

walterpadovani.

Arturo Martini

Female Choir













Arturo Martini
(Treviso, 1889 - Milan, 1947)

Female Choir,

c. 1934

Terracotta; 41 x 28 x 19 cm

SIGNED: "Martini"

PROVENANCE: Donated by the artist to the journalist and literary critic Enrico Falqui (1901-1974); Antonello Falqui, Rome.

This work was modeled during the 1930s and may have been used in 1936-37, the period when Arturo Martini was designing the models (now lost) for the Victory Arch competition, intended to be placed in Piazza Fiume, Milan. Martini won the competition for this grand monumental project, which he designed in collaboration with architects Mazzoleni and Carminati, though it was never realized (Catalogue Raisonné, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1998, no. 438).

The sculpture depicts a compact group of twenty standing female figures, captured in the act of singing aloud, tightly pressed together to form a block. This block is enlivened by the varied pos-





(3)

es of the individual figures, which are positioned with great insight on an inclined platform that lends the scene a unique charm and an unusual sense of movement (a similar base is found in *The Nun*, 1919, and *Palinuro*, 1946; I, 2). The choral

composition evokes a theatrical scene, as seen in ancient theater, or perhaps a public event.

This arrangement is reminiscent of other works by Martini, such as *The Brigands* group (Catalogue Raisonné no. 262; 3), presented in various





(4)

versions, both in terracotta and majolica, and *The Schoolgirls* group (Catalogue Raisonné no. 267; 4), which was designed in a circular composition with an empty center. These are all works from the early 1930s. Additionally, *Greek Tragedy*, a unique terracotta from around 1932 (Catalogue Raisonné no. 317; 5), likely shares thematic ties with the present sculpture due to its theatrical subject matter.

Considering these evaluations and the fact that the original title given to this work by the artist is unknown, the provisional title *Female Choir* is proposed.

This sculpture will be included in the upcoming edition of the *General Catalogue of Arturo Martini's Sculptures*, which is currently in preparation.

(5) **Nico Stringa**



The art collection of Enrico Falqui offers an intriguing glimpse into Italian creativity of the 20th century. Born from the passion of a prominent literary critic, this collection is notable for its variety and the quality of the selected works. (6)

Arturo Martini once said that “all works of art have the same right to stand on the balcony of the universe,” and it was the artist himself who donated this poetic and evocative terracotta piece to Enrico (6).

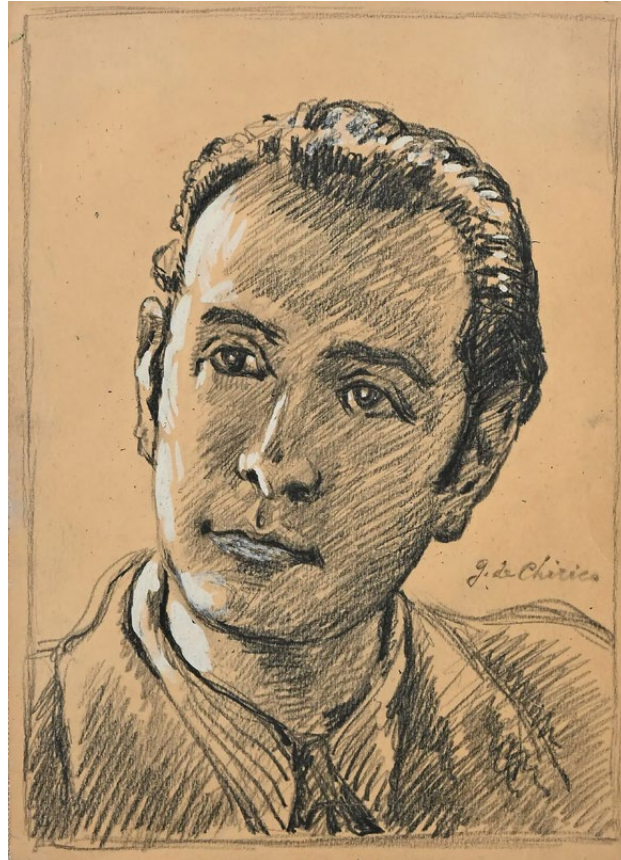
Enrico Falqui (1901-1974; 7) was a key figure in Italian literary criticism as well as an art collector. His work was instrumental in promoting authors such as Eugenio Montale and Giuseppe Ungaretti, while also helping to discover new talent. His passion for visual art was naturally intertwined with his love of literature, creating



(7)

a continuous dialogue between different forms of expression. Few were able to combine such an encyclopedic knowledge with a deep love for both literature and visual arts, building lasting relationships with the artists of his time.

Antonello Falqui (1925 - 2019; 8), Enrico's son and an acclaimed television director, inherited not only the collection but also his father's cultural approach. Although primarily dedicated to television, where he innovated with iconic programs such as *Studio Uno* (9) and *Canzonissima*, Antonello continued to expand the art collection, keeping alive the connection between visual arts and entertainment. Thanks to his sensitivity



and curiosity, the collection grew further, maintaining the cultural roots established by Enrico and turning the collection into a bridge between literature, visual arts, and entertainment.

Today, the Falqui collection provides a fascinating overview of 20th-century Italian art. It reflects not only the personal taste of two generations but also the deep connections between different cultural fields: literature, visual arts, and entertainment. This cultural heritage goes beyond the value of individual works, telling a story of passion for art and intellectual exchanges that shaped an important era in Italian culture.

(8)



(9)





Via Santo Spirito, 26/A - Milan
P. +39 02 76 31 89 07
www.walterpadovani.com

wp.