

Arturo Martini and Florence

edited by Lucia Mannini and Sergio Risaliti

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With all the courage and passion that is needed in this phase of revival, the Museo Novecento confirms its commitment to lending value to its magnificent collection. It is doing so by devoting a highly intelligent exhibition to Arturo Martini, one of the great 20th-century European masters, the creator of a modern sculptural idiom that keeps alive the mystery of art whilst never departing from the figure and some poetic motifs that were very dear to him – expectancy, contemplation, transcendence. We are proud of this research work that has engaged us over the last two years. I would like to thank the curator Lucia Mannini who, together with Eva Fracioli and Stefania Rispoli, has devised a truly original exhibition. Two works attest to this. The first is *Ofelia* (Ophelia), which belonged to the great Florentine composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. The second is a youthful terracotta discovered and attributed to Martini, which was unknown until a few months ago. The museum is a place for training and research that pursues a curatorial approach which is not necessarily spectacular, driven by the necessity or urgency to produce knowledge and a new sensibility. Organized at the same time as the major

retrospective on Henry Moore, another giant of modern and contemporary sculpture, *Arturo Martini and Florence* has arisen from collaboration between the Museo Novecento and the SAGAS Department of University of Florence, part of the *Dall'Aula al Museo* (From the Classroom to the Museum) project launched in 2019 together with Professor Giorgio Bacci. Taking shape from this, in the rooms dedicated to the *Solo* cycle – intended to focus on peculiar and less well-known aspects of the life and practice of leading painters and sculptors of the last century – is an exhibition centring on Martini and his relationship with Florence. The sculptor's brief but intense sojourn in the city in 1931, and his dealings with Roberto Papi, Luigi Bellini and the Contini Bonacossis, led to a joint exhibition of his work and that of Primo Conti at the Galleria Bellini in Palazzo Spini Feroni. It also generated interest in collecting his sculptures, of which there were many traces in Tuscany, an indication of the cultural dynamism of the city at that time, through to the works in the Alberto Della Ragione legacy that are part of the municipal collections. Martini would subsequently return to Tuscany to work with marble in the workshops of Carrara, in another period that once again speaks to us, with the *Donna che nuota sott'acqua* (Woman Swimming Underwater), of new discoveries, with the accompanying enthusiasms and disillusionment.

Sergio Risaliti
Artistic Director of Museo Novecento



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This volume has been published on the occasion of the exhibitions

ARTURO MARTINI AND FLORENCE ARTURO MARTINI AND CARRARA

Museo Novecento

16.07-14.11.2021

Donna che nuota sott'acqua

Museo Novecento

10.09-14.11.2021

Exhibitions promoted by

Comune di Firenze

Artistic direction

Sergio Risaliti

Exhibitions curated by

Lucia Mannini

with Eva Francioli and Stefania Rispoli

Scientific coordination

Francesca Neri – MUS.E

Organization

Luca Puri

Whitin the project *Dall'aula al museo*, in collaboration with

Dipartimento SAGAS - Università degli Studi di Firenze

Created by

Giorgio Bacci and Sergio Risaliti

Communication and education department

MUS.E

Giulia Spissu

Press office

Costanza Savelloni

Elisa Di Lupo, Comune di Firenze

Lea Codognato and Caterina Briganti, Davis & Co.

Visual identity

Concept: FRUSH design studio

Realization: Dania Menafra

Texts

Eva Francioli, Jacopo Manara, Lucia Mannini, Margherita Scheggi,
Valentina Torrigiani

Translations

NTL – Il Nuovo Traduttore Letterario S.c.

Photographs

Serge Domingie

Condition report

Silvia Fiaschi

Insurance

AGE Assicurazioni Gestioni Enti S.r.l.

Handling and artworks preparation

Arternativa S.r.l.

Room renovation

Matteo Calviani, Alessio Tirinnanzi

Graphic prints on display

SSD Lab

Lighting installation

Vannetti Andrea S.r.l.

Video installation

Avuelle S.r.l.

Security

REAR Società Cooperativa

ARTURO MARTINI AND FLORENCE

Edited by

Lucia Mannini and Sergio Risaliti

Editorial Coordination

Eva Francioli, Francesca Neri – MUS.E
Lisa Masolini

Publisher

Gli Ori, Pistoia

Book design

Gli Ori Redazione

Credits

Archivio Fotografico della Fondazione Cariverona (pp. 66-67)
© Archivio Ilario Bessi (pp. 85, 239, 241)
Alberto Bortoluzzi, 2006 © FAI – Fondo Ambiente Italiano (p. 33)
Serge Domingie (pp. 2-11, 16-19, 23-31, 34-45, 59-65, 117, 150, 287-325)
Fototeca Musei Civici Fiorentini (pp. 13, 15, 144, 155, 191)
Fulvio Rosso (p. 187)
Gabriele Toso fotografo – Padova (p. 21)

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Thanks to

Dario Nardella, *Mayor of Florence*
Tommaso Sacchi, *Deputy-Mayor for Culture, Fashion, Design and International Relations of Florence*
Matteo Spanò, *President of MUS.E*
Andrea Zorzi, *Director of SAGAS Department at the University of Florence*

The lenders

Archivio Contemporaneo "A. Bonsanti", Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario
G.P. Viesusseux
FAI – Fondo Ambiente Italiano
Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Verona, Vicenza, Belluno e Ancona
Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia – Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro
Fondazione Primo Conti Onlus
Marc e Greg Castelnuovo-Tedesco
Fabio Copercini e Andreino Giuseppin
Roberto Dulio e Andrea Penna
Mario Luca Giusti
Giacomo Lorello
And all the private lenders who wished to remain anonymous

Also thanks to

Veronica Ambrosoli, Francesca Banchelli, Bocci Bargellini, Andrea Batistini, Emanuele Becheri, Luca Bellingeri, Rossella Benvenuti, Maria Chiara Berni, Daniele Bertini, Andrea Bianchi, Alberto Boralevi, Lucia Borromeo, Marcellino Caloi, Davide Cammi, Mariella Carlotti, Giovanna Carotti, Diana Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Dennis Cecchin, Matteo Ceriana, Laura Chimenti, Monica Consoli, Giovanni De Santis, Fabio Desideri, Massimiliano Fabbri, Gabriella Farsi, Roberto Gabucci, Lorenzo Galli, Diego Gomiero, Giulia Gomiero, Emanuele Greco, Giovanna Lambroni, Annalia Lodovici, Ilaria Lodovici, Gloria Manghetti, Peter Marangoni, Ferruccio Marri Caciotti, Lisa Masolini, Monica Minghetti, Dania Moschetta, Eleonora Negri, Antonella Nesi, Antonella Nicola, Francesca Nicoli, Dominique Papi, Leonardo Papi, Cecilia Pappaiani, Silvia Penna, Elena Pontiggia, Mauro Pratesi, Susanna Ragionieri, Barbara Rapaccini, Alberto Recami, Sofia Rinaldi, Marta Ruffatto, Paolo Sani, Carlo Sisi, Nico Stringa, Aurora Totaro, Chiara Toti, Chiara Useli, Giovanna Uzzani, Lorenzo Valloriani, Valentina Zucchi

A special thanks to

Leo France
Fondazione Ambron e Castiglioni



Notes

Fonts

Gill Sans

Papers

Fedrigoni Arena Smooth White

Fedrigoni Symbol Tatami

Fedrigoni Sirio Pearl

© 2021

for the edition Gli Ori

for the texts the authors

for the text by Elena Pontiggia, Abscondita, Milan

ISBN 978-88-7336-859-5

www.gliori.it

Printed in September 2021 by Baroni e Gori, Prato