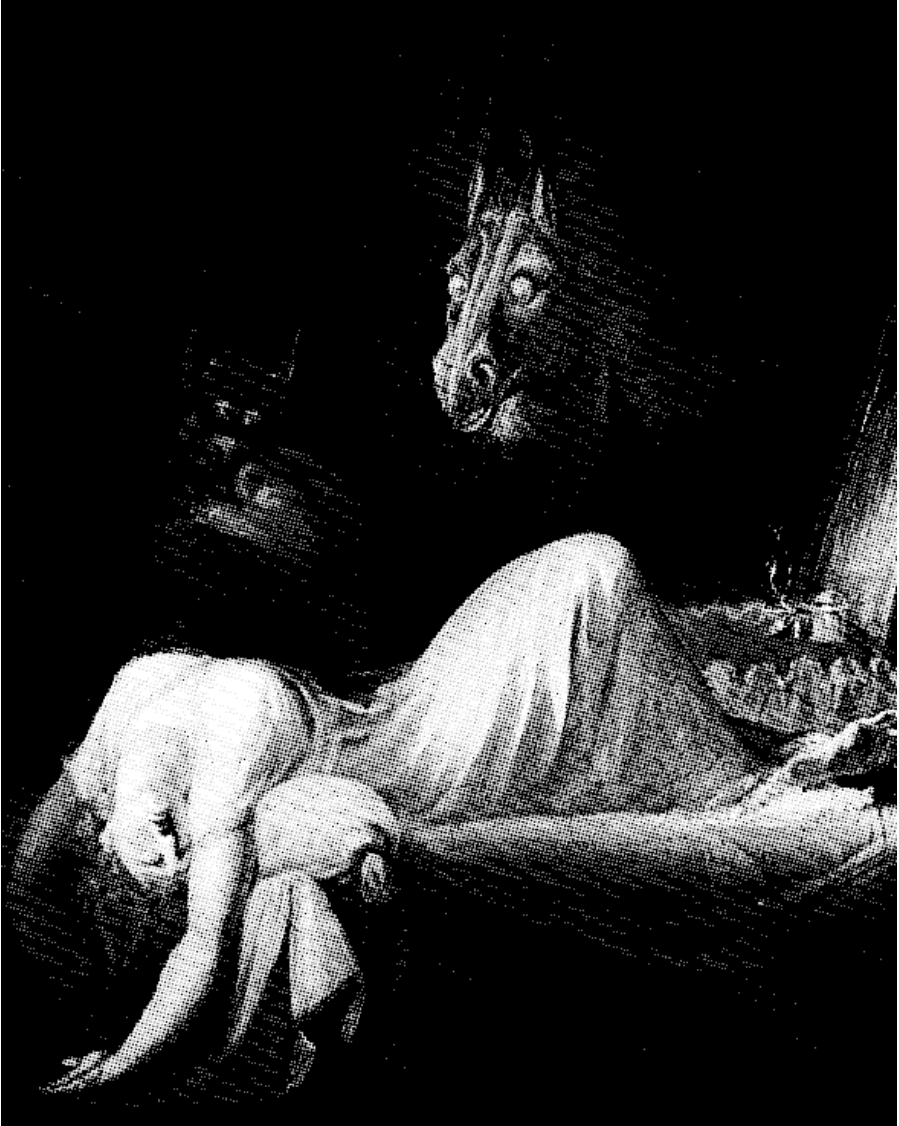
For me, the most important thing is that my art comes from my emotions, my visions, and often from my prophetic dreams. I use to create oil paintings, oil on canvas, sometimes adding on them some objects, scraps, roots, and other parts that have been damaged by the action of time and nature. I usually represent surreal landscapes, coming from my dreams, in a sort of transposition of alternative reality, born inside my mind or, maybe, transmitted by another universe, often dystopic. That's my visionary art.

In general, visionary art had always represented an imaginary gate over the physical world. In reality, it is part of us, of the imaginary space hidden in the deep part of our mind.



Visionary art was born in the 16<sup>o</sup> century, with the first artwork by Hieronymus Bosch, a Dutch painter, who represented his visions in contrast with the religious and moral restrictions of that time. After him, many other artists created visionary paintings, like the English William Blake and the Swiss Henry Fuseli (Johann Heinrich Füssli). Their artworks are pure representations of visions, imaginary scenery, and surreal landscapes.





Other famous painters like Salvador Dalí and René Magritte created a sort of visionary paintings. The famous painting of Magritte, called the clairvoyant, where he shows himself painting a bird on the canvas, having an egg as a model, is the pure example of visionary and prophetic art.



Today, Visionary Art is considered in different aspects and sometimes, in a distortion that I don't recognize, it can fall on an extreme and hallucinating side, that is the psychedelic art.

My visionary Art wants to be a pure transposition of my visions, my prophetic dreams, sometimes including signs and symbols. With those previews, those experiences, and my artistic background, I have decided, one night in march 2017, to found a new Project, a new community of artists which can share their visionary art in a mutual and free mode.





In the following years, we have created different exhibitions and events. The first edition of LeoniArt Project took place in Genoa in October 2018, in a historical Palazzo Doria Spinola, headquarter of the local prefect, while before the second one in Portugal other five smaller exhibitions called "LeoniArt Drops" have been performed. LeoniArt Project is now a community of 44 artists from the five continents, which are connected to each other and they can share their artworks (paintings, photos, and digital artworks) in a free exchange, far from the ephemeral business of the galleries, which often live simply receiving economic support from the artists.



Art must be free. LeoniArt Project is a no-profit organization and I am proud to have created this group of friends, that joined each other by the same passion, the same vision of Art. We are free souls, and I want to consider them my brothers and sisters in Art.

One last thought goes to the singer Gizem Buldan and the musician Can Ilter, from Izmir, Turkey, who have created for us the special song entitled "The Abyss".

**Hold your breath, dear friends, and deep dive into the Abyss of your soul. Have a good evening and enjoy the exhibition!**

*When I talk about the hallucinating aspect of Visionary Art, I refer to the psychedelic Art, a form of expression where the artist reaches the altered consciousness conditions through the use of drugs. Of course my Visionary Art come from my dreams and from my symbolic interpretation of my fantastic dystopic worlds only. I am true, in my life I have never smoked a cigarette!*

*My experience of photographer covered the years from 1987 to 2006, I worked in analog mode, taking slides in different countries like Australia, United States or Malaysia, in a period of time where the media were different. I worked close to the journalists, which suggested me the target, the cut and the type of photos I had to do, and anyway I tried to express my personal emotion through my images.*





*30 years ago my thirst of adventure had many opportunities, the world was different. For example, when I took part to the archaeological expedition in Cappadocia in Turkey, I was able to enter for the very first time, after centuries, in the secret underground cities and when I founded my road interrupted by lava in Hawaii Islands, no internet could immediately report the news. That was the real adventure world I had the luck to see when I was younger.*

*The match point with Art came when I started to hand paint my black and white pictures using blue oil colors on prints. That was the first step, then canvas replaced my original photos.*

