

Palazzo Giustiniani, Sala Zuccari
Senate of the Republic
Rome

ECLETTICHE ARMONIE/ECLECTIC HARMONIES

Percorsi Figurativi tra rinnovamenti inizio secolo
e nuove frontiere del realismo al tempo della Costituzione/
Figurative settings from the changes at the beginning of the 20th century
to the new frontiers of realism at the time of the Constitution

devised and curated by Marco Moretti

20 February - 16 March 2018

With the Patronage of the
Senate of the Republic
and
Soffici Museum in Poggio a Caiano

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The exhibition "ECLETTICHE ARMONIE. Percorsi figurativi tra rinnovamenti inizio secolo e nuove frontiere del realismo al tempo della Costituzione/ECLECTIC HARMONIES. Figurative settings from the changes at the beginning of the 20th century to the new frontiers of realism at the time of the Constitution" is devised and curated by **Marco Moretti** with the **patronage of the Senate of the Republic** and the **Soffici Museum in Poggio a Caiano**, with the organisation of **Lotti Art**, Como. On display 55 works, divided in paintings, incisions and drawings. It is open between 20 February and 16 March at **Palazzo Giustiniani, Sala Zuccari, Senate of the Republic, Rome**.

There are twenty-six artists on display, through them together with the support of bibliographic tools – books and magazines - the exhibition offers a figurative layout, starting from the Symbolist aesthetics and the cultural rebirth that set off in Florence in **1903**, continuing throughout the period between the two wars, **up to the birth of the Republic and the Constitution**.

The first section is dedicated to the "birth of modernity", with the coming out of "Leonardo", *rivista d'idee* (magazine of ideas), founded in Florence by the twenty-two year old Giovanni Papini and graphically characterized by the intaglio by **Adolfo De Carolis, Armando Spadini, Giovanni Costetti** and **Ardengo Soffici**. Soffici, still in Paris, provided his contribution as a writer and etcher to the third and last series of the magazine. In addition to the intaglio, there is here the portrait *Gianfalco* made by Costetti in 1902: it is the pseudonym used by Giovanni Papini to sign his work on the magazine. Also, an important painting by Soffici, *La raccolta delle olive/Olive harvesting* made in 1908, a year later his permanent return to Italy after the seven years he had spent in Paris among artistic and literary avant-gardes. In order to remind the visitor of these, one of the three watercolour figures that in 1907 **Picasso** donated to his Italian friend is here on display.

The second section – presented by Emanuele Bardazzi in an essay in the catalogue – is inspired by the modern interest for intaglio, which originated in Florence, thanks to the educational activities promoted by **Celestino Celestini** from Umbria. In addition to him being a very good etcher, Celestini's teaching skills and humanity enabled talents to flourish in his school. The outcomes of the school were presented in the *Prima Mostra di Bianco e Nero/First Exhibition of Black and White* held in Pistoia in 1913. It was a large collection of etchings and xylographs - heterogeneous in contents, forms and expressions. From them one could infer the specific personality of each pupil: **Ottone Rosai, Betto Lotti, Francesco Chiappelli** and **Ferruccio Pasqui**, whose works were displayed next to those by the masters the likes of **Romeo** and **Giovanni Costetti, Adolfo De Carolis** and **Celestini** himself. A graphic choice is at the heart of this section, which also consists of contemporary paintings, such as the portrait by **Costetti** made in 1913 of the poet **Dino Campana**, who thanks to his *Canti Orfici / Orpheus' Odes* gained a leading role in the artistic and literary environment of Florence. In addition, on display there is one of the extremely rare copies of its famous first edition of 1914.

Very interesting is the comparison between the works by **Betto Lotti** and those by **Ottone Rosai**, who - after displaying in the intaglio exhibition in Pistoia - held a group exhibition in November-December 1913 in Florence in via Cavour not far away from the futurist display "Lacerba". The Futurist painters, who were led by Papini, visited their exhibition, encouraging the two young artists.

The late-symbolist environment that was influenced by Mallarmé and Baudelaire's literary works affected the paintings by Lotti and Rosai: the two authors were dear to an elitist group of artists and intellectuals, main visitors of the cultural cafés of the city. On display, by **Lotti** there is the large canvas **Anime/Souls**; by **Rosai**, ***I miei amici della notte/My friends of the night***: these two paintings are once again displayed together 104 years after their shared exhibition.

The third section documents the *return to order* of forms started in 1918 in Rome by the magazine "Valori Plastici/Three-dimensional values" of Mario Broglio. It is a call reaffirmed by **Soffici** in 1920 in "Rete Mediterranea/Mediterranean net" and eight years later in "Periplo dell'arte/ Circumnavigation of art". They conveyed the widespread thoughts that reflected - with some variations – a feeling for clarity, which was called by **Giovanni Costetti** the «innate purity of art».

This section collects 20 paintings by various artists among which there are **Felice Carena**, **Betto Lotti**, **Ottone Rosai**, **Giovanni Colacicchi**, **Ardengo Soffici** and **Lorenzo Viani**, who - with their heterogeneous output as painters and authors - gave life to Florence during the years between the two wars, keeping it as a sort of centre of gravity between Rome and Milan. As is common knowledge, these two cities were quite lively during the years between the two wars: in the capital, the artistic coterie of the "Scuola romana" flourished, brought to life by **Mario Mafai** and his wife **Antonietta Raphaël**. Her portrait made by her husband in 1928 is on display. In Milan, the group "Novecento" was active. A landscape by Arturo Tosi and a portrait by Mario Sironi of the sculptor Giacomo Manzù represent them in the exhibition.

The cultural role of Florence grew also thanks to the flourishing publishing activity by Attilio Vallecchi. As such, the city was the hometown of writers and poets, from Montale to Landolfi, as well as artists like Piedmontese **Felice Carena**, **Giovanni Colacicchi** from Anagni, the Emilian **Costetti** and **Lega**, the Ligurian **Betto Lotti**. Lotti returned after his release from the imprisonment in Austria during which was able to hold an exhibition in Wien. His rekindled activity in Florence (where he also became an art critic and co-director of magazines) focused on a refined creation of *affiches*, interpretative of his own era, for instance *Dame au parapluie/Woman with umbrella* – made in 1925, the 'official' date of the birth of *art deco* -, which became the logo of the exhibition.

The fourth section, which is presented in the catalogue by an essay by Costanza Contu, concludes the exhibition with paintings by **Renato Guttuso**, **Armando Pizzinato**, **Betto Lotti**, **Fernando Farulli**, **Alvaro Cartei** and **Raffaele Leomporri** about the theme of labour, a homage to the 70th year anniversary of the coming into force of the Constitution. In the early years after the war, with free circulation of ideas, many young artists experimented with new figurative interpretations coming from the so-called neo-Cubism of Picasso. Through their works, which later matured along the lines dictated by P.C.I. (Italian Communist Party) inspired by social realism, the work of millions of Italians was effectively documented. They pulled up their sleeves in order to regain their and the country material and moral dignity, which was lost due to the war. Labour was contemplated as a laic and religious faith at the same time; it was idealized as a cogwheel in the emblem of the Republic and sanctioned as foundation of progress from the first article of the Constitution.

A comprehensive catalogue published by Masso delle Fate Edizioni accompanies the exhibition, with critical texts by Emanuele Bardazzi, Costanza Contu and Marco Moretti.

Exhibition details

Title ECLETTICHE ARMONIE. Percorsi figurativi tra rinnovamenti inizio secolo e nuove frontiere del realismo al tempo della Costituzione/ECLECTIC HARMONIES. Figurative settings from the changes at the beginning of the 20th century to the new frontiers of realism at the time of the Constitution.

Curated by Marco Moretti

Venue Palazzo Giustiniani, Sala Zuccari, Senate of the Republic; entrance from Via della Dogana Vecchia 29, Rome

Dates 20 February-16 March 2018

Opening hours Mon-Wed 10am-12:30pm/2pm-6pm. Thurs-Fri 10am-6pm. Saturday and Sunday closed

Entrance fee free entry

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