

The New Bronze Age (Rome, 22-23 Feb 23)

Rome, Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Feb 22-23, 2023

Deadline: Dec 15, 2022

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Prof. Paolo Coen, University of Teramo

The New Bronze Age: Artistic foundries in Italy after the Unification (1861-1915). A heritage of art, business and technology.

The conference aims to stimulate reflection on the topic through various types of critical orientation and by encouraging interdisciplinary approaches. One may refer to history of art or history of archaeology and thus, among other things, analyzing the linguistic-formal, iconographic, material and technical aspects of monuments and/or other metal artefacts from Italian foundries, as well as the commissioning, collecting, market, public and criticism - including the consideration and evaluation of individual artists - or finally the fruition, possibly through the mechanism of the museum. The same theme gives way to an urban and architectural interpretation. Where, how, by whom and on what grounds were the products of Italian foundries placed, from large bronze monuments to street furniture? Were there several criteria, or just one? These are just some of the possible questions. A considerable room is given to history and economic history. Some questions posed are the following: what weight did Italian foundries add to the overall economic framework of the Kingdom of Italy and/or to the iron and steel sector? Or to the new industrial districts that were just making their way, in Milan as well as in and around Verona? A third question, important among other things for 'material history' or the history of domestic consumption, focuses on the fashion for bronze objects: did this fashion, recorded in France from at least 1830-1840, find a counterpart in post-unification Italy, possibly on the basis of evidence from inventories of goods? The component of technology also had its dimension and specific weight. Compared to the previous master foundrymen, who were rooted in a centuries-old workshop tradition, Italian bronze entrepreneurs took a considerable step forward, leading to confrontation between art and the industrial revolution, which in Italy at that time was more alive than ever. This technological step forward was often echoed in promotional publications, in chronicles or in the motivations for prizes awarded in various competitions.

The theme of communication is also important. Since their appearance, monuments from Italian art foundries were subject to written descriptions and reviews, as well as reproductions, both lithographic and in photographs. Magazine series such as 'Emporium' or 'Arte Italiana Decorativa e Industriale' or 'L'Illustrazione italiana' spoke very clearly in this respect. Understanding which subjects were most represented or even the instruments, recipients and objectives of communication could certainly broaden our knowledge of the phenomenon and lead to unexpected results.

Call for Papers Topics

1. The relationship between artists and founders: languages, dynamics and tools in the production process
2. Italian magazines and their role in promoting and communicating the products of artistic foundries
3. Original bronzes, reproductions and serial products, from ancient times to contemporary age
4. The participation of Italian foundries in universal, national and/or local exhibitions
5. The material and immaterial memory of artistic foundries: issues of protection and enhancement, inside and outside the Museum
6. From Italy to the rest of the world: geography and geology of exports of men and art objects
7. Art market issues: agents, intermediaries and distributors
8. From the workshop to the design cycle: professional and artistic training
9. From the spoon to the city: micro architecture and large infrastructures connected to bronze/metal
10. The state of the art: sources and archives
11. The demand for artistic bronzes: value and economic cycle; public demand and private demand; demand for industrial production purposes and demand for final consumption of artistic or ornamental products
12. The artistic bronze foundry enterprise and its networks in the territory: quantitative and social analysis; contribution to income of the iron and steel sector; quantitative consistency and types (artisan or industrial enterprises); geographical concentration of capital, etc.
13. The effects of trade policies on the foundry sector: from laissez faire to national protection measures in the 19th century
14. Social history of the liberal bourgeoisie: the entry of bronzes into homes as a symbol of social identity; aesthetics of the new bourgeois cities; legacy and consequences in the 20th century

Call for paper drafting and deadline

Each proposal must consist of two parts: the abstract of the paper (maximum length: 400 words); the profile of the speaker (maximum length: 800 words), highlighting his/her CV and current professional position. The two parts must be included in a single Word or PDF file.

The file must be sent by 15 December 2022 to the following email addresses:

fonderieitaliane1861.1915@gmail.com (main address) and
pcoen@unite.it (Cc).

Organizing Committee

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CFP: The New Bronze Age (Rome, 22-23 Feb 23). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 29, 2022 (accessed Apr 18, 2024),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/37915>>.