

Maggiore gam new venue in *Paris*

208 Boulevard Saint Germain,
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Gio Ponti

La maison à l'italienne

Giorgio Morandi, Massimo Campigli, Fausto Melotti

à découvrir les oeuvres de:
Gio Ponti, Lisa Ponti, Salvatore Licitra

in collaboration with **Gio Ponti Archives**

Majolica adornment
by Gio Ponti


Ceramica di Vietri
**FRANCESCO
DE MAIO**

galleria
d'**a**rte
maggiore

The idea for this exhibition, curated by **Alessia Calarota** and organised in collaboration with the **Gio Ponti Archives**, originates from the first editorial by **Gio Ponti** for the magazine *Domus* in 1928, with the emblematic title "**The Italian Home**", which summarized Ponti's **ideal of encapsulating in a single project Italian architecture, Italian craftsmanship and manufacturing, Italian industry, and Italian art**. In the same issue, in a later article, he specifies: *«Art, architecture, design must merge to create an environment capable of offering, not so much comfort understood in its mechanical application of dimensional standards, guaranteeing minimal living space, but rather the necessary comfort to nourish the soul of modern man, as taught by the Italian classical tradition»*.

Indeed, reading his words, one is led to think of a Renaissance vision of existence reinterpreted in a contemporary key, but then again, is not the Renaissance a wholly Italian movement? Perhaps Gio Ponti wants to suggest that this vision is the right path to pursue even in the present, perhaps accompanied by contemporary authors who, in some cases, owe their international fame to him. A practical realization of this ideal of the "Italian Home" is **Villa Planchart** in Caracas, Venezuela, realized by Gio Ponti between 1953-1957.



Perhaps Gio Ponti in 1928 did not imagine that he would realize his project with the creation and realization of Villa Planchart in Caracas (1953-1957) for Armando and Amala Planchart, enlightened clients who entrusted Gio Ponti not only with the creation of the architectural building—where references to the Pirelli Tower, which Ponti was working on in Milan during the same period, are visible—but also with the choice of interior design and the art collection. It is precisely from Ponti's architecture, Italian design, and Italian art chosen by Gio Ponti for Villa Planchart that this exhibition begins to present the Italian artists chosen and with whom Gio Ponti loved to work, almost a summation of Italian art of the period.

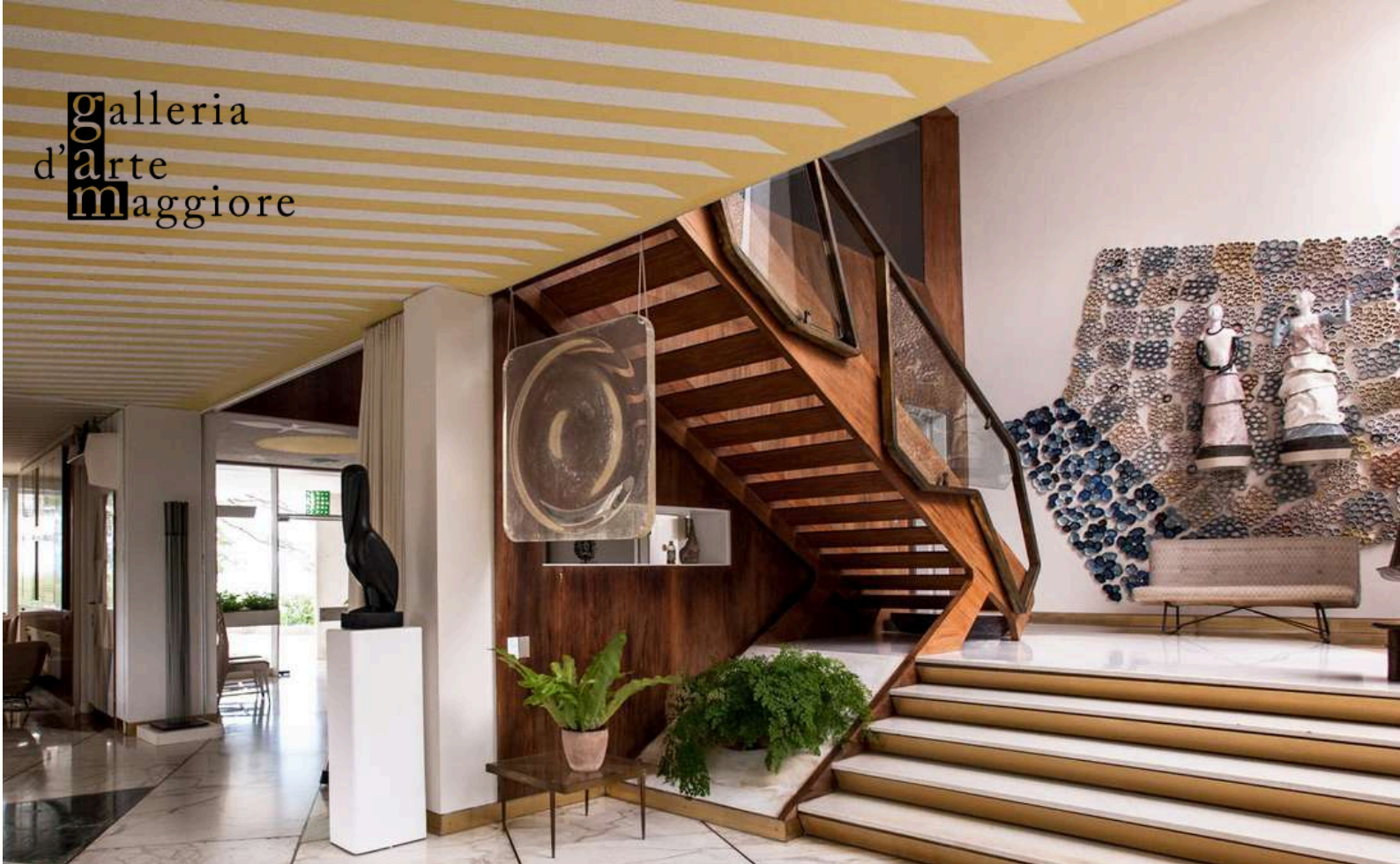


Fausto Melotti
Cerchi, 1960



Fausto Melotti
Angelo, 1954

The protagonists of the exhibition are the three Italians included and desired by Ponti within the Planchart art collection: **Giorgio Morandi**, **Fausto Melotti**, and **Massimo Campigli**. To complete the exhibition, there will also be a series of works on paper by **Gio Ponti**, **Lisa Ponti**, and **Salvatore Licitra**.



If in Villa Planchart from the furnishing point of view, Ponti involved the best of Italian craftsmanship, with iconic design pieces made by Cassina, FontanaArte, Venini, Richard Ginori, integrating it with some personal ceramic creations made with the assistance of the cooperative in Imola, from an artistic point of view, Ponti reveals his great preparation towards Italian art, of which he himself is a promoter in the world. For the Villa Planchart collection, it is as if Ponti sheds the role of the architect, lover, and collector of art, to don that of the curator, a role to which he was not averse since he was also responsible for the discovery of some great talents, as in

the case of **Fausto Melotti**, present with several works and installations within the villa, alongside the already highly acclaimed **Giorgio Morandi** and **Massimo Campigli**. It is precisely with the latter that the great friendship is known, which will lead Campigli himself, not only to create a portrait of the Ponti family but also to the only example of integration between art and architecture realized by Gio Ponti. It is surprising what he writes about this in 1957, the year in which the construction of Villa Planchart, begun in 1953, ends, and states: «*We talk about the unity of the arts: we want painting and sculpture to contribute to architecture in a 'unity of the arts'*»



(unity understood as union: union understood as assumption). It's difficult for this to happen in the generation of a work of art, except in cases of ideal friendship between architect and painter: thus I conceived the atrium of the Faculty of Letters in Padua for the walls frescoed by Campigli (Campigli is one of the few who have the vocation to collaborate exactly with (some) architects: he is perfect). Did this collaboration take place in the past? It only happened that architecture hosted painting» (Love Architecture. Architecture is a crystal, publisher Vitali and Ghianda, Genoa 1957). Referring to Campigli, his daughter, Lisa Ponti, speaks of a "figurative abstraction" to which Gio Ponti himself was attracted in these figures of vase/women triangles. There is also great admiration for Giorgio Morandi, of whom he says:



Massimo Campigli
Medaglioni, 1962

«Morandi rejects the present. He paints having no era [...] Few painters engage in the present, in the drama of the present: they save art from the present, preventing it from becoming contaminated by it: even if they are (Campigli) figurative, what they portray is only the abstraction of a figure» (Love Architecture. Architecture is a crystal, publisher Vitali and Ghianda, Genoa 1957).



Ponti often invited Roberto Longhi to write about Morandi's work in *Domus* magazine from the early issues. Then, over the years, he continued to admire this solitary painter whom he often put in the spotlight in his constructions.

Also the connection with **Fausto Melotti** was very close. In the exhibition there is a series of iconic brass sculptures (all unique pieces) and a series of ceramic works such as the rare "*Cerchi*" (1960) and a bas-relief "*Angelo*" (1954) from the same period of the works created for Villa Planchart. Many times Gio Ponti invited Melotti to create some site-specific artworks some example are: Hotel Parco dei Principi in Sorrento (1960), Villa Namazee in Theran (1960), the Alitalia Office in New York (1960). The presence in the exhibition of such prestigious works is due to the direct connection between the **Melotti Foundation** and the **Galleria d'Arte Maggiore gam**, today one of its official channels.