



PRESS RELEASE

"faccia a faccia"

by Mario Ceroli

curated by Gianfranco Maraniello

MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

21 December 2012 – 1 April 2013

From 21 December 2012 to 1 April 2013 **MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna** presents the exhibition **"faccia a faccia" by Mario Ceroli**, paying tribute to the internationally renowned sculptor, a leading member of the new generation of artists that in the early sixties initiated on the Italian scene a unique season of change in the course taken by the language of art.

The wide-ranging anthological exhibition, curated by Gianfranco Maraniello, retraces the entire creative career of the artist, who was born in Abruzzi and has made Rome his home. It presents a representative survey of his **inexhaustible inventive gift** for experimentation with material and exploration of a conceptual universe that makes constant reference to the tradition of art history.

The **47 works** on display at MAMbo include some of his most famous large-scale environmental installations, as well as **new works** presented specially on this occasion.

The artist has conceived the exhibition as a single project, sculptural and architectural at the same time. Turning on its head the principle underpinning his celebrated work-environment of 1966, **Cassa Sistina**, Mario Ceroli has taken over the extraordinary spaces of the museum's Sala delle Ciminiere and, starting out from that condensed introversion of architectural elements has projected his art into the extroverted space, heightening its visual impact and expressive force. Thus the exhibition in Bologna becomes a single entity in which an attentive play of cross-references and connections turns the works into the 'exploded' version of a space invented by the artist: the exhibition is laid out in a way that the older works hold a dialogue with the more recent ones, in a direct dialectical exchange that eschews chronological and historiographical criteria.

The title **"faccia a faccia"** ('face to face') refers to the comparison between the human and the divine that has been inspired by MAMbo's great central hall, so reminiscent of a cathedral.

After starting out as a very young assistant in the studios of the sculptors Leoncillo Leonardi, Pericle Fazzini and Ettore Colla, Mario Ceroli began his artistic career concentrating on ceramics under the influence of the non-representational climate. The recognition of **wood** as his ideal **expressive material** took place at the end of the fifties, prefiguring the intuition of an original line of research that was to develop into a complex formal language of great

inventiveness.

In this first phase of experimentation, Ceroli undertook rigorous research into profiles in which the modelling of the figure was taken as an archetypal principle in a process of progressive deconstruction, synthesis and reduction of the real aimed at grasping the metaphysical essence of the image.

The chronological starting point for the exhibition, the two-fronted work *ZOAS* of 1962, characterised by the use of lettering, testifies the strong tendency of the artist to turn words into form, already suggesting a spatiality that goes beyond the natural dimension of the individual letters.

Over the course of time Mario Ceroli has been associated with various artistic tendencies while never being linked with any of them in a coherent way. In the mid-sixties he tried out a new approach with a figurative repertoire influenced by American **Pop Art**, which brought him into relation with the fertile scene of the Roman avant-garde through the use, not without irony, of images drawn from contemporary reality. Another current of research with which his work ran parallel was that of **Arte Povera**: the artistic act carried out on a poor material like rough wood, invested with a powerful capacity for representation, brought him close to the contemporary experiments conducted by that group, ensuring the presence of his work in the first exhibitions devoted to the movement defined by Germano Celant, who described the Roman artist as **'the "poor" constructor *par excellence*'**. Some works like *Centouccelli* of 1967 and the surprising modular structure *Primavera* of 1968 can even be regarded as precursors of developments like **Minimal Art** and **Environmental Art**: marking the evolution from the early simple and flattened silhouettes towards ensembles articulated in space in the manner of genuine installations, they opened up the possibility of using sculpture as a means of spatial expansion, leading the artist to carry out interventions in which the environment became a fundamental element in the creation of the work of art.

Ceroli's ever more consciously monumental approach to the construction of sculptural space resulted in a progressive move beyond the objective limits of tradition into a theatrical spatiality in which the works, truly spectacular structures in their volumes and composition, literally invade the setting, in some cases inviting viewers to abandon their contemplative role and participate actively in the work.

His 1966 masterpiece *La Cina* investigated and developed the themes of the relation of sculpture to space and the interaction of the work with the viewer, emblematically marking the beginning of the second phase of Ceroli's artistic career. In this work, in fact, for the first time the reiteration of stylized profiles and forms of the human figure in wood assumes in their orderly advance a narrative dynamism of great communicative efficacy thanks to a construction that, proceeding by stratifications and successions of planes, defines a true installation.

The works created from the end of the sixties onward reflect a progressive spatial extension of the artist, with a strong **leaning towards the spectacular and theatrical**, marking the beginning of a fertile involvement in a field of activity that would lead to Mario Ceroli establishing himself as one of the most original figures in the history of contemporary Italian set design for the theatre and opera, collaborating with – among others – Pier Paolo Pasolini and Luca Ronconi.

Over the course of the seventies Ceroli consolidated a mature and complex plastic language, accompanied by a limpid formal rigour in the skilfully use of the raw material and a strong conception of volume and spatiality worthy of the Italian Renaissance vision. Exemplary of his constant cultural reference to the classical Italian tradition is the work of extraordinary formal elegance *Battaglia* (1978), an imposing reconstruction of Paolo Uccello's famous masterpiece *The Battle of San Romano* in wood that constitutes one of the most spectacular undertakings of scenic articulation carried out by the artist.

The exhibition at MAMbo also documents other significant trends in the artist's plastic and thematic experimentation. For example, the **rational component** of the structures marked by an abstract geometricism is evident in works dating from the sixties, like *Mappacubo* (1966) and *Mappatondo* (1966), and recurs in Ceroli's more recent production with the series of geometric projections made in iron in 2012. Another recurrent element that lends a symbolic depth to Ceroli's work is lettering, as in the sculpture-inscriptions *Terra, Fuoco, Aria, Acqua* (1972) which evoke the concept of nature through a sequence of words, while the **silhouette** and **profile** as iconically decisive components are still present in works from the early nineties, such as *Il Raccoglitore di miele* (1991).

In the eighties and nineties Ceroli's research was focused chiefly on the plane of the material, with **a freedom in chromatic choices and experimentation with materials** of natural and industrial origin that expanded and enriched his expressive alphabet, characterised after two decades by a pre-eminent use of wood. Glass, coloured earths, cloth, sand and ashes are some of the materials that Ceroli has worked with imaginative originality, as in the work *Sopra di noi il cielo* (1989), realized with copper sulphate of a brilliant deep blue colour, and *Scala di vetro* (1990) that returns to a recurrent figurative theme in the artist's imagery with fascinating chromatic effects of transparency and luminosity.

The exhibition is accompanied by a bilingual (Italian/English) **catalogue** published by Usher arte that includes an extensive photographic essay by Aurelio Amendola, along with introductory texts by Lorenzo Sassoli de Bianchi and Antonio Paolucci, critical essays by Luigi Ficacci, Gianfranco Maraniello and Lorenzo Vivarelli, and a statement by Aurelio Amendola.

For the entire duration of the exhibition the **MAMbo Educational Department** will be offering a full programme of guided tours for adults and families and specific workshop activities for children and young people. Charge € 4 per person plus



entrance to the exhibition (€ 6 full, € 4 reduced), min 6 max 30 people.
For info and bookings: tel. (+39) 051 6496652 (from Monday to Friday, 10 am–1 pm);
tel. (+39) 051 6496611 (Saturday and Sunday 10 am–5 pm).

The exhibition is also part of **ART CITY Bologna**, the cultural programme of exhibitions and institutional initiatives proposed, on the occasion of ARTE FIERA, in the city's museums and public spaces.

The initiative is included in the "**Programma per l'Arte Italiana**", a programmatic dossier that covers projects devoted to Italian artists included in the scheduling of museums belonging to AMACI, the Association of Italian Museums of Contemporary Art, for the period from November 2012 to November 2013.

Mario Ceroli was born at Castelfrentano (Chieti) in 1938. He lives and works in Rome.

For further information:
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MAMbo

Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

MAMbo is supported by:



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LIST OF WORKS

ZOAS, 1962

legno dipinto / painted wood
dimensioni variabili / variable dimensions

La Cina, 1966

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
200 x 500 x 1000 cm

Mappacubo, 1966

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
150 x 150 x 150 cm

Centouccelli, 1967

legno, rete metallica a maglia esagonale / wood, hexagonal wire netting
310 x 310 x 310 cm

Mappatondo, 1966

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
diametro / diameter 145 cm

Le bandiere di tutto il mondo, 1968

canale di zinco, terre colorate / zinc pipe, coloured earth
15 x 1000 x 200 cm

Primavera, 1968

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
100 x 300 x 300 cm

Progetto per la pace, 1969

legno, tela, piedistalli di metallo, sabbia / wood, canvas, metal pedestals, sand
400 x 500 x 700 cm

Aria, 1972

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
200 x 200 x 12,5 cm

Acqua, 1972

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
200 x 200 x 12,5 cm

Terra, 1972

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
200 x 200 x 12,5

Fuoco, 1972

legno pino di Russia / Russian pine wood
200 x 200 x 12,5 cm

Accordo dei quattro elementi, 1976

campane in lega di bronzo, argento, rame / bronze-silver-copper alloy bells
380 x 140 x 140 cm

"La battaglia: alla bandiera ridente straccio e il più povero ti sventoli"

Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1978

legno pino di Russia, tessuto / Russian pine wood, textile
360 x 1000 x 320 cm

La strada della politica degli ultimi cento anni, 1989

legno, ossido di piombo, vetro / wood, lead oxide, glass
400 x 250 cm

Sopra di noi il cielo, 1989

legno, solfato di rame, vetro / wood, copper sulfate, glass
400 x 250 cm

Groma, 1990

legno, bronzo, marmo rosa del Portogallo, marmo nero del Belgio / wood, bronze, Portuguese pink marble, Belgian black marble
104 x 52 cm

Scala vetro, 1990

vetro, ferro / glass, iron
416 x 53 cm

Raccoglitore di miele, 1991

legno, filo spinato / wood, wire fence
misure variabili / variable dimensions

Apologize Hiroshima, 1995

legno dipinto, legno bruciato, cellotex / painted wood, burned wood, cellotex
254 x 825 x 103 cm

Paesaggio italiano, 1997

legno, vetro, canaline di zinco, terre colorate / wood, glass, zinc pipes, coloured earth
209 x 209 x 20 cm

Paesaggio italiano, 1997

legno, plexiglass, canaline di zinco, terre colorate / wood, plexiglass, zinc pipes, coloured earth
209 x 209 x 20 cm

Alzabandiera, 2007

legno su basamento di ferro / wood on iron base
1000 x 80 x 20 cm

Riposa in pace!, 2007

legno pino di Russia, compensato, cenere / Russian pine wood, plywood, ash
192 x 234 x 9 cm

Alla nascita del Tevere, 2007

legno pino di Russia, cenere / Russian pine wood, ash
226 x 189 x 9 cm

Mappamondo, 2010

guaina d'alluminio, foglia d'oro su legno / aluminium sheath, gold leaf on wood
212 x 305 x 7 cm

Planisfero, 2010

foglia d'oro su legno dipinto con terre colorate / gold leaf on wood painted with coloured earth
diametro / diameter 300 cm

Dietro la rete, 2010

legno, rete metallica, alluminio ramato / wood, wire netting, auburn aluminium
200 x 200 x 12 cm

Dietro la rete, 2010

legno, rete metallica, alluminio ramato / wood, wire netting, auburn aluminium
200 x 200 x 12 cm

Dietro la rete, 2010

legno, rete metallica, alluminio ramato / wood, wire netting, auburn aluminium
200 x 200 x 12 cm

Dietro la rete, 2010

legno, rete metallica, alluminio ramato / wood, wire netting, auburn aluminium
200 x 200 x 12 cm

Curiosity. Le ombre su Marte, 2010

carboncino su telo di cotone / charcoal on cotton cloth
225 x 283 cm

Curiosity. Le ombre su Marte, 2010
carboncino su telo di cotone / charcoal on cotton cloth
216 x 282 cm

Curiosity. Le ombre su Marte, 2010
carboncino su telo di cotone / charcoal on cotton cloth
226 x 283 cm

Faccia a faccia, 2012
legno, piombo, telo di cotone / wood, lead, cotton cloth
dimensioni variabili

L'amore con la madre terra, 2012
legno, cenere, terra, paglia / wood, ash, soil, straw
290 x 200 x 35 cm

Mare Nostrum, 2012
carta su tela / paper on canvas
320 x 415 cm

Progetto per la casa di Leonardo, 2012
ferro / iron
250 x 250 x 11 cm

Progetto per la casa di Morandi, 2012
ferro / iron
92 x 162 x 24 cm

Progetto per la casa di Mondrian, 2012
ferro / iron
201 x 190 x 6 cm

Progetto per il Giardino di Boboli, 2012
ferro / iron
130 x 202 x 18 cm

Progetto per la casa di Malevic, 2012
ferro / iron
141 x 192 x 12 cm

Progetto per la barca Luna Rossa , 2012
ferro / iron
180 x 166 x 18 cm

Progetto per la casa di Mirò, 2012

ferro / iron

172 x 120 x 12 cm

Le briglie di Varenne, 2012

legno, foglia d'oro, gomma / wood, gold foil, rubber

160 x 214 cm

Stretto di Hormuz, 2012

carta su tela / paper on canvas

315 x 415 cm

Sindone, 2012

telaio in ferro tubolare, rete metallica, lamina di alluminio ramato / iron tubular structure, wire netting, auburn aluminium foil

150 x 150 x 12 cm



TECHINICAL SHEET

Title:	"faccia a faccia" by Mario Ceroli
Curator:	Gianfranco Maraniello
Exhibition venue:	MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna via Don Minzoni 14 – Bologna
Exhibition dates:	21 December 2012 – 1 April 2013
Opening hours:	Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 12 pm – 6 pm Thursday, Saturday, Sunday, holidays 12 pm – 8 pm closed on Mondays
Admission:	full price € 6; reduced price € 4
Information:	ph. (+39) 051 6496611 – fax (+39) 051 6496600 info@mambo-bologna.org www.mambo-bologna.org
Guided tours	for groups booking is obligatory ph. +39 051 6496628 / 611 mamboedu@comune.bologna.it special guided visit € 4 for person guided visits for groups (max 30 people) € 80 visits in other languages € 100
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Press:	ph. (+39) 051 6496653 / 608 ufficiostampamambo@comune.bologna.it
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