

Luigi Mainolfi

(Rotondi, Avellino, 1948)

Anthropomorphic, fabulationist, almost prehistoric: Luigi Mainolfi's art emerges in dialogue with myths pertaining to the earth, in a fertile, magical, and atemporal dimension where sun, trees, water, and fire, but also animals and human settlements have spirits that correspond to their external forms. For the artist, object and material coincide; in Mainolfi's hands, the concreteness of terracotta, the ductility of bronze and the generosity of wood all become sculptures that embody the earth, sun, and plant world. His investigation includes the universe of signs and the use of a prelinguistic code, capable of traversing time and linking different cultures. Considered in its totality, the artist's research into archetypes unfolds through a wide variety of proportions, as if inhabiting without distinction the world of men and that of heroes. Like a trove of extremely ancient memories, the sound and the elements that can produce it constitute part of the artist's language, developed over a research that began between 1978 and 1979, with works such as *La campana (The Bell)*, making him one of the pioneers in the international revival of sculpture.

Composing a whole that can freely occupy the space, with *Tamburi, campane e campanacci (Drums, Bells, and Cowbells)*, 1988-1989, Mainolfi recreates the forms of percussion instruments and bell clappers. Through the physicality of its presence, the installation, created in bronze and wood, evokes the symbolic power of the rhythms that are produced when groups meet, but also the tolling that indicates animals in movement or that call an entire village to the church courtyard. Its imposing proportions consign the work to the world of myth, as if the instruments were awaiting a giant, ready to give them back their voice. (MB)