

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'arte  
maggiore

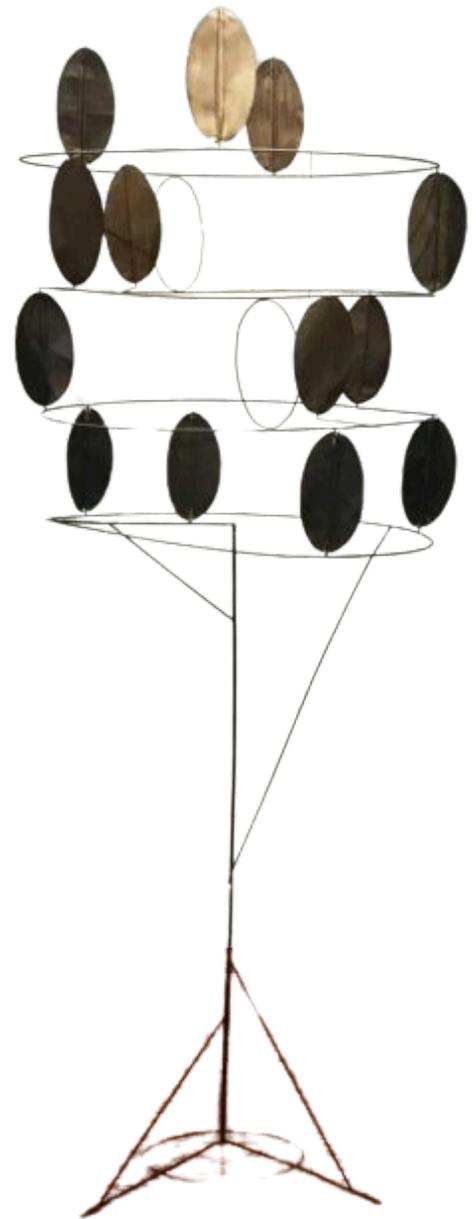
The idea for this exhibition, curated by **Alessia Calarota** and in collaboration with the **Gio Ponti Archives**, originates from the first editorial by **Gio Ponti** for the magazine *Domus* in 1928, with the emblematic title "**The Italian Home**", which summarized Ponti's **ideal of encapsulating 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



Fausto Melotti

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 the only example of integration between art and architecture realized by Gio Ponti. It is surprising how 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).*



*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). In the past, did this collaboration take place? 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: «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 invites Roberto Longhi to write about Morandi's work in Domus magazine from the early issues, and his admiration for this solitary painter, whom he continues to admire over the years and whom he will include with still lifes and landscapes in various houses where Ponti's advice is sought, is great.*



Also the relationship with **Fausto Melotti** is very close. Melotti is present in the exhibition not only with a series of iconic brass sculptures (all unique pieces), but also with a series of ceramic works including the rare "*Cerchi*" (from the 1960s) and a bas-relief "*Angelo*" from 1954 and therefore contemporary with Villa Planchart. Both works recall the site-specific creations realised by Melotti for the Venezuelan villa. Such a prestigious presence of works in the exhibition is due to the direct relationship between the **Melotti Foundation** and the Galleria d'Arte Maggiore, today one of its official channels. Gio Ponti was Melotti's great talent scout who invited him to work for Richard Ginori and who, given his talent, called him on several occasions to collaborate with his works created specifically for the various architectures he designed.

