

## SANDRO CHIA SIGN AND MATTER

13 January – 28 February 2025

*Opening reception  
Thursday 23 January 2025*

*In an explosion of colors, lines that tell stories, and shapes that chase each other across glossy surfaces, the **Galleria d'Arte Maggiore g.a.m.** is hosting a solo exhibition by **Sandro Chia** at its Paris location. Chia is one of the leading figures of **Transavanguardia**, a movement born in the 1980s in New York from a group of Italian artists aiming to revive figuration and narration—key characteristics of Italian art history and tradition. In Chia's case, figure and narrative unfold not only in painting but also in sculpture, mosaic, and ceramics. In this context, the Galleria Maggiore presents alongside some majestic painted canvases a selection of works created for Chia's important solo exhibition at the **Museo Internazionale della Ceramica in Faenza (2011)** - realized with the contribution of Maggiore g.a.m. - where painting and ceramics blend into a poetic continuum.*

*As Chia himself states, "Ceramics are the celebration of the surface [...] then I asked myself: how does ceramic appear when it is not looked at? This may be the true motive of the work undertaken." A series of artworks in which material creation and narrative sign merge to shape the work itself, becoming intrinsic elements of art. According to Chia, "one must resort to art to satisfy an urgent vital need."*

Sandro Chia's artistic production is vast and rich in references, memories and allusions, both high and low and at the same time of continuous contradictions. His extraordinary ability to bring everything onto the same level elevates and reshapes the elements within his works, narrowing the gap between high and popular culture. The result is a wide-ranging iconographic repertoire that draws as much from the ancient as the modern. The large canvases on display dense with vibrant and intense colors, accommodate imposing figures and offer themselves to the viewer's gaze as a cohesive whole, deeply rooted in the Italian golden tradition. Captivating and illustrative titles complement the work itself. From canvas to ceramics, Chia's sign is transferred. The selection of ceramics in this exhibition, made on the occasion of the major show *Sandro Chia: Ceramics vs Drawing 1:0* at the Museo Internazionale della Ceramica in Faenza in 2011 - made possible thanks to the contribution of Galleria Maggiore - highlights how painting is inserted not only on the surface, but integrates into the work itself. This is evident in works like the Cornici (*Frames*), where the artwork consists of both the ceramic frame and the paper it holds: drawings narrating stories of people and places. The Master's artistic journey is thus retraced, allowing further reflection on how the crossing of avant-gardes, hinted at by the term *Transavanguardia*,

indicates also an openness to experimentation that utilizes any language suited to the expressive need, giving rise to an eclecticism that is not only stylistic but also technical. *Frames, globes, and books* in ceramics emerge, shaped by Chia in an old laboratory - Bottega d'Arte Ceramica Gatti - in the Italian traditional city for ceramic: Faenza - supported by Galleria d'Arte Maggiore g.a.m.

Sandro Chia was born in Florence in 1946, where he studied at the Art Institute and the Academy of Fine Arts. During the 1970s, his work increasingly distanced itself from conceptual art which was gaining prominence at the time, in favor of the rediscovery of pictorial language, garnering growing attention from Italian and European critics. He lived for two decades in New York, and during his career, he exhibited at the Paris and São Paulo Bienniales and several times at the **Venice Biennale**. His most significant solo exhibitions include those at the **Stedelijk Museum** in Amsterdam in 1983, the **Metropolitan Museum** in New York and the **Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris** in 1984, and the **Nationalgalerie** in Berlin in 1984 and 1992, among others. In 2009, he participated in the **Italian Pavilion** at the 53rd Venice Biennale, and in 2003, the Italian State acquired three of his works for the permanent collection of the **Senate of the Republic at Palazzo Madama**.