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IL GENIO di MILANO

*Crocevia delle arti
dalla Fabbrica del Duomo
al Novecento*

Sotto l'Alto Patronato del Presidente della Repubblica

**23.11.2024
16.3.2025**

**Gallerie d'Italia – Milano
Piazza della Scala, 6**

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INTESA  SANPAOLO

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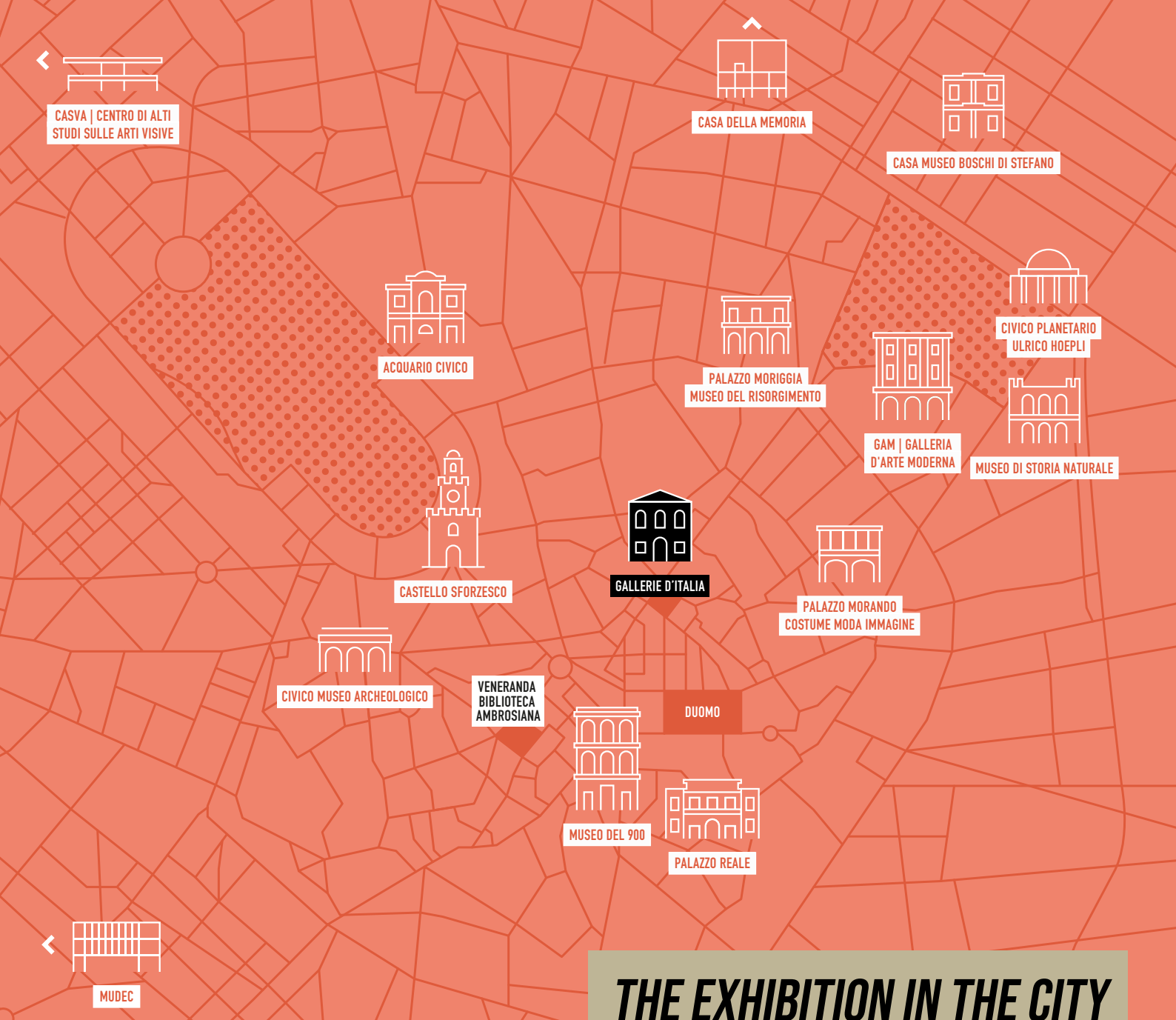
*Crocevia delle arti
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THE EXHIBITION IN THE CITY

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THE EXHIBITION IN THE CITY

1 ITINERARY in 20 CIVIC MUSEUMS amid WORKS ARTISTS COLLECTIONS

Coinciding with the exhibition *Il genio di Milan. Crocevia delle arti dalla Fabbrica del Duomo al Novecento*, at the Gallerie d'Italia - Milan from 23 November 2024 to 16 March 2025, the initiative *The Exhibition in the City* will help discover some particularly significant figures in Milan's cultural and artistic history, in an itinerary through the numerous collections of the Civic Museums.



ACQUARIO CIVICO DI MILANO

viale Gerolamo Gadio 2, Milan | www.acquariodimilano.it

MENICO TORCHIO (Turin 1932 - Urbe, Savona 2001), born and educated in Turin, was endowed with great energy and possessed multiple interests. In Milan he found fertile ground for the development of his creative interests. A graduate in the Natural Sciences, he arrived in Milan in 1960 as a curator at the Museum of Natural History, and in 1963 was seconded to the Aquarium as director. In just eight months he had reopened it, obtaining the official commendation of the mayor of Milan, Gino Cassinis, president of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.

In 1973 he published his first contribution to bioethics, nature conservation and the philosophy of science, becoming a pioneer of bioethics in Europe and the first to introduce the ideas of Van Rensselaer Potter.

Described by those who knew him as impressive and authoritative, with a strong and complex personality, capable of inspiring and motivating his staff, Menico Torchio made an enduring contribution to science, particularly in the fields of marine biology and bioethics. ■



Fabrizio Dusi, *Exhibition project*
Don't kill, 2017, neon and ceramics

CASA DELLA MEMORIA

via Federico Confalonieri 14, Milan | www.casadellamemoria.it

FABRIZIO DUSI sculptor, ceramist and painter, was born in Sondrio in 1974 and studied ceramics at the Scuola Cova in Milan, graduating in 2003. In 2005 he opened an art workshop in Milan, where he currently works, dividing his time between ceramics and painting, experimenting with new techniques and combining new materials, from wood to plexiglas and neon.

Under a title that quotes the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, “Don’t kill”, there is a core collection of works designed specifically for the House of Memory during the exhibition held in 2017. It is inspired by the words of Primo Levi, Liliana Segre, Eva Pickova and Marco Spiry. The works embody the spirit of the place, devoted to preserving a shared historical memory, dedicated to the victims of all massacres, all forms of terrorism, marginalisation, exclusion and violence. ■



Furniture for a dining room (table, six chairs, sideboard), 1936 for Colombo & Vitali, Milan inlaid walnut; sideboard: red marble top; fruit stand: carved mirror and central plaque with high-relief in bronze (on deposit from Fondazione Boschi Di Stefano)

CASA MUSEO BOSCHI DI STEFANO

via Giorgio Jan 15, Milan | www.casamuseoboschidistefano.it

MARIO SIRONI (Sassari 1885 - Milan 1961) was a major figure in Italian art in the first half of the twentieth century. He trained in Rome, where he also began his artistic career, which then intensified with his move to Milan in 1919. A regular visitor to the house at the time of Antonio Boschi and Mariada Di Stefano, he is one of the artists most emblematic of the collection, which contains some forty of his works, many purchased directly from the painter in 1947.

His monographic room in the Boschi Di Stefano Museum House, originally a living room, is now wholly devoted to exhibiting his works, making it possible to retrace the main stages of his career, from the late Futurist and Metaphysical phase to the Novecento, from the suburbs to experiments in mural painting. Other works from the same collection are exhibited at the Museo del Novecento.

The room displays ones of the most famous works of the museum house: *The Venus of the Docks*, in tempera and collage on canvas, a technique already explored by the avant-gardes. It dates from the artist's early Futurist period. Analysis of one of the newspaper clippings in the composition – "La Tribuna", dated 2 April 1919 – enables the work to be dated with certainty, hence it must have been produced a few months before Sironi's definitive move to

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Mario Sironi, *Great Composition*, c. 1946
tempera and oil on
canvas, 121 × 164 cm

Mario Sironi, *The Venus
of the Docks*, 1919
collage and tempera on
canvas, 98 × 73.5 cm

Milan in autumn 1919. The subject of this nocturne is a modern Venus, a mannequin-woman in Metaphysical style, who stands on a wharf. In the background we see an approaching ship, while on the right an apartment block anticipates a subject that Sironi would explore closely in the following decades, so much so that it became a typical theme of his work. This appears again in his scenes of the outer city exhibited here. Among them the *Urban Landscape* of 1929-1930, acquired by the Galleria Milano in 1935, stands out with its intense blue sky and the bright red of the factory chimney occupying the centre of the scene. Sironi had begun to paint his dramatic views of the city in the early twenties, depicting tragic, alienating and desolate landscapes, composed of solid and powerful volumes of buildings, factories and gasometers, in which the human figure finds almost no space. Also in the early twenties, in Milan, Sironi embraced Fascism and its ideology with conviction. He began to contribute as an illustrator and then an art critic to the newspaper founded by Mussolini, “Il Popolo d’Italia”, ending only in 1942.

In 1920 he signed the *Futurist Manifesto. Against all returns in painting*, while in December 1922, he was one of the founders, with Achille Funi, Anselmo Bucci, Leonardo Dudreville, Emilio Malerba, Piero Marussig and Ubaldo Oppi, of the Novecento Italiano group. This advocated a modern classicism and was supported by the intellectual and art critic Margherita Sarfatti and the gallerist Lino Pesaro. Sironi soon became its most representative artist.

In the thirties he devoted himself above all to mural painting and large-scale decorative works, fulfilling the dream of art for the masses, which could be enjoyed in the streets, places where people worked and gathered, and public buildings, freed from the logic of the market and individual possession, capable of stimulating State patronage and



Mario Sironi, *Urban Landscape*, 1929-1930
oil on plywood, 60 × 65 cm

prompting artists to represent the great themes of history, in harmony with the regime. The design of the furniture for a dining room also dates from the middle of the decade. Like most of the furniture now present in the museum home, it was purchased by the Boschi Di Stefano Foundation when it opened the institute to the public, to restore the interiors, which were almost completely bare, creating an atmosphere that was both domestic and refined. The walnut furniture – table, chairs and sideboard – with a restrained and severe pattern, was designed by Sironi for the home of Santo Aimetti, deputy director of “Il Popolo d’Italia” and a collector of the artist’s work, and exhibited at the 6th Triennale in Milan in 1936.

Great Composition, painted immediately after the end of World War II, is a work built up out of fragments and quotations of ancient art and the Italian tradition. This procedure, mindful of the experience of mural painting, is often found in works from Sironi’s maturity. They derive from the large decorative works he made in the previous decade in official and administrative buildings, such as the Triennale, the Law Courts and the Palazzo dei Giornali, in which he inserted bas-reliefs, statues set in niches and other references to classicism. *Great Composition* was probably among the works exhibited at his solo show held in November 1946 at the Galleria al Camino in Milan, recently founded by the Ghiringhelli brothers with Romeo Toninelli. It took place in a hostile climate, which judged his fragmented compositions to be outdated and symptomatic of his failure as a painter. The following year the work was purchased by Antonio Boschi and Marieda Di Stefano in the painter’s studio. ■



Codex Trivulzianus 2162,
Leonardo da Vinci's autograph
notebook, c. 1487
manuscript on paper

ARCHIVIO STORICO CIVICO E BIBLIOTECA TRIVULZIANA - CASTELLO SFORZESCO

piazza Castello, Milan | <https://trivulziana.milanocastello.it>

open to the public by appointment only

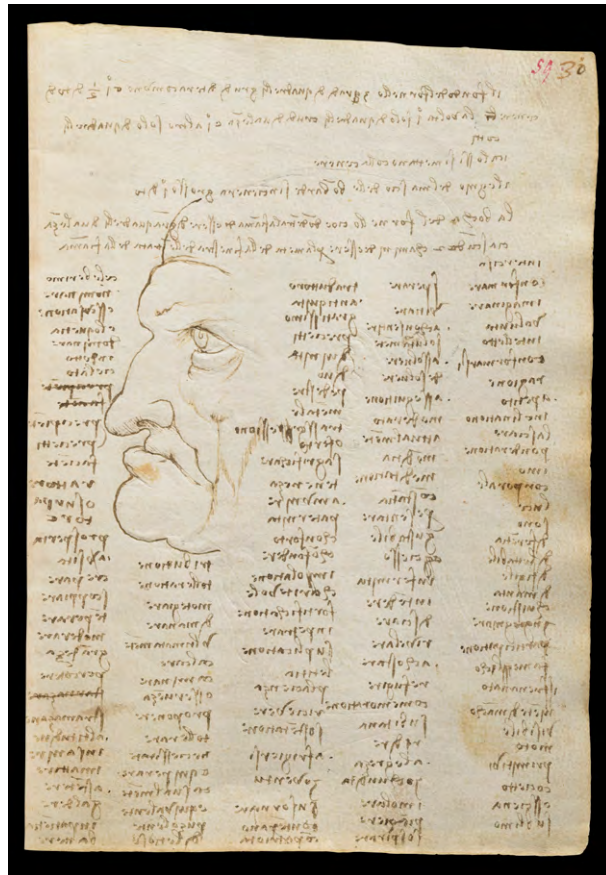
for purposes of conservation, the work is not on display to the public, but can be consulted online

LEONARDO DA VINCI's *Notebook* (Codex Trivulzianus 2162) is a small manuscript on paper that he used between 1487 and 1490, during his first stay in Milan. In it Leonardo (Vinci, Florence 1452 - Amboise, France 1519) made some studies of physiognomy, architectural sketches for the cathedral and other buildings in Milan, diagrams of mechanical instruments and war machines. In addition, on seven pages of the codex there are also drawings by Leonardo traced not in ink but metalpoint, clearly visible when the page is illuminated with a sidelight. In some cases the drawing was then filled in with ink. A distinctive feature of the Codex Trivulzianus is the presence of long lists of words, written by Leonardo's own hand in his characteristic cursive from right to left. These lists document the artist's attempt during his years in Milan to enrich his vocabulary by

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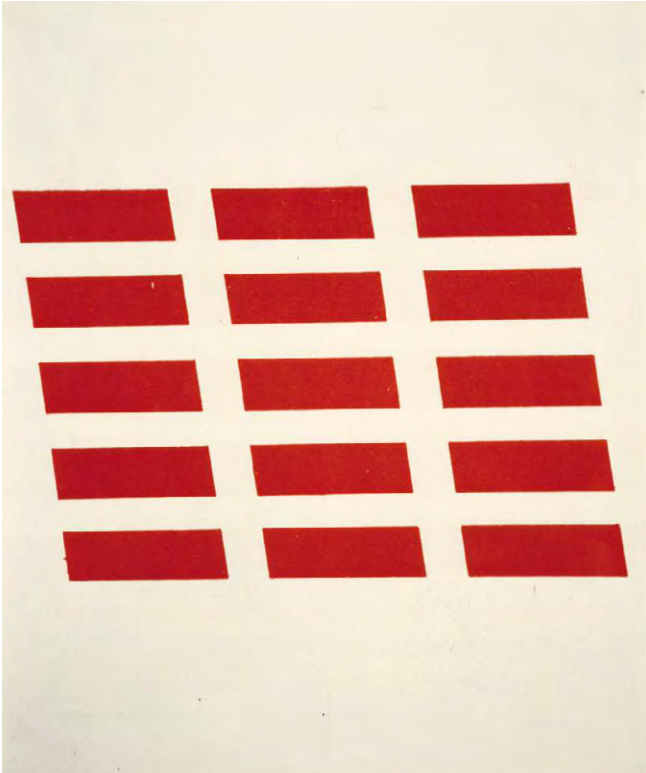


mastering terms derived from Latin, to claim the full scientific dignity of his work and gain fuller access to the writings of humanists and scientists.

After the artist's death, the *Notebook* was bequeathed to his pupil Francesco Melzi. In the late sixteenth century, together with other autograph works by the master, the manuscript came into the possession of the sculptor Pompeo Leoni. In 1632 it was purchased by Count Galeazzo Arconati, who in 1637 donated it to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana. He later took it back in exchange for another Leonardo autograph known as Manuscript D. The traces of the codex are then lost until the mid-eighteenth century, when it became part of the rich Trivulzio collection, which was merged in 1935 into the collections of the Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana in the Castello Sforzesco. ■

The manuscript is not normally exhibited to the public but can be consulted digitally at this website:

<https://graficheincomune.comune.milano.it/GraficheInComune/immagine/Cod.+Triv.+2162+piatto+anteriore>



Roberto Sambonet, *Logo for the Municipal Library of Milan*, 1981, pencil and coloured felt-tip pen on cardstock, 35 × 35 cm

CASVA - CENTRO DI ALTI STUDI SULLE ARTI VISIVE

piazza Castello, Milan | <https://casva.milanocastello.it>

open to the public by appointment only (now nearing completion is restoration of the municipal market in the QT8 district that will host Casva's new premises) for the purposes of conservation, the work is not on display to the public, but can be consulted online

ROBERTO SAMBONET (Vercelli 1924 - Milan 1995), designer and painter, studied at the Faculty of Architecture of the Politecnico di Milano. At the same time, he enrolled in evening courses at the Accademia di Brera. After some years in Brazil, he returned to Milan in 1953, where he worked with La Rinascente department store on displays and graphic and advertising projects. He then created kitchen utensils for the family business, joined in the seventies by projects for brands such as Tiffany, Richard Ginori and Seguso Murano. His notable output won him four Compasso d'Oro awards.

The *Logo for the Municipal Library of Milan* was conceived in 1981 for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the library's transfer from the Castello Sforzesco to Palazzo Sormani. In its geometric restraint, it is intended to recall aligned tables, a fundamental place for study and research in the library. The white and red colours are a tribute to the city's coat of arms. ■



Bernardino Prevedari (engraver),
Donato Bramante (inventor),
Interior of a temple with figures
(Prevedari Engraving), 1481
engraving on paper, 695 × 510 mm

CIVICA RACCOLTA DELLE STAMPE ACHILLE BERTARELLI - CASTELLO SFORZESCO

piazza Castello, Milan | <https://bertarelli.milanocastello.it>

open to the public by appointment only

for the purposes of conservation, the work is not on display to the public, but can be consulted online

DONATO BRAMANTE (Fermignano, Pesaro and Urbino 1444 - Rome 1514) was born in the Duchy of Urbino, where he spent his formative years, specialising as a painter of “perspectives”, meaning an expert in the construction of architectural spaces. He arrived in Lombardy in 1474-1477, being first employed in Bergamo, where he frescoed a series of philosophers on the facade of the Palazzo del Podestà. He then settled in Milan at some date between 1478 and 1480. The first record of his presence in the city is the *Prevedari Engraving*, depicting an ancient temple in ruins, a work dated 1481, after a model designed by Bramante (now lost), engraved with the burin by the goldsmith Bernardo Prevedari.

While in Milan, Bramante continued his work as a painter of perspectives, with works such as the *Men at Arms* (c. 1492), today in Brera, which came from the home of Gaspare Visconti (later Casa Panigarola). He also began to establish his reputation as an architect, a field in which he worked with a spirit of renewal, soon becoming one of the leading figures of the Renaissance, capable of making the classical coexist with the late Gothic decorative tradition. Representative of his work as an architect are the lantern of the cathedral of Milan, the tribune of Santa Maria delle Grazie, the church of Santa Maria presso San Satiro and the cloisters of the basilica of Sant'Ambrogio. Also of fundamental importance was his friendship with Leonardo da Vinci, who had arrived in Milan in 1482. During his time in the city, Bramante was painter, architect, poet, treatise writer and musician, thus fully embodying the Renaissance ideal of the artist as “universal man”. In the late summer of 1499 he left Milan, and in 1500 we find him in Rome, where he worked as an architect on projects such as the Temple of San Pietro in Montorio, St. Peter's Basilica and the Belvedere Courtyard. He died in Rome in April 1514. The engraving made by Bernardino Prevedari, known from only two copies, one in the Civic Collection of Prints Achille Bertarelli and the other in the British Museum, London, reproduces a drawing by Bramante and is one of the earliest records of his arrival from Urbino in Milan, where he would profoundly influence Renaissance architecture in Lombardy.

The work is unique in many respects. It is considered one of the masterpieces of Lombard Renaissance engraving, as well as the largest Italian print made on a single plate in the fifteenth century, it is the earliest engraving in which the term *fecit* appears, as well as the only one known at this date which indicates Milan as the place of execution.

The sheet depicts a very complex architectural composition, in which Bramante synthesised the extensive knowledge he had acquired in central Italy and in the new Lombard context. It contains numerous references to antiquity, to the work of Leon Battista Alberti and Brunelleschi, as well as the Portinari chapel of Foppa, to cite only a few examples.

The artist depicts the interior of a partly ruined building, identified as a pagan temple in which, however, Christian elements appear, such as the monumental candelabrum surmounted by a cross and the religious figures in the foreground. The meaning of the composition has not yet been unanimously clarified by the critics. It might be a representation of the Milanese church of San Giovanni alle Quattro Facce, in Bramante's parish in Via Boito, destroyed in 1786. According to tradition, it was built on the remains of an ancient temple of Janus. In this case the artist might have depicted the origins of the church, associated with the coming of St. Barnabas to Milan, identified with the kneeling figure in the foreground. ■



Studio Ballo+Ballo, “Lettera 22”
portable typewriter (Marcello
Nizzoli for Olivetti, Compasso
d’Oro 1954), 1957, silver bromide
gelatin print, 40 x 30 cm

CIVICO ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO - CASTELLO SFORZESCO

piazza Castello, Milan

<https://archiviofotografico.milanocastello.it>

The Archive of the **STUDIO BALLO+BALLO** was donated in 2022 to the City of Milan’s Civic Photographic Archive by Marirosa Toscani Ballo.

Aldo Ballo (Sciacca, Agrigento 1928 - Milan 1994) and Marirosa Toscani (Milan, 1931-2023), photographers, founded Studio Ballo+Ballo in the early fifties. Marirosa attended the Liceo Artistico di Brera, but since 1949 she had been a photojournalist and worked for her father, Fedele Toscani (1909-1983), a collaborator of Vincenzo Carrese and Publifoto, then owner of the Rotofoto agency. Aldo attended the same secondary school, then the Politecnico di Milano and the Studio di Monte Olimpino, in Como, founded by Marcello Piccardo and Bruno Munari, devoted to experimental cinema. He also worked for Rotofoto, but in 1956, with Marirosa, he abandoned reportage and opened what would become the most important photographic studio for design photography, where organisation, professionalism and competence would take the practice to outstanding levels of excellence.



Studio Ballo+Ballo, "GA 45 POP"
record player (Mario Bellini for
Minerva), 1968, color slide, 18 x
13 cm

Over the years, Studio Ballo became a centre for discussions between artists, architects and designers. Among the many were Bruno Munari, Gae Aulenti, Cini Boeri, Ettore Sottsass, Pier Giacomo and Achille Castiglioni, Enzo Mari and Alessandro Mendini. Aldo and Marirosa Ballo worked with them and for the most important design firms, such as Olivetti, Cassina, Danese, Zanotta, Brionvega, Alessi, Arflex, Bassetti, Barilla, Kartell, Artemide, Tecno, Driade, Borsalino, B&B Italia, Venini, and La Rinascente. Aldo and Marirosa's photographs were published in leading design and furniture magazines, such as "Domus", "Ottagono", "Abitare", and in particular "Casa Vogue", edited by Isa Tutino Vercelloni, which commissioned work from the studio from 1968 to 1992.

In this way Studio Ballo was positioned at the centre of the cultural ferment and the dynamics typical of the development of Italian design, decisively contributing with their images to its international success. This was enshrined in the great exhibition *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* held at the MoMA in New York in 1972 (curated by Emilio Ambasz). The photographs in the catalogue were commissioned from Aldo Ballo. Studio Ballo+Ballo's Archive, comprising 119,456 negatives on film and glass, 60,533 colour slides, 11,852 positive prints, documents and books, is therefore essential to the knowledge and study of the creations of Italian design by designers, architects and artists who chose Milan as the favoured location for their work. ■



Umberto Boccioni, *I Want to Synthesize the Unique Forms of Continuity in Space (Dynamism of a Human Body)*, 1913
graphite, pen and ink, brush and ink, tempera, watercolour on paper, 293 × 230 mm

GABINETTO DEI DISEGNI - CASTELLO SFORZESCO

piazza Castello, Milan | <https://gabinettodeidisegni.milanocastello.it>

open to the public by appointment only

for the purposes of conservation, the work is not on display to the public, but can be consulted online

UMBERTO BOCCIONI (Reggio Calabria 1882 - Verona 1916) spent several years in Padua, then moved to Rome in 1899, where he began his apprenticeship as a poster designer, and enrolled in the Free School of the Nude. In 1902 he met Giacomo Balla, from whom he learned the Divisionist technique. Later he became friends with Gino Severini and Mario Sironi. In 1906 he stayed in Paris, and the following year enrolled at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice. In this period he became dissatisfied with Divisionism, in the quest for a modern artistic language capable of reflecting the themes of the new industrial civilisation.

In 1907 he moved to Milan, where he met Gaetano Previati and became friends with Carlo Carrà and Luigi Russolo. A fundamental event was his encounter with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Futurism. In 1910 he signed the *Manifesto of the Futurist Painters*

and *Futurist Painting. Technical Manifesto*. His early Futurist works were influenced by Previati's Divisionism and Edvard Munch's Expressionism, taking it to an extreme that verged on abstraction. In 1911 he stayed in Paris, where he studied Cubism, but felt it was limited by a static interpretation of reality, as opposed to Futurism, which exalted movement. In 1912 he took part in the European exhibitions of Futurist painters and published the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture*. In it he stated that sculpture must also be based on the search for a "style of movement". From this time on, he continued his research into the representation of dynamism in the media of both painting and sculpture. In 1915 he enlisted with other Futurists in the Lombard Volunteer Cyclists Battalion. In July of the following year he was drafted into the army. He died shortly after this from a fall from a horse.

The Cabinet of Drawings of the Castello Sforzesco preserves one of the richest and most representative collections of Boccioni's graphic works worldwide. It consists of sixty drawings covering the period between 1906 and 1916, the year of his death, so documenting the essential lines of the artist's whole career, before and during Futurism. This drawing is part of a mixed group of Futurist sheets dating from 1913, brought together under the title *Dynamism of a Human Body*, in which the artist continued his research into the concept of dynamism, which would culminate in the theoretical field with the publication of the volume *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* (1914).

Boccioni here wanted to represent the movement of the human figure, starting both from direct observation of the musculature of athletes and sportsmen, and more traditional iconographic allusions. This is shown by the chiasmic pose derived, albeit with some changes, from Myron's *Discobolus*. The result is a synthesis of forms that approaches the plastic-dynamic abstraction of movement, while still preserving some figurative aspects in the representation of the human body, absent from the painting of the same name executed by Boccioni in that year, to which it is related (Museo del Novecento di Milano, inv. CC 859).

In this drawing, created to be exhibited at the artist's solo exhibition of sculpture – therefore conceived as a completed work, not a mere preparatory study – Boccioni used a mixed and stratified technique. He sought a volumetric and compositional synthesis by alternating right angles and curvilinear signs, white tempera backgrounds and parts executed in black ink. ■



Giovanni di Balduccio and workshop, *Sculptural group from Porta Ticinese in Milan (St. Lawrence, St. Ambrose, Virgin and Child, St. Eustorgius, St. Peter Martyr)*, 1340s, sculpted marble

MUSEO D'ARTE ANTICA - CASTELLO SFORZESCO

piazza Castello, Milan | <https://arteantica.milanocastello.it>

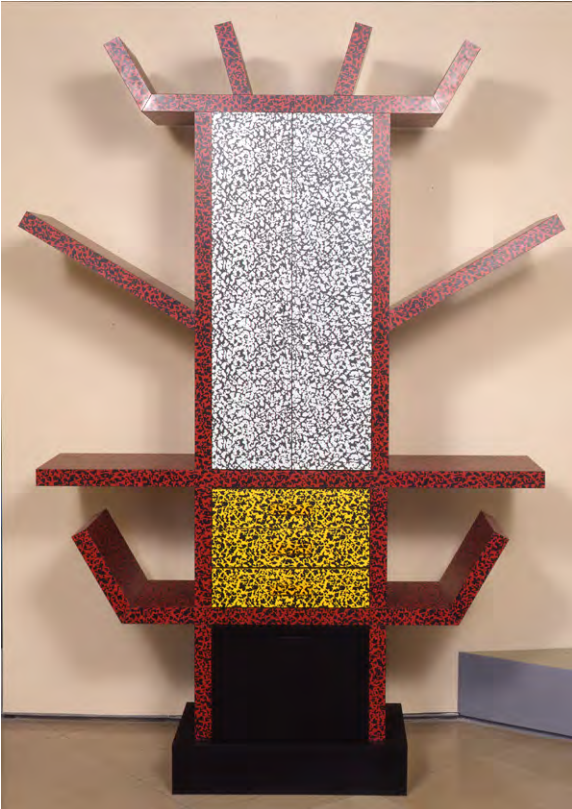
The young **GIOVANNI DI BALDUCCIO** (Pisa between 1295 and 1305 - ? after 1349) trained on the busy worksite of the cathedral in Pisa. He soon made his name with important public and private commissions, then moved in the thirties to Florence and Bologna, where he was commissioned to work on important sites such as the churches of Santa Croce and Orsanmichele and the papal fortress of Bologna. The fame he achieved and his contacts with great artists such as Giotto enabled him to move to Milan by about 1335, where he created sculptural masterpieces that include the ark of St. Peter Martyr in Sant'Eustorgio.

His principal works, however, were made for the Visconti rulers, eager to renew the city's image by using the talents of the two Tuscan masters Giotto and Giovanni di Balduccio. The latter carved three of the six sculptural groups on the city gates, the funerary ark of Azzone Visconti and the various tombs of other members of the family. He was also responsible for the very Tuscan facade, later dismembered, of the church of Santa Maria di Brera. The last recorded traces of his work date from 1349, but critics do not agree that he died soon after this date.

The five sculptures exhibited at the Museum of Ancient Art adorned the Gothic aedicule



above the entrance arches of Porta Ticinese, one of the gates built in Milan's city walls in the thirties, close to the basilica of San Lorenzo and the famous Roman colonnade. The city walls were rebuilt by Azzone Visconti, who was also responsible for assigning Giovanni di Balduccio the task of sculpting the statues of the Virgin and the most representative saints of each *sestriere* or quarter of the city, intended to protect the entrances to Porta Ticinese, Porta Orientale and Porta Romana. Beside the Virgin seated with the Child in the Porta Ticinese group are the city's patron St. Ambrose (who kneels and offers her the simplified model of the *sestriere*), St. Lawrence, St. Eustorgius (titular saint of the two nearby basilicas), and St. Peter Martyr, whose remains were placed in the precious mausoleum completed by Giovanni di Balduccio himself (commissioned by the Dominican Order) in the church of Sant'Eustorgio. This last statue, which comes from the aedicule of Porta Ticinese, is made from three different types of marble and is the masterpiece of the whole group in terms of technical quality and expressive intensity. Since 1958 the five sculptures have been kept in the Museum of Ancient Art in the Castello Sforzesco. Those now on Porta Ticinese are copies sculpted by Francesco Wildt, son of the more famous Adolfo. ■



Ettore Sottsass for Memphis,
Casablanca living room furniture,
1981, Memphis 2003 edition,
decorated plastic laminate

MUSEO DEI MOBILI E DELLE SCULTURE LIGNEE - CASTELLO SFORZESCO

piazza Castello, Milan | <https://museodeimobili.milanocastello.it>

Born in Austria but trained in Turin, **ETTORE SOTTSASS** (Innsbruck 1917 - Milan 2007) moved to Milan after the war and became a leading figure in the renewal of Italian design.

For over twenty years he worked for Olivetti, designing the first Italian electronic calculator, the *Elea 9003*, awarded the Compasso d'Oro in 1959, and numerous typewriters, including the famous red portable *Valentine* (designed in 1968 and put into production in 1969). In 1980 he founded Sottsass associati, which initially devoted itself to interior design and then turned to visual communication and corporate image. He was responsible for the graphics of the magazine "Domus" and worked for Alessi.

He then founded the Italian design and architecture collective Memphis, active in Milan between 1981 and 1987, which presented a new vision of design. It used non-precious materials, such as plastic laminates and furnishings notable for bright colours and original forms, more emotional than functional, transformed into provocative messages for traditional design culture.



Ettore Sottsass for Memphis, *Tartar Table*, 1985, Memphis 2003 edition, decorated plastic laminate

In the Museum of Furniture and Wooden Sculptures in the Castello Sforzesco, four furnishings by Ettore Sottsass are on display, in the itinerary devoted to the Masters of style of the twentieth century (Room 16): the *Casablanca* bookcase and the *Tartar* console, which document the Memphis experience, and two prototypes of a room designed in 2000: the chest of twenty-seven drawers and the round table in steel veneered with wood.

The *Casablanca* bookcase is a furnishing for the living room with exposed and internal shelves. It resembles a totemic sculpture and introduces a playful, ironic, disruptive dimension into the furnishings in contrast with the tradition of Italian furniture. The free use of colour in plastic laminates, with geometric decoration that imitates the veining of marble or wood, arriving at abstraction, with courageous colour combinations characterise both the bookcase and the Tartar multi-level console table. The console is revolutionary in its “decomposed” structure; the decorative inserts, reproducing the motif from which the title of the work is taken, are made to a design by Sottsass himself. With these two pieces of furniture, Sottsass revolutionised the concept of living-room furniture, and in the eighties he launched the New International Style, which contributed to making Milan the capital of design.

The other two pieces of furniture on display document a room designed by Sottsass in 2000, during an exhibition at which he was asked to measure himself against the genius of Carlo Bugatti (1855-1940). The care devoted to the choice of materials and decoration, found in Bugatti’s work, was repeated by the designer with a modern vocabulary a



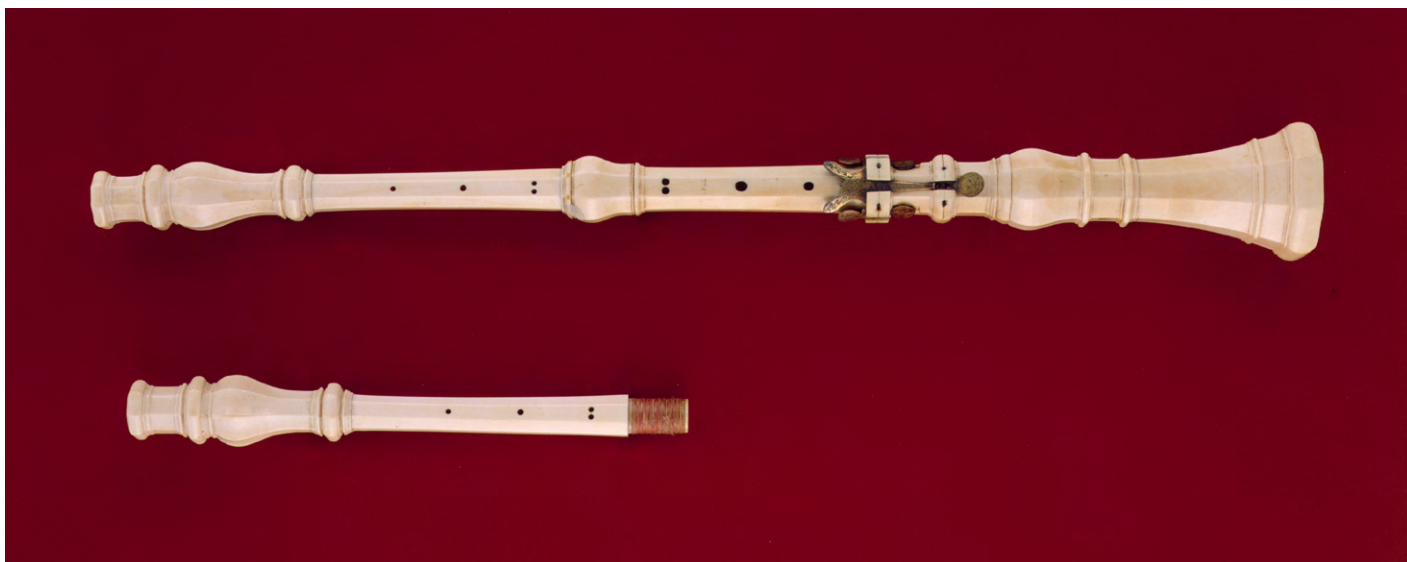
Ettore Sottsass for Memphis, *Round table*, 2000, ebony veneer, steel, gilded metal

Ettore Sottsass for Memphis, *Chest of drawers*, 2000, Scottish maple, lacquered wood

hundred years later. In the contemporary context, where industry has to cope with large-scale demand, and requires products that are easy to adapt to market requirements, so penalising the quality of the object itself, Sottsass responded by enhancing the qualities most closely bound up with craftsmanship.

The round table has a steel top veneered with guariuba wood with a sunburst pattern of fillets of ebony, legs covered in movinguì ondé wood and bases in gilded sheet metal. The dresser is made of Scottish maple, with twenty-seven drawers painted in three colours and lacquered wooden support columns.

Twenty years after his experience in Memphis, in these furnishings Sottsass reasserted Milan's centrality in design with unexpected relations between colour and materials, weight and lightness, abstraction and tradition. ■



Giovanni Maria Anciuti, Oboe with three keys, with spare piece, Milan, 1722, ivory, gilded silver

MUSEO DEGLI STRUMENTI MUSICALI - CASTELLO SFORZESCO

piazza Castello, Milan| <https://strumentimusicali.milanocastello.it>

Until a few years ago there was no biographical information about **GIOVANNI MARIA ANCIUTI** (Forni di Sopra, Udine 1674 - Milan 1744). His surname was believed to be a pseudonym, given that he was a maker of reed instruments (and *ancia* in Italian means “reed”).

It was only in 2008 that some basic information became available, with the publication of the results of research in the archives by Cinzia Meroni, assisted by the organologist Francesco Carreras. We now know that Anciuti, born at Forni di Sopra (a small town in the Friulian Dolomites), went to Venice for a period of apprenticeship to become a maker of wind instruments.

Around the age of 25, he moved to Milan, where he married, and set up his business. An incentive to move to the Lombard capital, where he remained for the rest of his life, may have been the presence of the Milanese Giuseppe Baldassare Sammartini, one of the finest oboists of the time. Anciuti secured an undisputed reputation by his skill in making wind instruments in wood but above all ivory.

The instruments today he is known to have made number about thirty, mainly flutes and oboes. In addition to the instrument in the Museum of Musical Instruments in Milan, two oboes are owned by the Musée de la Musique in Paris and one, formerly belonging to Gioachino Rossini, is exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.



The example in the museum in Milan is considered one of the most remarkable Baroque oboes to have come down to us today by the preciousness of the material, the exceptional skill of its maker and its perfect state of preservation, though ivory is very sensitive to climatic variations, easily subject to deformation and cracking.

The oboe consists of three parts that slot into each other and equipped with a spare part that enables the pitch of the instrument to be varied, having a different length than the one currently mounted. Anciuti was among the first to adopt this system, which was very useful for musicians, and became common only after 1750.

An extremely refined specimen, after turning and drilling, it was worked to obtain an octagonal section, testifying to the remarkable expertise of this maker of wind instruments. As can be deduced from the yellowing of the inner bore and the wear on the area around the finger holes, the instrument has had an intense musical life, clearly being prized not just for its outstanding aesthetic appeal but above all the quality of its sound. Ivory instruments generally have a more pronounced sound than wooden ones and are therefore better suited to performing solo pieces. Among the most famous composers for the oboe from this period are Antonio Vivaldi, Tomaso Albinoni and Johann Sebastian Bach.

The metal keys are probably from a later period. They show no signs of wear and have engraved decorations in Renaissance style representing flowers, a zoomorphic character and the Wind. ■



Unknown artist (production of Cerveteri), *Etruscan amphora with chimera rampant*, 490-480 BC (donation of the Fondazione Lerici, 1957)

CIVICO MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO

corso Magenta 15, Milan | www.museoarcheologicomilano.it

On its main side, the amphora has the image of a chimera painted black with incised details. The monster, with front legs raised, has the body and head of a lion and a goat protome protruding from its back; its tail consists of a coiling snake. Depicted beneath the monster's body appears the shoot of a plant above lotus buds.

The amphora comes from a chamber tomb excavated at Cerveteri on 2 August 1957 by the Lerici Foundation, an advanced institute for geophysical research founded at the Politecnico di Milano of Milan by the engineer Carlo Maurilio Lerici (Verona 1890 - Rome 1981), together with the Institute of Applied Geophysics. Born in Verona to a Venetian mother and Piedmontese father, **CARLO MAURILIO LERICI** grasped the importance of applying to archaeology the geophysical methods usually used for research in geo-mining. In Milan he set up the first institution in Italy to use non-invasive methods of diagnosis for locating and identifying undiscovered archaeological structures.

Between 1957 and 1965 the Foundation conducted important research and excavations in the necropolis of Cerveteri on the invitation of the Superintendency, to recover the archaeological documentation and save it from illegal digs, particularly active in those years. Many of the finds recovered by the Foundation and assigned to it by the Ministry were donated in the engineer's will to the Civic Archaeological Museum in Milan, which therefore possesses finds of exceptional importance from excavations. ■



CIVICO PLANETARIO ULRICO HOEPLI

corso Venezia 57, Milan | www.comune.milano.it/planetario

ULRICO HOEPLI (Tuttwil, Switzerland 1847 - Milan 1935) was born into a family of peasant origin at Tuttwil, Switzerland. He moved to Milan in 1870 and took over a small bookshop in the Galleria De Cristoforis, near Piazza Duomo. He was the founder of the publishing house of the same name, carving out an original market niche in Milan, the capital of Italian publishing, where Treves, Ricordi and Sonzogno were active, among others. He collaborated with the liveliest forces of positivist scientific culture, such as the Istituto Tecnico Superiore (which would become the Politecnico di Milano) and the Brera Astronomical Observatory. In 1929 he donated the Civic Planetarium “to generous Milan”, his “adopted homeland”, and it was inaugurated on 20 May 1930. ■



Francesco Hayez, *Portrait of Matilde Juva Branca*, 1851
oil on canvas, 120 × 94 cm

GAM | GALLERIA D'ARTE MODERNA

via Palestro 16, Milan | www.comune.milano.it/web/gam-galleria-arte-moderna

Born in Venice and trained in Venice and Rome, **FRANCESCO HAYEZ** (Venice 1791 - Milan 1882) moved to Milan in 1822, after the success of his painting *Pietro Rossi*. This introduced a subject from national history into Italian painting and made him the standard-bearer for Romanticism.

A teacher of painting at the Accademia di Brera for almost half a century, he dominated Milan's cultural life, profoundly renewing history painting and portraiture with a recovery of the dazzling Venetian colouring.

The portrait of the opera singer Matilde Juva Branca, exhibited in Brera in 1851 and Paris in 1855, one of the most important and intense portraits of nineteenth-century Italy, is an example of this, inspired by Titian's *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Glove*. ■



Tounsai: atelier di Toun
*Flower vase (usubata) with water
tortoise motif*
Japan, Edo period (1603-1868),
c. 1829-1850/70
bronze (lost-wax casting)
(Giovanni Battista Lucini
Passalacqua Collection, acquired
in 1899)

MUDEC, BIBLIOTECA

via Tortona 56, Milan | www.mudec.it

**The work is exhibited at the Biblioteca del Mudec, open at the following times:
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Thursday 3 p.m.-7 p.m.**

The object was displayed at the Historical Exhibition of Industrial Art in 1874, where it was certainly viewed by the Milanese craftworkers and artists of the time, for whom the exhibition was held. The collection of Count **GIOVANNI BATTISTA LUCINI PASSALACQUA** and the other private Oriental collections presented in the exhibition constituted a relatively early episode of high artistic quality to which the Milanese craftworkers were exposed. This was generated by the intense and widely recognised work of the buyers of silkworm eggs, called *semai*, of Northern Italy, who were also experts on Japanese art objects, comparable to the artefacts that arrived in Paris in the same period, where they gained worldwide recognition at the Universal Exposition of 1867. Enrico Cernuschi, one of the most famous Parisian collectors, and the traveller Count Giovanni Battista Lucini Passalacqua were both clients of Ferdinando Meazza (an important Milanese *semaio*). They built up their own collections in the same period, in 1871 and 1872. These collections, in many ways alike, had contrasting fortunes: Passalacqua was forgotten, but Cernuschi was praised in Paris, populated by artists like Monet. Some Japanese merchants were also present at the 1874 exhibition in Milan, reflecting the close ties between the city and Meiji Japan. A sporadic episode, however, destined to germinate, revisited at the end of the nineteenth century [edited by Anna Antonini, 2024].



The flower vase (usubata) with a motif of water tortoises has a chalice-shaped body with a softly rippled wall on which five cranes 鶴 *tsuru* in flight are modelled in high relief. The full mouth is set in a plate with a broad rim and a vertical border decorated externally with a band with a pattern of 雷文 *raimon* frets, under which appear clouds in the round. The whole is assembled on a base in the shape of stylised waves, within which there are three water tortoises. From the upper plate the vase is identified as 薄端 *usubata* (literally “thin rim”), a model used for the flower ceremony, in particular because of the form 生花 *seika*, in the semi-formal style 行 *gyō*. Vases of the *usubata* genre were produced in quantity in the Bunka-Bunsei period (1804-1830), meeting the favour of Japanese scholars 文人 *bunjin*, who favoured Chinese-inspired forms and decorative motifs attributable to the Nanga current. They were used by the flower arrangement schools Ikenobō 池坊, Enshū 遠州 and Koryū 古流, who appreciated their sophisticated decorations. They were among the objects most often met with by travellers to the country in the first years of the Meiji era (1868-1912), at a time when many families of the military aristocracy, to cope with the difficulties due to the loss of their class privileges, were parting with their possessions on the antiques market. The tortoise, fashioned in an extremely naturalistic way, is the hallmark of the bronze workers of the school of Murata Seimin 村田製珉 (1761-1837), to which the maker of this vase belonged. Information is scarce, but we know that Seimin came from Iwate Prefecture 岩手県, in

Tōhoku 東北, and that he worked in Edo. Today this name is celebrated in the principal museums of Oriental art for having perfected the technique of casting by the lost wax method 蠟型 rōgata. His most famous pupils were Kurihara Teijō 栗原貞乘, his son Senjirō 仙次郎, and Kimura Toun 木村渡雲 (1781-1830?), all active in the first half of the nineteenth century. Toun, whose workshop mark is found on the base and bottom of this bronze, was chosen by the master as his official successor and in 1829 acquired the title of 二代製珉 Nidai Seimin, Seimin II. Senjirō, then too young, only later took the name of Seimin III. For many years in Europe, Toun's fame surpassed that of his master thanks to Edmond de Goncourt, who magnified the perfection of the large globular censer with a dragon coiled around it in the collection of Enrico Cernuschi (Inv. M.C. 2082), which bears the artist's seal. Today the censer is considered a work of his school created in the seventies, at the time of the great universal exhibitions. Though many objects with spurious signatures are circulating, given its size, style and skilled workmanship, it is likely that this vase was produced in Toun's workshop in the second quarter of the nineteenth century [by Pietro Amadini 2013]. ■



Lucio Fontana, *Neon Structure for the 9th Triennale di Milano*, 1951 (2010)
environmental installation,
18 mm diameter crystal tube,
6500°K white neon light, 250 x
1000 x 800 cm (Lucio Fontana
Foundation deposit)

MUSEO DEL NOVECENTO

piazza Duomo 8, Milan | www.museodelnovecento.org

One of the symbolic works of the Museo del Novecento is the *Neon Structure for the 9th Triennale di Milano* by **LUCIO FONTANA** (Rosario di Santa Fe, Argentina 1899 - Comabbio, Varese 1968), which earned the artist the Gran Premio delle Nazioni della Giuria Superiore della Triennale at the 1951 Triennale. The Museo del Novecento exhibits one of its four reconstructions authorised and presented on deposit by the Lucio Fontana Foundation.

The first is kept in the Fontana Foundation; the second, in the Museo del Novecento, replaces one made for the artist's retrospective at Palazzo Reale in 1972; a third, destroyed in 1992, was made for the design exhibition at the Kappa Center in Noviglio; and finally there is a reconstruction of it at the Fundación La Caixa in Barcelona.

The installation was, and still is, composed of dozens of hand-bent segments of neon tube, with an overall length of about 100 meters, suspended by steel cables from a false ceiling originally designed by the architects Luciano Baldessari and Marcello Grisotti. The dark colour of the ceiling contrasts strikingly with the light emanating from the lamps, softening the effect of the ambient lighting and favouring the legibility of the drawn gesture freely articulated in space.

The *Structure* seems to reproduce the luminous trail left by a torch in the dark, shaped through the use of new materials and technologies, such as neon, anticipating

the solutions to the Minimal light structures of the Sixties. Fontana saw light as a fundamental material, in this case exclusive to the work. The artist also experimented with a new relationship with space: both in the Triennale and at the Museo del Novecento the installation is positioned at the top of a flight of stairs. While walking up them, the viewers cease to be passive subjects, becoming co-creators of the space in which they are moving, modifying the perception of the *Structure* with their steps. Although Fontana's first *Spatial Environment* was the *Black Environment*, set up in 1949 at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan, it was with the *Neon Structure for the 9th Triennale di Milano* in 1951 that he effectively embodied the postulates affirmed in his Spatialist manifestos: we arrive at a dematerialisation of art itself, in favour of an "integral" art where colour, sound, movement and space are fused in an ideal unity. The *Neon ambiances* created by the artist are in fact neither sculptures nor paintings, but represent a unique glowing form in space, a "pure airy, universal, suspended image".

In addition to the famous neon, the Museo del Novecento houses many works by Lucio Fontana, such as the equally iconic *Spatial Ceiling*, created in 1956 for the Hotel del Golfo on the Island of Elba and transported in 2010 to the Museo del Novecento for conservation reasons, after being acquired by the State. It is also possible to admire on the fifth floor various *Spatial Concepts*, including the famous *Holes* and *Cuts* or rather the *Waits*, in which the artist experimented with a new idea of spatiality: the physical signs inflicted on the canvas open the work to an infinite dimension of emptiness and space, defining another dimension.

It is not only the works by the great Spatialist artist that can be enjoyed at the Civic Museums. In fact, Fontana has left many traces in the Milanese area, both linked to his early formative period, with the decoration of some tombs in the Monumental Cemetery, still of influenced by Wildt, and associated with his first public commissions, such as the bas-relief of *Justice between the Legislative and Executive Powers* at the Palace of Justice (1938-1939). Most of the works, however, date from the post-war period, after his definitive return to the city from Argentina and the publication of the Spatialist Manifestos, as a result of his fruitful collaboration with the major architects of the time. Examples include the polychrome bas-reliefs in the Menghi and Zanuso office building in Via Senato (1947), his work in the Cinema Arlecchino (1948), the decorative panels for the condominium in Via Lanzzone (1952), and the *Spatial Concept* for the condominium in Via San Zaccaria (1951-1952). Finally, there are his studies for the fifth door of the cathedral (1951-1952), the ceramics of San Fedele (1956-1957) and the *Minerva* at the State University (1956). ■



MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE

corso Venezia 55, Milan | www.museodistorianaturalemilano.it

GIORGIO JAN (Vienna 1791 - Milan 1866), of Hungarian origin, devoted himself from 1812 to the study of the natural sciences, and soon became assistant professor of botany at the museum in Vienna.

After only two years, at the express request of Duchess Marie Louise, he moved to the University of Parma, where he took over the direction of the Botanical Garden and the teaching of botany at the age of only 25. From then on he felt Italian in all respects and devoted himself to botany, entomology and palaeontology.

In 1832 he met the Milanese nobleman Giuseppe De Cristoforis (1803-1837), with whom he established a society for the study and dissemination of the natural sciences. Their combined collections were housed in ten rooms of De Cristoforis' house in Milan and were the original core around which the Civic Museum of Natural History, the city's first museum, developed. It was founded on 7 May 1838, by an agreement with the Municipality of Milan, and was soon transferred to the former Convent of Santa Marta, which no longer exists. The steady growth of the collections prompted the city administration to designate Palazzo Dugnani as its new headquarters, located in the Public Gardens at the side of Via Manin, where it remained until the construction of the new building in Corso Venezia, the museum's present premises.

At the age of sixty-two, Jan began to take an interest in snakes, taking as his motto

Dante's verse "The serpents were my friends from that time forth". He became an authority recognised worldwide and increased the collection from 110 species in 1847 to 940 in 1857, working with an extensive network of scholars around the world, who sent specimens to have them identified.

This enormous amount of material was used for the description of numerous hitherto unknown species and led to the publication of a monumental work on snakes from every part of the world, the *Iconographie générale des Ophidiens*, admirably illustrated by his assistant Ferdinando Sordelli. Unfortunately, Jan did not see the end of his work, published by instalments at his own expense between 1860 and 1881 and completed by Sordelli, since he died in 1866. Few complete copies of the work remain in libraries around the world, but in recent years the museum has issued a reprint edited by Stefano Scali. One copy is in the museum's library, along with a full set of proofs.

The collection remained on public display until August 1943, when a violent Allied air raid destroyed the museum and most of the collections it contained. For many years it was thought that Jan's collection had been completely destroyed, but patient research is now unearthing some specimens that were saved from the fire. A street in the centre of Milan, near Porta Venezia, has been named after Giorgio Jan. ■



Angelo Morbelli
The Refectory of the Old People's Home (The Refectory of the Pio Albergo Trivulzio), 1919
oil on canvas, 51 x 41 cm
signed and dated lower left:
"Morbelli 1919"

PALAZZO MORANDO | COSTUME MODA IMMAGINE

via Sant'Andrea 6, Milan | www.comune.milano.it/web/palazzo-morando

ANGELO MORBELLI (Alessandria 1853 - Milan 1919) arrived in Milan in 1867 on a scholarship from his native town that enabled him to travel and study at the Accademia di Brera, where his important career began. Among Morbelli's works preserved in Palazzo Morando is *The Refectory of the Old People's Home (The Refectory of the Pio Albergo Trivulzio)*.

Aurora Scotti Tosini was responsible for the first exhaustive study of the work for the memorable exhibition on Angelo Morbelli in Turin in 2001. On that occasion, the painting was rightly related to Morbelli's late period and identified with the canvas in the former Museo di Milano.

The refectory that the painter portrays in this 1919 work is that of the old premises of the Pio Albergo Trivulzio in Via della Signora in Milan, abandoned in 1910 after the institute moved to a new building on the road to Baggio. As already pointed out by Scotti, in painting this work, Morbelli used his own photograph of the interior of the refectory. ■



Carlo Canella, *The Battle at Porta Tosa* (22 March 1848)
c. 1848
oil on canvas, 75.5 × 89 cm

PALAZZO MORIGGIA | MUSEO DEL RISORGIMENTO

via Borgonuovo 23, Milan | www.museodelrisorgimento.mi.it

CARLO CANELLA (Verona 1800 - Milan 1879) was born in Verona, where he completed part of his training. The younger brother of Giuseppe Cannella, the best-known landscape painter in Verona in the early nineteenth century, Carlo is numbered among the most sensitive and attentive landscape painters active in the mid-nineteenth century. His early work dates from 1829/1830, with the exhibition in Milan of some oil portraits. First a student then a professor at the Cignaroli Academy in Verona, however, he owed his subsequent fortune to urban *vedute*, often painted in different versions, with the focus on the many details of costume and everyday life animating the scenes. He depicted many lively glimpses of Italian cities, prominent among them Milan, where he moved in 1842. A student at the Accademia di Brera, he was regularly featured in the exhibitions held there, contributing to the trend for urban landscapes in which he was among the leading artists, together with Migliara and Bisi. “*Canella is a painter who is making progress every year,*” we read in a periodical of 1843. “*His views of the Public Gardens and the Bastion of Porta Orientale deserve particular praise for the beautiful and well-distributed touches of colour.*” Entering the soul of a city also means interpreting the most important events in its history

IL GENIO di MILANO

Crocevia delle arti
dalla Fabbrica del Duomo
al Novecento

THE EXHIBITION IN THE CITY

and social development. Canella did this in portraying some views of Milan, in numerous paintings rich in minute details notable for a refined palette. But he not only recorded the city's architectural and urban beauties. He also interpreted and chronicled one of the most intense periods in the city's history in 1848, when the citizens oppressed by Austrian rule rebelled in the squares and streets. This painting is in the collections of Palazzo Moriggia| Museo del Risorgimento, and is one of the most iconic and celebrated depictions of the Five Days of Milan. Its narrative richness and descriptive detail express uniquely and with extraordinary evocative power the idea of the city in those tragic days of siege and struggle for freedom. He represents a cross-section of the rising that made Milan the protagonist of a revolt not only by the common people but also by the middle class and intellectuals, united in a common desire for self-determination. The painting, exhibited in one of the two rooms devoted to the Five Days of Milan, in the museum's permanent layout, ideally opens the chronicle of those events. Through the delicate depictions of the individual figures who animate the scene, in particular the children and young women caught in the foreground, Canella manages to evoke the intensity of the struggle, and every small detail helps create a single, heartfelt general picture. The small hot air balloons, which rose from the besieged city during the "revolution of Milan", to warn the neighbouring areas of the events that were happening within the city's walls, stand out in the sky, a tribute by Canella to the resourcefulness and inventiveness of the Milanese. For the city, 22 March was the most intense of those "days of redemption" with their echoes of Manzoni's ode. The Milanese, led by Luciano Manara, managed to break the encirclement of the Austrian army on the line of the Bastions and forced the Austrian soldiers to retreat. However, the future failed to live up to this promise, and on 6 August 1848 the keys of the city were returned to Field Marshal Radetzky by the then *podestà* Paolo Bassi. ■



Raffaelli Giacomo, *Centrepiece*,
c. 1804
marble, semi-precious stones,
gilded bronze
Deposito Soprintendenza ABAP-
Mi

PALAZZO REALE

piazza Duomo 12, Milan | www.palazzorealemilano.it

The *Centrepiece*, or epergne, of Palazzo Reale is a work by **GIACOMO RAFFAELLI** (Rome 1753 - 1836), a famous Roman mosaicist of the eighteenth century. Representing a Roman circus, the work was commissioned in March 1804 by Francesco Melzi d'Eril, Vice-President of the Republic, to embellish the banquet held in the Sala delle Cariatidi of Palazzo Reale, given by the Viceroy Eugene de Beauharnais in honour of Napoleon Bonaparte for his coronation as King of Italy on 26 May 1805.

The centrepiece is made up of three parts: a long central element of about 9 meters consisting of 13 marble bases and twin elements that were placed at the ends of the main epergne, each 1.60 m long and each consisting of two marble bases. The whole composition extends for a total of 13 meters and consists of 242 pieces.

Giacomo Raffaelli reproduced and combined elements of classical Greco-Roman architecture and sculpture, such as columns and temples, with elements of Egyptian art such as obelisks and sphinxes. There are numerous sculptures on pedestals



depicting classical gods, such as Jupiter in gilded bronze placed in the central aedicule and Diana's chariot drawn by deer.

Neoclassicism, much loved by the new sovereign, meets the eclecticism typical of eighteenth-century Rome in the use of countless materials and colours, such as white Carrara marble, Egyptian porphyry, precious lapis lazuli, malachite and alabaster, combined with metals such as gold and bronze.

All the splendour and magnificence of the Kingdom of Italy, which aspired to the legacy of the Roman Empire, are reflected in the work commissioned by its Vice-President Melzi d'Eril. ■



IL GENIO *di* MILANO

*Crocevia delle arti
dalla Fabbrica del Duomo
al Novecento*

THE EXHIBITION IN THE CITY