

“ The tragic saga of maritime rescue in the Mediterranean Sea recorded live and beyond clichés. ”



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Riccardo Gatti, Marco Aime

Conversations on the High Seas

afterword by Duccio Facchini
illustrations by Gianluca Costantini

Against the backdrop of the institutional hypocrisy that characterises Europe, formally defender of human rights but in fact evermore isolated in itself, Riccardo Gatti, who for years has been active in sea rescues, tells us about the job of rescuer, in a dialogue with Marco Aime. In these conversations exchanged "on the field", while sailing across central Mediterranean Sea, an "Anarchist Captain" and an anthropologist of migrations, try to analyse the complexity of maritime rescue and their implications, not exclusively human, together with the cultural setting and the narrative that have come to surround them. A live account that helps us to understand how, in little time, those who were once called "Sea Angels" have suddenly become "human traffickers". Against the prevailing rhetoric, rowdy on one side and simplistic on the other, and most of all against the indifference of the majority, these reflections grant us access into the reality of one of the most significant phenomena of the last twenty years. One that is far from over and which is engaging some of our deepest values.



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Riccardo Gatti during a rescue.

MARCO AIME teaches Cultural Anthropology at Università di Genova. He has conducted research in West Africa (Benin, Mali) and the Italian Alps. He authored numerous anthropological essays including *Eccessi di culture* (Einaudi, 2004), *Contro il razzismo. Quattro ragionamenti* (Einaudi, 2016), *L'isola del non arrivo. Voci da Lampedusa* (Bollati Boringhieri, 2018). With elèuthera he also published *La macchia della razza* (2013) and *Guida minima al cattivismo italiano*.

GIANLUCA COSTANTINI is an activist and artist who fights his battles through drawing. He actively collaborates with many NGO's such as Amnesty and Emergency. His drawings mapped, among others, the story of the HRW Film Festival in London and of the FIFDH Human Rights Festival in Geneva. In 2017 he was nominated for the European Citizenship Awards. In 2019 he received the Art and Human Rights award from Amnesty International. He has published comic stories on many magazines all over the world including "Le-Man" in Turkey, "Courrier International" and "Le Monde Diplomatique" in France, "World War Illustrated" in the United States as well as on multiple major Italian publications.

RICCARDO GATTI (Lecco, 1978) had just turned twenty when he moved to Palma de Majorca, where he started his career as a social worker in areas of social-professional marginalisation and as youth educator. On the island he also learned the art of sailing, a skill that allowed him to pay for studies in Psychology. Thanks to the experience and abilities acquired in these first endeavors, in 2015 he begins working for Médecins sans Frontières in the Aegean Sea as a pilot on rescue ships. In May 2016 he starts working in the central Mediterranean Sea on the ships of the Spanish NGO Open Arms, first as captain and later as head of mission, taking on the position of president of Open Arms Italy at the same time. In September 2021, having completed his experience with Open Arms Italy, he continues to collaborate with several NGOs that carry out rescue operations in the central Mediterranean Sea.

Anabel Montes

