

Fausto Melotti

LA CERAMICA

curated by **Ilaria Bernardi**

More than **seventy years after the first meeting** between **Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti** and the ceramics by **Fausto Melotti**, and **twenty years after the publication** of the “*Catalogo generale della ceramica*” of the artist, an exhibition narrates and explore the production, wrongly considered to be minor, of one of the protagonists of the **transformation of Italian art of the 20th century**

Different ceramic works by Melotti compared with ceramic ones by contemporary artists return us a portrait of the artist rooted in his time

25 March - 25 June 2023

Fondazione Ragghianti
Complesso monumentale di San Micheletto
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www.fondazioneragghianti.it

In 1948, **Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti** published an essay in the catalogue of the exhibition “*Handicraft as a fine art in Italy*”, held at the House of Italian Handicraft in New York. Among the exhibited works also the ceramic vases by **Fausto Melotti**, who along with the works by Afro and Mirko Basaldella, Pietro Cascella, Filippo de Pisis, Renato Guttuso, Leoncillo, Marino Marini and many others, were exhibited on that occasion to demonstrate how the production of the so-called *applied arts* in Italy were to be considered as *fine art* to all effects.

To celebrate that first meeting of Ragghianti with Melotti, and to homage the twentieth anniversary of the “*Catalogo generale della ceramica*” edition, the **Fondazione Ragghianti** organises **from March 25 to June 25** the exhibition “**Fausto Melotti. La ceramica**”, curated by **Ilaria Bernardi**, a journey through the works of an absolute protagonist of the Italian artistic renewal of the twentieth century.

Sculptor, painter, designer and poet, **Fausto Melotti** (Rovereto, 1901 – Milan, 1986) was an exquisite ceramist and from the second post-war period to the early 1960s, he found in ceramic a tool for inventing and transforming his own sculpture.

In collaboration with the **Fondazione Fausto Melotti** and the **MIC – Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza**, with the support of the **Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Lucca** and the patronage of the Regione Toscana and the Provincia and Comune di Lucca, “**Fausto Melotti. La ceramica**” is divided into **four sections**.

The **first** one contextualizes the ceramic production by Melotti within his life and activity, through an illustrated chronology from his birth in 1901 until his passing in 1986. The timeline illustrated by glass cases containing **documents from his archive** and specifically connected to the ceramic production, includes **three notebooks never exhibited before**.

The **second section** is dedicated to the best-known **types of ceramic sculptures** conceived by the artist as such: from the sacred ceramics to the bas-reliefs, from the animals to “*Korai*”, from the so-called “*Bambini*” (children) to the “*Teatrini*” (little theatres). The precious “*Lettera a Fontana*” (1944), exhibited in 1950 at the Biennale di Venezia, is also on display.

In the **third section** the video “*In prima persona. Pittori e scultori. Fausto Melotti*” (1984), by **Antonia Mulas**, includes the only interview in which the artist, analysing his own path and his conception of art, talks about ceramics.

Preceded by a focus on another of Melotti's best-known typologies of ceramic works – the **vases**, in their countless different forms – the **fourth and final section** of the exhibition brings together different types of ceramics-cups, bowls, lamps, plates, tiles. Works that, even if inspired by common use objects, the artist created releasing them from their purposes and making them real sculptures.

Alongside the works of Melotti, pieces by major **artists and designers**, with whom the artist had direct or indirect contacts are on display and loaned by the **MIC in Faenza**, which holds the largest collection of ceramic art in the world. From **Giacomo Balla** to **Lucio Fontana**, from **Leoncillo** to **Arturo Martini**, from **Enzo Mari** to **Bruno Munari**, **Gio Ponti**, **Emilio Scanavino**, **Ettore Sottsass** and many others.

With the exhibition "**Fausto Melotti. La ceramica**", the Fondazione Ragghianti wishes not only to pay tribute to an artist, who knew how to combine the classical tradition with the European avant-gardes, the scientific-mathematic knowledge with the musical one, and the literary-poetic ability with that of draughtsman, painter and sculptor. It above all wishes to celebrate his multiform and innovative production in ceramics through an exhibition that can outline a new mapping of what Germano Celant called the "Melotti galaxy".

The exhibition is accompanied by a **catalogue-book in Italian and English**, published by **Edizioni Fondazione Ragghianti Studi sull'arte**, with reproductions of all the works on display, documents and period materials, essays of **Ilaria Bernardi** and **Claudia Casali**, director of the MIC – Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza, and the introductory texts of **Paolo Bolpagni**, director of the Fondazione Ragghianti, and of **Edoardo Gnemmi**, director of the Fondazione Fausto Melotti.

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