galleria
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Memory of matter

Giorgio Morandi, Magritte, Arman, Bertozzi & Casoni, Leoncillo, Mimmo Paladino, Franz Kline, Luigi Ontani, Sandro Chia, Fernand Léger, Louise Nevelson, Giorgio de Chirico, Massimo Campigli, Giulio Turcato, Zoran Music, César, Louis Cane, Mattia Moreni

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BOLOGNA | Via d'Azeglio 15

Galleria d'Arte Maggiore g.a.m. *presents "**Memory of matter**" at its venue in Bologna, a new exhibition dedicated to ceramics, a material as ancient as human history and one of the earliest forms through which human artistic expression manifested itself. The exhibition unfolds through a selection of ceramic works created by artists who, in different historical periods and with different sensibilities, have explored the potential of this material, alongside a series of historical works on paper, retracing the many expressive possibilities of ceramics and highlighting unexpected dialogues and correspondences between artists, generations and artistic languages. Maggiore g.a.m.'s interest in ceramics and terracotta has also been consolidated through its decade-long collaboration with the **MIC – Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche di Faenza,** during which the gallery has invited various artists on numerous occasions to experiment with and engage with this material, promoting exhibitions and institutional projects that have also received international recognition.*

Ceramics, a material capable of withstanding fire and enduring the passage of time, yet also characterised by profound fragility, takes centre stage in an exhibition that explores its versatility and its ability to assume ever-changing forms and meanings.

An essential starting point is the dialogue between **Fernand Léger** and **Louise Nevelson**: united by a sensibility towards the fragmentation of form rooted in Cubism, they engage in a comparison between ceramics and painting. Léger addresses the debate between abstraction and realism, central to modernist thought, through a solution that combines volumetric forms with flattened surfaces. This artistic investigation finds a correspondence in Nevelson's sculptures, where the composition and organisation of volumes generate a similar dialogue between solids and voids. This connection also recalls the exhibition that Galleria Maggiore g.a.m. dedicated to the artist in 1996, precisely at the MIC – Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche di Faenza.

Also characterised by figurative beginnings influenced by Cubism is **Leoncillo**, an artist of great relevance today and one of the most important sculptors of twentieth-century Italy, who has once again come into the international spotlight thanks to a series of exhibitions from New York to Milan. Leoncillo's distinctive imprint is represented in the exhibition by a ceramic work and several material-based drawings, which bear witness to the moment of profound crisis and transformation experienced by the artist when, in the late 1950s, he gradually abandoned the realist tradition to embark on an abstract investigation in which matter became the absolute protagonist and a vehicle of expression.

Matter resonates with memories also in the dialogue between **Arman** and **César**, both associated with the *Nouveau Réalisme* movement. Arman shared a profound friendship with Franco and Roberta Calarota, and with their support he created extraordinary works over a period extending from the 1994 exhibition at the MIC in Faenza to the large monument dedicated to Ferrari in 1999. Even though they adopt different artistic languages, the two artists both investigate the expressive

possibilities of matter: Arman through accumulation, while César works with compression. These are two distinct approaches which, despite originating from different gestures and processes, share the desire to reinterpret their own work in the wake of the Italian tradition associated with ceramics.

Another comparison unfolds between **Franz Kline** and **Mimmo Paladino**, artists far apart in terms of both period and artistic languages, yet united by a profound interest for the material dimension. Kline's work, particularly significant as one of the earliest examples of abstraction anticipating his celebrated black-and-white painting period, enters into dialogue with Paladino's *Disco*, in a comparison involving gesture, form and the physical presence of matter. Paladino, who has always been drawn to a narrative that brings together tradition and the peoples of the Mediterranean, is currently the focus of renewed attention also for his artistic and civic commitment: Pope Leo XIV recently walked through his *Porta d'Europa*, a monumental work which, since 2008, has welcomed visitors and shipwreck survivors on the island of Lampedusa. It is a monument commemorating the thousands of people who cross the Mediterranean in an attempt to reach Europe. Paladino has also had an important relationship with the MIC, where he has been featured in exhibitions and projects, including the 2012 exhibition.

The exhibition then moves towards a Pop dimension, with a work by **Giulio Turcato**, a materic collage made with sand and oil, which enters into dialogue with the Neo-Pop language of **Bertozzi & Casoni**. Masters of *vanitas* and *memento mori*, the two artists made their debut in the early 1980s at the gallery's Bologna premises, which over the years has devoted important exhibitions and projects to them, including the recent 2025 exhibition at its venue in Paris, dedicated to the vases created as a tribute to Morandi for the exhibition held at the museum bearing his name in 2022. Their works invite viewers to pause over the most hidden details, to be surprised by unexpected elements and to discover the infinite expressive possibilities of ceramics, a medium capable of conveying an extraordinary richness of forms and meanings.

Another important Italian dialogue is that between the works on paper by **Giorgio Morandi** and the table sculpture by **Luigi Ontani**, created specifically as a tribute to the Bolognese artist. Morandi is a figure in whose work time seems to stand still: an artist who never allowed himself to be influenced by passing fashions and trends, remaining faithful to his own investigation of still lifes and landscapes. This consistency runs throughout his entire oeuvre, despite a period in the early twentieth century associated with Metaphysical painting and influenced by De Chirico's teachings. It is precisely this period that Ontani's sculpture pays tribute to, weaving together references to the Metaphysical period of the Bolognese artist in a dialogue between generations.

The exhibition continues into the secondary room, where the investigations of different artists intertwine, many of whom have been featured in recent exhibitions and projects organised by the gallery – **Louis Cane, Giorgio de Chirico, Massimo Campigli, Mattia Moreni, Zoran Music, Mimmo Paladino, Sissi and Sandro Chia** – engaging in dialogue through historical works on paper and ceramic works, in a comparison that brings different periods and sensibilities into relation, broadening the panorama of artistic languages and interpretations of matter. *Memory of Matter* thus becomes an opportunity to rediscover ceramics not merely as a technique and a tradition, but as a field of experimentation and exchange, capable of traversing periods, movements and artistic languages while maintaining its expressive power intact.