

FAUSTO MELOTTI: COUNTERPOINT

16 January – 7 April 2019

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, London, N1

www.estorickcollection.com @Estorick

Press View: 5-6pm, Tuesday 15 January 2019

Private View: 6-8.30pm, Tuesday 15 January 2019



The harmonious and delicately-poised work of Fausto Melotti (1901-1986) is revered in Italy, yet surprisingly little-known in the UK. Informed by the languages of music and mathematics, his artistic activity spanned sculpture, ceramics and two-dimensional imagery. Organized in collaboration with Milan's Fondazione Fausto Melotti, the exhibition includes key works from his entire career, from the 1930s until the 1980s, and is the first institutional show of Melotti's work in the UK. It reveals an Italian master whose imagery is not only infused with a sense of precision, but also a spirit of poetry, playfulness and exuberance. *Fausto Melotti: Counterpoint* opens at London's Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art on 16 January and runs until 7 April 2019.

Born in Rovereto, Melotti initially studied physics and mathematics at the University of Pisa before graduating in electrical engineering from Milan Polytechnic in 1924. At this time, he also studied the piano and sculpture, enrolling at the Accademia di Brera in 1928. There, Melotti met Lucio Fontana who became a lifelong friend. By 1935, Melotti's cousin Carlo Belli had published his treatise *Kn* – a volume famously described by Kandinsky as "the Gospel of abstract art" – and Melotti joined the Abstraction-Création movement. That year he took part in an exhibition of abstract art in Turin, followed by a solo show at Milan's influential Galleria del Milione, displaying works largely inspired by the mathematical principles of musical counterpoint. The exhibition brought him little success, and for a time Melotti worked on figurative pieces and bas-reliefs for public buildings such as Marcello

Piacentini's Palazzo della Giustizia (1937-39), as well as for the Esposizione Universale di Roma (EUR), planned for 1942.

During the post-war period, he won several awards for his ceramics; in 1967 he exhibited a number of new sculptures and began to achieve the success that had eluded him earlier in his career. Unlike his solid, geometric pre-war sculptures, these pieces were delicate, incorporating wire and cloth.

Melotti died in 1986, and that year the 42nd Venice Biennale posthumously awarded him the Leone d'Oro prize.

Notes to Editors

About the Estorick Collection

The Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art is internationally renowned for its core of Futurist works. It comprises some 120 paintings, drawings, watercolours, prints and sculptures by many of the most prominent Italian artists of the modernist era. There are six galleries, two of which are used for temporary exhibitions. Since opening in 1998, the Estorick has established a reputation and gained critical acclaim as a key venue for bringing Italian art to the British public.

Listings Information

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 39a Canonbury Square, London N1 2AN

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www.estorickcollection.com

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Opening Hours

Wednesdays-Saturdays 11.00-18.00, Sundays 12.00-17.00

Closed Mondays & Tuesdays

Admission: £7.50, Concs £5.50

Includes entry to exhibition and permanent collection

Transport: Tube/Rail: Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line / London Overground / Great Northern); Essex Road (Great Northern)

Images

Left: Fausto Melotti, *La coscienza inquieta (The Uneasy Conscience)* 1973, brass and mirror, 88 x 57.5 x 33 cm
Right: Fausto Melotti, *Senza titolo (Untitled)* 1955, tempera, pastel and burn marks on paper, 25 x 33.5 cm

Both works:

© Fondazione Fausto Melotti, Milan

Courtesy Fondazione Fausto Melotti and Hauser & Wirth

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