

THE 2ND NATIONAL ART QUADRIENNALE IN ROME

Whereas the president, Enrico di San Martino, and the secretary, Cipriano Efisio Oppo, were delighted by the modern character of this edition, Ugo Ojetti,¹ who was also a member of the organizing committee, stated he preferred the conservative program of the Venice Biennale, which was abandoned by some artists in 1934 so as not to miss the opportunity of exhibiting at the Rome Quadriennale the following year. Francesco Callari showed appreciation for the modernity of the Roman exhibition: "Here, it is the young who have triumphed, with all their force and inexhaustible imagination."²

This Quadriennale did not restrict itself to giving space to young artists, confirming the end of the "Novecento." Solo exhibitions were granted to Giorgio de Chirico, Filippo de Pisis, Marino Marini, Quirino Ruggeri, Francesco Messina, Mario Mafai, Fausto Pirandello, Enrico Paulucci, Gisberto Ceracchini, Antonio Donghi, Arturo Dazzi, and Luigi Bartolini, among others; groups of works were by Corrado Cagli, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Emanuele Cavalli, Arturo Tosi, Ottone Rosai, Arturo Martini, Gianni Vagnetti, Carlo Socrate, Felice Casorati, Giorgio Morandi, Leo Longanesi, Nicola Galante and Pericle Fazzini.

The Roman School, the school of Via Cavour, and Scipione's retrospective confirmed the predominance of the Roman contingent. Oppo was more interested in the talent of the artists and gave little thought to their support for the regime's art, which explains the presence of works by the anti-Fascist painter Carlo Levi at the Quadriennale, in the attempt by the Secretary to persuade artists living in Paris to return to Italy.

Among them, Gino Severini emphasized his Italian roots and carefully arranged his thirty-six works that recounted his artistic trajectory and his skills at dealing with different techniques (oils, tempera, collage, wax, mosaic). The entrance included three Futurist works, perfectly integrated with the series of recent still lifes inspired by traditional themes (musical instruments, cupids and fruit), while family portraits all had affinities with Byzantine. Severini won the first prize for painting and did well on the sales side: the Governatorato bought the mosaic *Composizione per mosaico* (Composition for Mosaic, 1933) and the Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Torino acquired his *Ritratto di Gina Severini (Mia figlia)* (Portrait of Gina Severini [My Daughter], 1934). Private buyers included

the Princess of Piedmont, Lawyer Edoardo Agnelli, Giuseppe Bottai, His Majesty the King, and Countess Pecci Blunt.

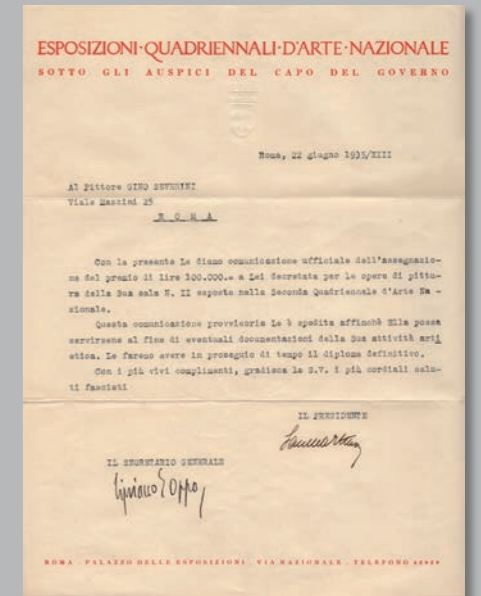
The anti-monumental sculptures by young Marino Marini, who won the first prize for sculpture, were rigorously and severely plastic. The work in wood, *Icaro* (Icarus, 1933) was hung on the wall of the main façade. A sensation of isolation and the void was exacerbated by the figure of the *Giovane coricata* (Reclining Woman, 1934) beneath. In the marble work, *Il musicista* (The Musician, 1930), Marini modeled only the passing of the light, mindful of Medardo Rosso, while in *Nuotatore* (Swimmer, 1932) we are reminded of Etruscan terracotta, in reaction to the bombast of official Fascist art. Reviews of the *Bagnante* (Bather, 1935) were positive, a subject inspired by classical iconography but which he arranged in space in a modern manner. His portraits were also well received, the subjects of which were characterized by just a few salient lines. The young sculptor's *Autoritratto* (Self-Portrait, 1929) was purchased by the Governatorato, *Pugile* (Boxer, fragment, 1934) by the Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Torino, and *Musicista* by the king.

Winners of the sculpture and painting 100,000 liras prizes each donated³ one of their works to the Galleria d'Arte Moderna: Marini gave the *Bagnante*, and Severini *L'angelo rapitore* (Kidnapper Angel, 1935), motivated by the death of his son Jacques (the angel carries the young boy up to Heaven, while his toys left on the floor are organized like a still life). The Governatorato remained the Quadriennale's most important patron, giving 500,000 liras for the prizes and allocating 300,000 for purchases of works. The financing⁴ was managed by a committee⁵ whose guideline was to acquire a single work by each master in order to ensure the greatest representation of contemporary artists⁶. On the contrary, purchases made at the next Quadriennale, in 1939, left out certain important names, and few coincide with those in the Regia Galleria Nazionale⁷, perhaps in view of the imminent unification of the two collections⁸. Some of the most important solo exhibitions in this edition were those of Morandi, Capogrossi, Pirandello and Giacomo Manzù, all of whom were included in the purchases made by the state but not—apart from Capogrossi—by the municipality⁹.

—Stefania Gagliardini



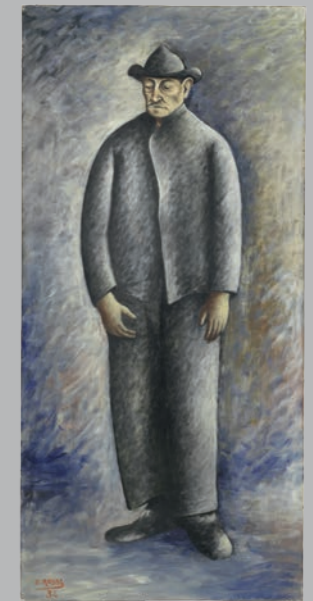
2nd Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1935. Works by Giorgio de Chirico



The letter from Cipriano Efisio Oppo to Gino Severini announcing his victory at the 2nd Quadriennale, June 22, 1935



Osvaldo Licini, *Castello in aria*, 1933-36



Ottone Rosai, *Il vecchio Eliseo*, 1934

- Rome, Archivio X Rip., A.B.A., b. 125, fasc. 5, Letter of appointment of February 16, 1935. In addition to A. Muñoz, the members of the committee for the award of the prizes and the selection of works to be purchased for the Governatorato were Felice Carena, Cipriano Efisio Oppo, Antonio Maraini, Enrico di San Martino Valperga, Arturo Martini e Arturo Tosi. For the second edition of the Quadriennale, the final report for the purchases and prizes has not been traced. See Sergio Guarino, "La Quadriennale da mostra periodica a struttura pubblica," in Rosella Siligato, Maria Elisa Tittoni (eds.), *Il Palazzo delle Esposizioni. Urbanistica e architettura. L'esposizione inaugurale del 1883. Le acquisizioni pubbliche. Le attività espositive*, exh. cat., Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, December 12, 1990-January 14, 1991 (Rome: Carte Segrete, 1990), p. 212.
- Exceptionally, the Governatorato acquired two works by Lombardi, two by Morandi, and six by Scipione (*Ritratto del Cardinale Vannutelli* [Portrait of Cardinal Vannutelli] and five other paintings).
- Archivio Storico della Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, POS., 9B Quadriennali Roma, B.1, F.2. On March 10, 1939, the Sales Office of the Quadriennale sent Roberto Papini the list of works acquired by the Ministry of National Education on behalf of the Regia Galleria d'Arte Moderna. The note of 21 July 1939 from the Minister of Education to Papini informed the latter that 200,000 liras had been allocated for purchases. The letter from the Minister of Education to the Superintendent to the Gallerie di Roma, with a list enclosed, dated September 28, 1939, and the reply from the Soprintendente, *Acquisto suppletivo disposto*

- dal Duce alla III Quadriennale, of October 14, 1939, relate the expenditure of 50,000 liras by Mussolini for the purchase of 16 works for the Regia Galleria.
- For details, see Giovanna Bonasegale (ed.), *I Catalogo Generale della Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea* (Rome: De Luca, 1994), pp. 42-44.
- Rome, Archivio X Rip., A.B.A., b. 269, fasc. 4, *Elenco delle opere acquistate dal Governatorato di Roma*.

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- Giovanna Bonasegale (ed.), *I Catalogo Generale della Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea* (Rome: De Luca, 1994), pp. 72-78.
- Claudia Salaris (ed.), *La Quadriennale. Storia della rassegna d'arte italiana dagli anni Trenta a oggi* (Venice: Marsilio, 2004), pp. 29-41.
- Elena Pontiggia, Carlo F. Carli, *La grande Quadriennale. 1935, la nuova arte italiana* (Milan: Electa, 2006).
- Francesca Romana Morelli (ed.), *Cipriano Efisio Oppo. Un legislatore per l'arte* (Rome: De Luca, 2000), pp. 353-363.
- Seconda Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale: catalogo generale* (Milan/Rome: Tumminelli, 1935).

¹ Ugo Ojetti, "Due programmi," in *Corriere della Sera* (February 23, 1935).

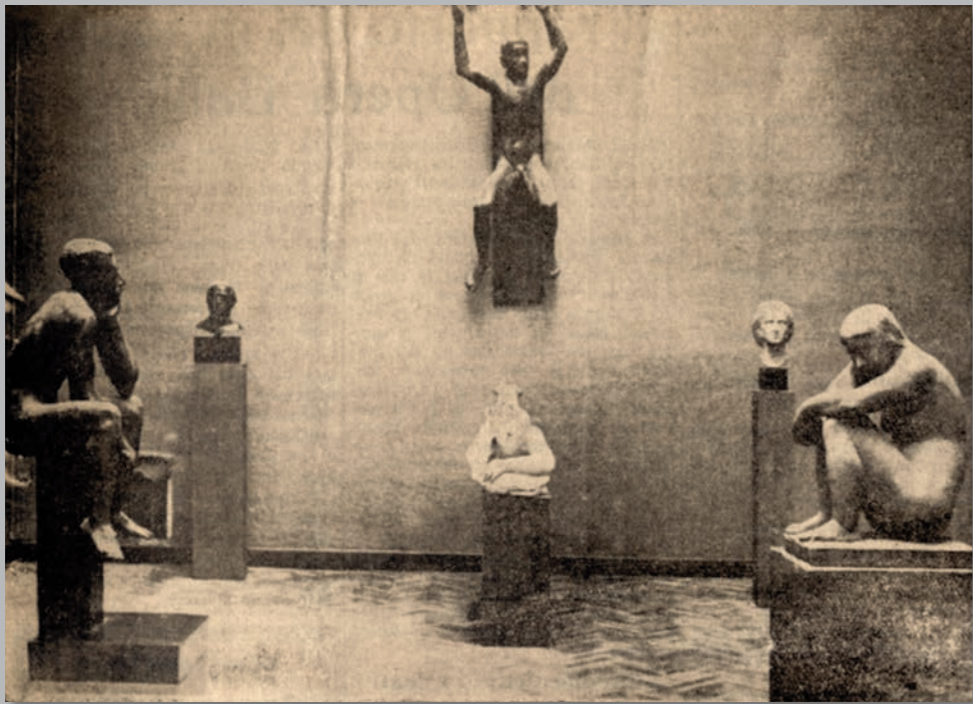
² Francesco Callari, *Il Quadriennale d'Arte Nazionale* (Rome: Conquiste, 1933), p. 9.

³ Rome, Archivio X Rip., A.B.A., b. 124, tit. 17, classe I, sottocl. 6, fasc. 5, 1935.

⁴ Letter from the General Secretary of the Quadriennale, Cipriano Efisio Oppo, to

Governor Giuseppe Bottai, June 8, 1935. Here the work by Severini was called *Angelo consolatore* (Comforter Angel).

⁵ Rome, Archivio X Rip., A.B.A., b. 125, fasc. 5, Letter from the Governor to Conte Enrico San Martino Valperga (April 19, 1932).



2nd Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1935. Works by Marino Marini including *Bagnante*, 1935



Marino Marini, *Bagnante*, 1935



2nd Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1935. Works by Gino Severini including *La Bohémienne*, 1905



Gino Severini, *La Bohémienne*, 1905



2nd Rome Quadriennale, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1935. Works by Gino Severini *Ritratto della signorina Severini (Ritratto di Gina Severini)*, c. 1934, *L'angelo rapitore*, 1935, *Nature Morte or Masque*, 1930, *Ritratto di Jeanne Severini*, 1934, *Ritratto di Jeanne Severini*, 1934i, *Ritratto di Jeanne*, c. 1932, *Ritratto di Donna Lelia Caetani*, 1930-31



Gino Severini, *Ritratto della signorina Severini (Ritratto di Gina Severini)*, c. 1934



Gino Severini, *L'angelo rapitore*, 1935



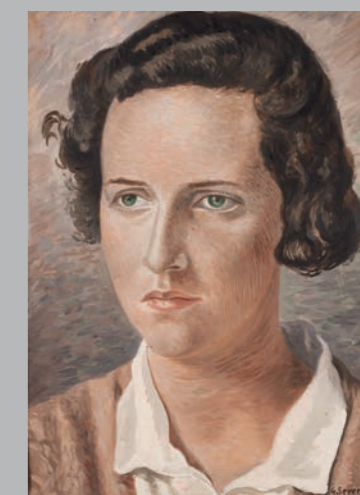
Gino Severini, *Nature Morte or Masque*, 1930



Gino Severini, *Ritratto di Jeanne Severini*, 1934



Gino Severini, *Ritratto di Jeanne*, c. 1932



Gino Severini, *Ritratto di Donna Lelia Caetani*, 1930-31

