

Victoria Surliuga

**EZIO GRIBAUDO**

**My Pinocchio**

Gli  
Ori



## Table of Contents

### *Acknowledgments*

Victoria Surliuga wishes to express her gratitude to Ezio Gribaudo for making available his archive, and for discussing at length the importance of Pinocchio in his works; thanks also go to Paola Gribaudo for her editorial supervision and for having managed every aspect of the publication of this book, and to Carlo Gribaudo for his work as archivist. The author has been able to consult the Ezio Gribaudo Archives thanks to several Scholarship Catalyst Program Grants (Office of the President, Office of the Provost, and Office of the Vice President for Research) of Texas Tech University.

Ezio Gribaudo is grateful to Dante Bricca, Maurizio Gavassa, Calogero Treccarichi, Pasquale Volpicelli (Monumenti d'Arte, Turin).

### *Publisher*

Gli Ori, Pistoia

### *Editorial Coordinator*

Paola Gribaudo

### *Translation*

Sylvia Adrian Notini

### *Photo Credits*

Ezio Gribaudo Archives

Andrea Guermani

### *Graphics and Layout*

Gli Ori Redazione

### *Printed by*

Bandecchi & Vivaldi, Pontedera

Copyright © 2017

Images: © 2017 Ezio Gribaudo

Texts: © 2017 Victoria Surliuga

ISBN 978-88-7336-669-0

All rights reserved

[www.gliori.it](http://www.gliori.it)

[info@gliori.it](mailto:info@gliori.it)

[www.eziogribaudo.com](http://www.eziogribaudo.com)

[www.victoriasurliuga.com](http://www.victoriasurliuga.com)

The quotes from *Pinocchio* are extracted from Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio*. Tr. by E. Harden. London: Puffin Books, 1995.

A special acknowledgment goes to the Associazione Amici di Groppoli and its President Gian Piero Ballotti.

### *On the cover*

*The Initiatory Dance of Pinocchio*, 2015, relief on blotting paper, 60 x 47 cm.

## VICTORIA SURLIUGA **Pinocchio in the Art of Ezio Gribaudo**

7

### **Works**

41

### **About the Artist**

125

### **Materials and Techniques Used by Ezio Gribaudo**

127

### **Legends**

130



## Pinocchio in the Work of Ezio Gribaudo



Ezio Gribaudo in his studio in Turin, 2017.  
On page 5, *The Dualism of Pinocchio*, 2017, Carrara, Verde Alpi, arabesqued, 140 x 80 x 3 cm.

In the work of Ezio Gribaudo, Pinocchio's silhouette, captured both when moving and when motionless, is explored in its existential metamorphoses in a series of studies and situations that began in the 1950s and continued down to the artist's most recent works, starting from the volume *Disegni e parole*, curated by Ezio Gribaudo with Luigi Carluccio and Edoardo Sanguineti, and published by Edizioni d'Arte Fratelli Pozzo in 1963. The volume contains several drawings derived from Collodi, which do not mimetically develop the progression and each of the details in the book, but rather place the figure in circumstances that create a visual scenario that is constantly changing with respect to the novel.

At first, Pinocchio appears in black and white drawings that on and off evoke the start of Collodi's story (figs. 1-8). This is followed by a phase consisting of color drawings where the uneven geometry related to Pinocchio's silhouette prevails, although there is no reference to the story of the puppet. The educational purpose that was pivotal in Collodi is set aside here insofar as it is not relevant to Pinocchio's "graphic" function, which is that of creating a study of volumes and geometric forms. The contrast between triangles and circles creates a multiplicity of backgrounds against which these stylized Pinocchios become opportunities for the use of brilliant colors, pointing out both their comic-strip-like and playful aspects (figs. 9-22). These are followed by white monochromes, collages, and more traditional paintings.

*The Adventures of Pinocchio*, described by Alberto Savinio as a Bible of the heart for connoisseurs, is one of the most important texts in Italian literature.<sup>1</sup> The countless literary rewritings include Aleksey Tolstoy's *Buratino* (1936), *La vita nova di Pinocchio* by Luigi Compagnone (1971), *Pinocchio, un libro parallelo* by Giorgio Manganelli (1977), *Pinocchio con gli stivali* by Luigi Malerba (1977), and *Pinocchio in Venice* by Robert Coover (1991), not to mention *Le avventure di Guizzardi* by Gianni Celati (1972), owing to its decidedly Collodian atmosphere. Pinocchio also stars in a film directed by Anatomoro, where the character is played by the mime Polydor (1911), in *Totò a colori* by Steno (1952), in the theater of Carmelo Bene (1962 and thereafter), in the television version of the story by Luigi Comencini (1971), and in many film versions, namely the ones



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

directed by Walt Disney (1940), Steve Barron (1996), Steven Spielberg (*A.I.*, 2001), and Roberto Benigni (2002).<sup>2</sup> It is almost impossible to keep track of the illustrations of Collodi's novel, starting from the ones made by Enrico Mazzanti in 1883.<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to the many translations and the various adaptations, Pinocchio has struck the collective imaginary of children and adults around the world. It is part of the canon of children's literature along with *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, the *Book of the Jungle* by Rudyard Kipling, and *Peter Pan* by James M. Barrie. It is safe to say that everyone is familiar with this puppet, and that they have seen it in the many illustrations, movies, or cartoons.

Within this proliferation of interpretations and adaptations, my analysis of the Pinocchio theme in Gribaudo's work necessarily heads in several directions. The first of these stems from the value of creativity itself, that is to say, how the artist has created different models for Pinocchio, which correspond to various "automata-like" bodies added by him within the context of the pictorial work. Geppetto carves Pinocchio out of the trunk of a cherry tree, which has its own life, and reacts to and engages dialectically with his own creator. The painter, instead, having overcome the mimetic phase of the drawings that follow some of the episodes in the novel, considers Pinocchio a geometrical and mechanical form. Its origin cannot be determined, except as concerns the creation itself of the models, and his insertion creates new narrative spaces dictated by the context of the themes favored by the author, such as the flongs, the Theaters of Memory, and the travel journals.