



FAUSTO MELOTTI

20 November – 20 December 2013

This autumn Waddington Custot Galleries will devote a comprehensive solo show to the Italian artist Fausto Melotti (1901–1986). Featuring almost 30 works, the exhibition spans 40 years of artistic production, from his early terracotta figures, such as *Diavolo (Devil)*, c.1945, to his later works in brass, including *Carro delle illusioni (Wagon of illusions)*, 1984.

Fausto Melotti is known for his ceramic works and his lyrical and intricate brass sculptures, which he often combined with pieces of fabric, paper and cardboard. His early education in Florence introduced him to the art of the Renaissance which had a profound effect on him throughout his life. He was also greatly influenced by music and his studies in engineering. Melotti was a leading member of the group of Milanese abstract artists which included his lifelong friend Lucio Fontana (1899–1968).

In response to the Second World War, and like many of his contemporaries, Melotti began working in a more figurative and humanist style. Works produced at this time – such as the small ceramic stage sets like *Teatrino (Little theatre)*, c.1950 – display a greater sense of narrative compared to his earlier output; their fatalistic melancholy would endure in Melotti's later work. Like the city squares of Giorgio de Chirico's 'metaphysical paintings', Melotti's little theatres urge the viewer to bring narrative fragments to life and form a coherent performance.

Fausto Melotti (b. 1901, Rovereto, Italy; d. 1986, Milan, Italy) was educated in Florence and went on to complete a degree in electronic engineering in Milan. In 1928 he studied sculpture at Brera Academy, Milan, where he met Lucio Fontana. Melotti's first exhibition was held at the Galleria del Milione in Milan in 1935. In 1951 he was awarded the Grand Prix at the Milan Triennale. Shortly after his death in 1986, Melotti was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale. Solo exhibitions were held at Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund (1971), Marlborough Gallery, Zurich (1973), Palazzo Reale, Milan (1979) and Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome (1983). Since his death, his work has continued to be shown worldwide, including retrospectives at Kodama Gallery, Osaka (1990) and Paolo Baldacci Gallery, New York (1994). More recent exhibitions of Melotti works have taken place at Musée des Arts Contemporains at Grand Hornu, Belgium (2004) and Waddington Galleries, London (2006). In 2013, the exhibition 'Klee-Melotti' was held at the Museo d'Arte Lugano.

A fully illustrated catalogue with an introduction by Martin Filler will accompany the exhibition.

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Monday to Friday: 10am - 6pm
Saturday: 10am - 1:30pm

Images: Fausto Melotti, *Teatrino (Little theatre)*, c. 1950; *Il magazzino delle idee (The warehouse of ideas)*, 1960; and *Proscenio (Proscenium)*, 1975. © Archivio Fausto Melotti, Milan; photography by Daniele De Lonti, Milan. Courtesy of Waddington Custot Galleries, London

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