



Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche – Fondazione

www.micfaenza.org

Quotation from ART. 2 of the Museum Statute

AIMS and ACTIVITIES

1) The Foundation aims to provide for:

- * the preservation, promotion and valorization of the cultural and historical heritage of ceramic art, at a national and international level;
- * the development of all relevant activities related to the valorization of the historical heritage, including the organization of education and training initiatives, of research and restoration in the ceramic field, and of publications through appropriate editorial means;
- * the development of activities which promote ceramic culture and art, including the collaboration with public and private partnerships;
- * the promotion of economic interests through specific cultural, Museum and exhibition initiatives;
- * the search for resources to purchase works of art in order to enrich and increase the collections, and to increase the heritage on display in the Museum;
- * to valorize the synergy between the historical tradition of ceramics in Faenza and current production capability.

Candidature of the Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza

The International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza is now a modern place devoted to preservation and promotion of the most ancient art of man: ceramics. It was founded in 1908, following a far-sighted and ambitious project and was completely destroyed by the air raids in 1944. From that tragedy the Museum like a Phoenix rose again from its ashes, taking advantages of the passion and competence of the Director who, step by step laid the foundation for the present museum that represents one of the outstanding museums in the world. From that moment on the events characterizing the life of the museum were devoted to develop and strengthen the international relations in order to promote the form of art that is mainly linked to the story of mankind. A form of art that join people, that helps different and far away civilizations to come in contact in a constructive way, that facilitates cultural exchanges among continents, that testify the creativity of the greatest masters of the history of art. In particular Picasso who devoted the ceramic work "the Peace Dove", to the Museum to celebrate the rebirth after the war.

The Museum exhibition halls show the comparison and meeting among cultures of any time and place. It is testified by the presence of collections coming from Syria, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, South America, for the most part described by didactic panels and videos that attract the visitors allowing them to admire ceramics in a passionate way and to feel part of the history and civilization which produced that works. The artefacts, sometimes very ancient, that offer the possibility to know customs and life styles of population from all the continents, let people charmed and, at the same time, help them to make considerations about the cultural diversities and richness. It is a unique exemplar in the world thanks to the masterpieces of the Italian renaissance, works by Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Leger, Burri, Fontana and other great works of art. The MIC is a privileged site for the preservation of the ceramic cultural heritage, it is relevant to remember the assertion of the General Assembly of United Nations in the "Declaration for a culture of peace" (1999): - *the education, of any level, constitutes one of the principal instruments to build a culture of peace.*

The Museum

The MIC founded by Gaetano Ballardini in 1908 represents a reference point for ancient, modern and contemporary ceramics in Italy and throughout the world. In the museum exhibition halls ceramic productions from all the ages and continents are represented: from ancient pieces found in Mesopotamia dated back to 5th millennium B.C. up to the production of contemporary great masters such as Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Fontana e Burri. The ceramic collections have been enriched considerably up to nowadays, and they are a unique example in the world concerning the number of works, their variety and extraordinary quality. Some ceramic pieces were acquired but for the most part they are fruit of generous and far-sighted donations by from Institutions, private persons, collectors and artists. The most remarkable donations came from Picasso, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall and Fernand Leger immediately after the Second World War, they were followed by the great donations by Galeazzo Cora and Angiolo Fanfani. The historical artistic patrimony of the Museum groups about 60.000 pieces.

The important process of transformation concerns also the widening of the exhibition halls, it aims at a rational and ideal presentation of the works to the public. A great energy was used to facilitate the visit at the collections; didactic devices such as videos, panels with Italian and English texts, images, signs indicating the tour and pictures are necessary for a space of about 15.000 squared meters included in a suggestive frame. Following the Statute of the Museum approved by Royal Decree in 1912 that cites "*collecting and showing systematically the Italian and foreign ceramic production that results to be interesting for its artistic, technical and traditional value*", the museum has always maintained the primary role of center for documentation of the ceramic world.

A short tour among ceramic art

The Italian archaic works, the treasures from the Renaissance, the collection of the “white” of Faenza, ceramics which joined the name of Faenza to the word majolica all over the world, and the impressive collection of Italian ceramics from 17th, 19th, and 19th century, testify the whole history of the Italian ceramic tradition as deeply as any other museum.

The outstanding and numerous works of art, in the **20th Century Italian Section**, testify the relevance of ceramics in the world of the contemporary art. Italy and Faenza in particular, have been extremely important for the history of modern and contemporary ceramics and in this section it is possible to see a wide range of works by artists who expressed, and in some cases are still expressing, their poetics through ceramics: from the Art Nouveau splendours to the contemporary sculptures. Surprising progresses are expressed by the works of Arturo Martini, Gio Ponti, Tullio D’Albissola, Angelo Biancini, Nanni Valentini, Lucio Fontana, Carlo Zauli, and many others.

Beside that, the **20th century international sculpture** collection testifies the extraordinary liveliness of ceramics. Most of the works has come to the MIC thanks to the prestigious Faenza Prize, since 1938, and to the donations of important personalities who considered the MIC a point of reference for the international ceramics.

The **European collection from the 16th to the 20th century** is a documentation of the main European centres of ceramic production from 16th to 20th century, exposed following the ceramic materials (majolica, stoneware, cream-ware and porcelain), to facilitate the relations and comparisons among the countries, through their excellences and unique works. Starting point are the Spanish lusterwares, followed by the fancy white and blue “chinoiserie” from Delft, until the utmost innovations of the 17th century: the porcelain and the cream-ware. The 20th century European collection is devoted to important manufactures, unique exemplars are the ceramics from the Weimar Republic. Noteworthy are the ceramic experiences by Picasso and his peers Chagall, Léger and Matisse, whose creations anticipate, from a conceptual point of view, the poetics of the modern and contemporary international sculpture.

The historical international context is represented by the **Great Civilizations**, in particular the treasures from the Far East (**China, Japan, Thailand**), about 400 works, representing the main centres of ceramic production, taken to the West world through the “Porcelain route” from the Marco Polo’s age to the epoch of the East India Company, thanks to which European potters came in contact, appreciated and imitated the artistic-technical qualities of the far Eastern potters. The collection includes a group of contemporary Korean works.

The **Pre-Columbian art** is represented by very rare ceramics coming from the Mesoamerican, Caribbean, Intermediate, Amazonian, Peruvian, South-Andean and Pampas areas. This ceramic production represents different archaeological cultures all associated to the word “Pre-Columbian” even if they are different each other.

The ceramic collection offers an overview of the ancient Islamic world production, represented through the enchanting Persian lusterware of Selgiuchide epoch, the decorative richness of the Fatimide Egypt and the Syrian-Egyptian production of Ayyùbide and Mameluch epoch, until the ceramic Iznik fancy creation and the Spanish Moorish vessel. An exposition of more than 1000 fragments, displayed in 64 drawers, completes the collection.

The Library

Among the objectives of the Museum cited in the 1912 statute is that of "collecting publications in order to offer researchers bibliographic material of critiques, history, art, and ceramic technology". The specialised Library was created as a result of this and over the years continued to expand its book and documentary patrimony consistently, until 1944, when it suffered an abrupt halt due to bombing and the consequent destruction during the Second World War. The Library was reconstructed after the war, around 4,000 volumes and booklets were recovered and there were many generous donations which enriched the collection. The flourish in ceramic studies over the last twenty years and a constant policy of change and acquisition have increased the Library's patrimony to about **60,000 volumes** and thousands of magazines of which 200 are current and are part of a library exchange with specialist institutions. The Library offers a service to the public of consultation and scientific assistance for publications and research.

The Review Faenza

the review *Faenza* has been published since 1913: it is a repertoire of historical studies about ceramic art and also contains didactic essays. It is a fundamental contribution for studios, scholars and people fond of ceramics. The review is managed by a scientific Committee whose members secure the high level of the contents and face the increasing request of the scientific community. The review is diffused on the internet through the web- site of the MIC

The Photographic Archives

It is a fundamental support tool for researchers, it dates back to 1927 when Ballardini set up the Ceramic Photographic Archive in order to provide a photographic record of ceramic works held in public and private collections all over the world. It groups 26.000 images. Beside the Archives, a Photographic Laboratory is active to update all the images of the collections in the Museum

The "Playing with ceramics" laboratory and educational programs

Fundamental for its didactic role is the "Playing with ceramics" laboratory which was created in 1979 by Bruno Munari, with the specific aim of furnishing children with an informed understanding of the Museum works, through taking part in manual activities. Nurseries, Primary Schools and Middle Schools from around Faenza converge on the laboratory, even including participation in special courses by Italian and foreign teachers and ceramicists. The aim of the didactic laboratory is to make the Museum accessible through recreational, manual and exploratory activities in ceramic materials. Working with the creative capacities of children creates a greater understanding of their abilities, stimulates their attention and

develops socialisation. Alongside the work of the laboratory there are also didactic activities in the exhibition areas. The creative idea for the activities is always taken from the objects in the collection: from the world of mythology to the mysteries from pre-Columbian culture, from the narrative decorations in jugs, pots, dishes and flasks, to researching the most bizarre objects for creating a story.

The Restoration and Catalogue Section

The MIC Restoration Laboratory through specific technical competences deals with the conservation of the Museum works and offers its activity to private and public customers. The laboratory organises specialised courses and training including "Diagnostics for the conservation and restoration of ceramic materials", "Restoration of ceramic materials in architecture", "Organisation and running of collections" and various periodical meetings on the themes of restoration and conservation of ceramic works.

The laboratory has a cataloguing and computerization office dealing with the specifications of the works in collaboration with the Emilia Romagna Cultural Heritage Institute which has made the SAMIRA system available to the Museum to respect the new cataloguing standards.

The Faenza Prize

The International Ceramic Art Competition – Faenza Prize was created in 1932 at a regional level by the Faenza Museum and the patronage of E.N.A.P.I. (National Small Business Association); it did not begin as an autonomous event, it was inserted in a collection of various trade-show promotional initiatives, which Faenza had organised for several years under the title of "Faenza Week". It originated from the Faenza ceramic tradition and followed the fundamental principle of the Museum Statute to "arrange international exhibitions and magazines interesting from the point of view of art, technique and practical use" as well as "arranging international competitions for the production of ceramics relating to art and technique". In 1938 the Competition became national, in 1963 it became international. It took place annually until 1987, bi-annually from 1989 until today. The event has always been an important moment for valorisation, renewal and promotion of ceramics, both relating to the artistic and decorative aspect and also functional and furnishing aspects. The same event has also stimulated complex research, not only aesthetic, regarding experiences in the sector of clay technology, enamel, firing borrowed from industry and involving the same industry in return during the design of items and tiles. Many Italian artists have taken part in the Faenza Competition, for example: Angelo Biancini, Guido Gambone, Leoncillo Leonardi, Pietro Melandri, Carlo Zauli; and also foreign artists such as Eduard Chapallaz and Sueharu Fukami who have not only made the history of ceramics in the 20th century but also the history of sculpture and painting, with significant aspects in the realm of experimentation and fusion between various materials, not exclusively ceramics.

European Projects

In the field of European programs the International Museum of Ceramics has been working actively for many years in collaboration with the main Institutes and Museums in Europe. The projects "Ceramics –

Culture – Innovation” , followed by **“People and Potteries – a cultural heritage in Europe”** and **Ceramics and its Dimensions** testify the continuity in the panning of ceramic cultural activities involving many European countries. This programs allowed the MIC to realize movies of interviews to people who were active in the world of ceramics at different level showing a very important human component, travelling exhibitions devoted to the protagonists of ceramics and to the masterpieces coming from well-known European manufactures, data-base devoted to the historical sources of ceramic productions and ceramics in architecture, educational programs and many other activities promoting the world of ceramics.

The ceramics from the Mediterranean and Balkan area were promoted through the project **“Cooperation among ceramic sites part of the Adriatic Region for developing cataloguing, preservation, management and communication of ceramics – Adriatic Ceramic System S.C.A.”** part of the INTERREG Program.

The **International Relations** of the Museum started with the foundation of the Museum itself. The first Director, Gaetano Ballardini, understood the necessity to come in contact with the most important international institutes linked to ceramics. In the Thirties the MIC received the donation of ancient Islamic ceramics from the Scholar Fredrik Robert Martin from Stockholm, a group of works of great scientific value representing a great range of decorations and techniques testifying a millenarian culture. Many generous philanthropists have been continuously enriching the MIC collections, great examples are Paolo Mereghi, Galeazzo Cora and Angiolo Fanfani. In the Eighties the significant Pre-Columbian collection was acquired, it was then integrated and enriched during the years. The international relations have the aim to create an active role of the MIC in the world of ceramics, to promote the activities and the cultural projects among the principal protagonists of the ceramic field.

In 2001 the Town Administration constituted the Foundation in order to give the Museum a wide autonomy in the management. Thanks to this decision the Museum, for the first time, includes in the management private institutions, following a politics of cultural investments. It opens the road to enterprises and new perspective for research, communication strategies, relations with the territory and local community. The Foundation follows the **“managing models”** foreseen by the State Law n. 231 of 2001, that actuates the directory of European Community. In the latest years the visitors of the museum have been increasing constantly and the Museum obtained the certification of **“high quality museum”**, a mark given by the Institute for the Cultural Heritage in Emilia Romagna region. It means that the MIC own all the necessary characteristics for a good management, a successful activity in order to offer high quality services to the public. The international relevance of the MIC, its history deeply linked to a town which joins its name with ceramics itself, the great exhibitions, the meetings, the events devoted to several forms of art, allowed it to be part of the sites selected by UNESCO as place of peace with the acknowledgement **“MIC expression of ceramic art in the world”**.

IL DIRETTORE
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