

Calder & Melotti
Children of the Sky
11 October – 30 November 2013



Alexander Calder with his work *Teodelapio*, 1962, in Spoleto



Fausto Melotti, *Insonnia*, 1964

Ronchini Gallery is proud to present *Calder & Melotti: Children of the Sky*, 11 October - 30 November 2013, in collaboration with Museo Carandente Palazzo Collicola, Spoleto, Italy, curated by Director Gianluca Marziani. The exhibition features works by American artist Alexander Calder (1898-1976) and his Italian contemporary, Fausto Melotti (1901-1986). It tells the stories of two artists who took inspiration from the city of Spoleto and Italian cultural life in the post-War period.

This scholarly exhibition – including loans from private European collections and Museo Carandente Palazzo Collicola – is a rare opportunity to view many works which have never been publicly exhibited in the UK. While these artists were separated geographically, their respective bodies of work share many technical and aesthetic sympathies. Both artists employed a lyrical expressiveness in the often stolid medium of constructed metal sculpture. Influenced by both the Surrealists and Constructivists, Calder and Melotti were each attracted to working with iron and malleable alloys, using these materials to represent the balance of opposing forces. Both men were trained in engineering before turning to art and were interested in music and dance. Melotti trained as a pianist and often discussed his works in musical terms. Calder often collaborated with composers and choreographers. In their works, the precision of the engineer combines with a musician's sense of rhythm, balance and play.

Calder's relationship with Spoleto began when he visited in 1958 to oversee the construction of sets he had designed for a ballet. He was later commissioned by the Italian cultural figure Giovanni Carandente¹ to make a sculpture for the Spoleto Festival. In 1962 Calder created one his most notorious works, *Teodelapio*, a monumental steel 'stable' sculpture which arches the main roundabout in Spoleto. This was the first stabile ever made by Calder. When the exhibition closed, Calder donated the work to Spoleto and it became the first non-traditional

¹ Giovanni Carandente (1920 - 2009) was a leading Italian cultural figure, curator, journalist and art historian. He organised various exhibitions around the world and from 1988 to 1992 was Director of the Venice Biennale. Carandente had a close relationship with Spoleto lasting over fifty years and organised multiple exhibitions relating to public arts festivals in Spoleto.

monument erected in an Italian square in the 20th century. This work opened a new chapter in his life as a sculptor and during his later years, he primarily concentrated his efforts on large-scale commissioned works. Urban stables were subsequently made for many places throughout the world including Mexico City, Montreal, Detroit, Berlin, Paris and New York.

Lorenzo Ronchini describes his relationship with Spoleto:

'My father used to take me to Spoleto as a child and the city has always brought to mind creative, cultural and innovative artistic ideas. The amount of international culture packed into this small Umbrian town is impressive and many international artists such as Sol Le Witt and Henry Moore have also worked there. The art I saw and culture I experienced in Spoleto remains with me to this day so I am delighted to be working with the Spoleto Museum to bring a selection of works from their permanent collection to London.'

Ronchini Gallery will be showing the maquette of *Teodelapio* created in 1962 in painted aluminium. The sculptures and paintings on view range from the 1960s to the 1970s. Among the works in the exhibition are Calder's signature standing mobiles from the late 1960's created in metal painted red, yellow and white. The gallery will present paintings including *Soleil et étoile noire*, 1967, a bold and arresting gouache on card work with a blazing orange sun rising out from behind a black star. Also on view is *Octopus*, 1964, and *Ostrich and Orange Man*, 1975, both gouache on paper works that demonstrate Calder's use of dramatic movement and energy. A selection of freestanding wire sculptures will be included in the exhibition. Among them is *Dancer, Headless Man Attacking a Woman, Dancer*, 1967, *Spider*, 1965 and *Portrait of Giovanni Carandente*, 1967. Calder's wire sculptures of this period tended to be portraits, caricatures, and stylized representations of people and animals. As his work developed, he created a place for wire sculpture in art history.



Alexander Calder, *Soleil et étoile noire*, 1967, gouache on card, 61 x 80 cm



Alexander Calder, *Red, Yellow, White, Standing Mobile*, 1967, painted metal, 33 x 44 x 36 cm

For Fausto Melotti, Spoleto was a city about dialectical confrontation, a driving force behind informal debate and new plastic expressions of sculptural language. He had a volatile start to his relationship with the city's cultural scene when Carandente did not invite him to participate in the "Sculture nella città" exhibition in 1962. Carandente famously regretted this decision and his subsequently organised events in Spoleto included Melotti alongside Calder and other international artists. Carandente, Spoleto and Melotti forged increasingly strong links as time went on. Calder and Melotti met in Spoleto and on occasions spoke to each other, but they both remained firm in their independence as sculptors and never sought any kind of collaboration despite the strong parallels in their oeuvres. Melotti's sculpture *Insonnia*, 1964 will be on display—a work which is associated with the famous *Teatrini* miniature theatres for which the artist is renowned. It was donated by Giovanni Carandente to the Spoleto

museum. Other works on view by Melotti include sculptures that helped to establish his reputation as one of Italy's foremost modern sculptors.

About the artists

Alexander Calder is one of the most acclaimed and influential American sculptors of the 20th century. Major retrospectives of his work have been held across the world at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (1964); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1964); Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris (1965); the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France (1969); and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1976).

Fausto Melotti first came to prominence in Italy in the years prior to World War II. He earned the Premio Rembrandt award from the Goethe Foundation in 1973 and the Feltrinelli award for sculpture in 1976. Retrospectives of his work have been held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Hornu (2004); the Institute Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt (2000); and the Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan (1987).

About Ronchini Gallery

Ronchini Gallery is a contemporary art gallery founded by Lorenzo Ronchini in 1992 in Umbria, Italy, which relocated to Mayfair, London in February 2012. The gallery aesthetic is defined by Minimalism, Spatialism, Conceptualism and Arte Povera and it retains an unblinking future-focus on progressive movements whilst remembering the past. Its exhibitions have explored pioneering movements across a broad spectrum of contemporary artistic practice. Working with acclaimed curators and scholars from across the world, the gallery provides a rigorous context in which its artists can be viewed. The gallery has recently begun working with an international group of younger artists including Adrien Broom, Jacob Hashimoto, Adeline de Monseignat, Berndnaut Smilde and Rebecca Ward. It is also actively involved in the secondary market and has become known for presenting critically acclaimed curated exhibitions that explore the work of modern and contemporary artists who are part of the gallery's history. These artists include Alexander Calder, Mario Schifano, Alighero Boetti, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Enrico Castellani. In 2012, Ronchini Gallery announced its exclusive representation of the Conrad Marca-Relli Archive and mounted the renowned American Abstract Expressionist's first UK solo exhibition curated by David Anfam and Kenneth Baker. It aims to discover and rediscover exceptional artists and through its secondary market programme Ronchini Gallery's objective is to inspire the next generation of young artists. Paterfamilias Adriano Ronchini was an early supporter of artists such as Alighiero Boetti, Daniel Buren, Joseph Kosuth, Frank Stella and Michelangelo Pistoletto and collected their work throughout the seventies; Ronchini Gallery evolved from these years of private collecting. The gallery maintains a successful publishing arm, which produces exhibition catalogues, monographs, critical texts and artist's books.

Exhibition Facts: Calder & Melotti: Children of the Sky

Exhibition Dates: 11 October – 30 November 2013

Opening Reception: 10 October 2013, 6 - 8pm

Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 10am–6pm, Saturday 11am – 5pm

Location: 22 Dering Street, London, W1S 1AN

Tel: +44 (0)20 7629 9188

Website: www.ronchinigallery.com

For press information and images please contact:

Sophie da Gama Campos or Aimee George at Pelham Communications

Tel: +44 (0)20 8969 3959

Email: sophie@pelhamcommunications.com or aimee@pelhamcommunications.com