

## Fausto Melotti

(Rovereto, Trento, 1901 – Milan, 1986)

On the occasion of a show of his abstract sculptures from 1935 to 1962, Fausto Melotti wrote about the impossibility for his generation to avail itself of the figurative representation of reality and recalled the many adventures in which the avant-garde movements had engaged, stating: “Other ways open up, other sermons. Dazed, thirsty for quiet, we distance ourselves every now and then and secretly witness the Orphic nuptials of geometry and poetry. We shall not be forgiven; we shall be accused of uncertainty, of incoherence and, in the end, of immorality. [...] An art that chooses limitations and respects them is moral. But Picasso ignores barriers.” But after having compared the thousands of disguises of the Spanish painter to images in rapid succession that appear to a dying person as if they were a recapitulation of his or her entire life, he concludes: “and so this license no longer appears as such, but only the tragic warning of a coming catharsis of this long civilization of ours, and Picasso’s ‘condition,’ the incessant wandering outside the boundaries, seems the most deeply felt and, in the end, the most moral.”

Melotti encouraged the uneasiness of an artistic life in which he found himself frequently crossing and re-crossing the threshold that separates figurative from abstract art, in a continuous investigation that the artist perceived as melancholically destined to reach only as far as the outer walls of the true work of art that the ancients were capable of creating: “an insuperable wall,” Melotti writes, “the wall of poetry, precludes the citadel of art. Ideas pass inside there unadorned.”

The sculptor knew how to draw close to the poetry of ideas through his works in the 1930s and the early 1970s, made of pure geometries, but also through the fragile and dreamy grace of works such as *La Balancoire auxviolettes*, 1963, where the drawing-like lightness of the metal is combined with the chromatic suggestion and the suspended equilibrium that had been present in earlier works in ceramics, such as *Giocolieri (Jugglers)*, 1955, finding in these a new inflection that has, in itself, the promise of a story. That promise will find full expression in the series *teatrini*, or small theaters, which includes *La ballata del cervo (The Ballad of the Stag)*, 1979. In these more recent sculptures the material, which has become fully corporeal, porous to color, and open to the modeling of form, encloses the spaces of a miniature architecture where everything seems suspended by means of an archaic theatrical representation of mythical stories. (EV)