

**Triennale di Milano**

viale Alemagna 6, Milan

Presentation of the book

**FRANCA GHITTI**

*curated and with an introductory essay by Elena Pontiggia*

**Skira** editore

**Thursday 23 March 2017, 6pm**

Sala TriennaleLab, ground floor

*presented by*

Cecilia De Carli, *Professor Università Cattolica, Milan*

Micol Forti*, Director Collection of Modern Art, Vatican Museums, Rome*

*with the participation of*

Elena Pontiggia, *Professor Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera*

*press release, 16.03.2017*

**On Thursday, 23 March at 6pm** the **Triennale** of Milan hosts the presentation of the monographic volume about the sculptress Franca Ghitti, curated and provided with an introduction by Elena Pontiggia; it is published by Skira.

**The book retraces the artistic development of Franca Ghitti** (1932-2012), who was an internationally known sculptress, from the 1950s to her death. Her works are part of important public and private collections among which there are the National Gallery of Modern Art of Rome and the Vatican Museums.

It delivers a comprehensive presentation of the artist's work starting from Valle Camonica, which is her birthplace and that has always remained meaningful to her throughout her life: it retraces all the significant stages, from her artistic education in Milan, Paris, and Salzburg to her African experience and the international exhibitions. What emerges is a cyclic return to her origins and homeland, that motivates her to further experimentation, in-depth examination and research.

Franca Ghitti was **very careful in her choice of materials**. At the beginning she chose those materials especially linked to the earth and the working world, among which there are old wooden boards and sawmill leftovers. Later she also opened up to iron and metal scraps, salvaged from the old foundries from Valle Camonica, such as molds, off-cuts, reinforcing rods, nails, flux powder, but also production swarf from metal industries.

Her style of putting things together again gives the materials a new energy and deep meanings; she uses a basic and concrete language, with lines and shapes, linked to geometry, which **connects past and present harmoniously**. Several are indeed the references to **petroglyphs** and African tribes' **primitive symbols** that mingle with modern and contemporary forms of expression.

The first wooden works, which are called *Mappe/Maps* and were made during **the 1960s**, are wooden boards: they take inspiration from the petroglyphs. They are followed by other series of sculptures made by adding a new element, i.e. nails.

In **the 1970s**, the African experience and her relocation to Africa for some years lead the artist to add to her form of expression new symbols, colours and materials among which there are concrete and glass.

In the following years Franca Ghitti's works took several forms and shapes, which were always linked to her life experiences, such as verticality - inspired by the sight of skyscrapers in Montreal and the forests of Labrador. The vertical thrust is, however, often opposed by a horizontal energy, rendered by using a repeated combination of wooden tiles and strips, as if matter had been weaved or intertwined. Due to an artistic view constantly focused on her relationship with space, at the end of **the 1980s** she developed an interest in the circular form where a more or less perfect circle calls to mind the idea of repetitiveness.

At the end of **the 1990s** the artist rediscovered forgotten forms of expression, taken from past cultures.

Her artistic experimentation carried on with continuous in-depth studies, which held the memory of communal experiences, which are linked to different places and times in connection with contemporaneity.

The artist indeed used to say: “*I don't believe in improvisation. A work of art is the result of long consideration, of a process of acquisition of knowledge that lasts one's whole life*”.

After Franca Ghitti's death, as per her will, the **Archivio Franca Ghitti** **Foundation** was founded in order to culturally promote the artist's works in Italy and abroad.

**The event in Triennale** is accompanied by **the showing of the trailer** for the documentary “Franca Ghitti. Il film/Franca Ghitti. The movie” directed by Davide Bassanesi who retraces the most significant moments in the life of the sculptress.

Also the architect Giovanni Cadeo takes part in the presentation: he is the author of the project for the restoration of the building chosen to host the Archive-Museum of the artist, with the **projection of images** from the project, which now is in its final stage.

**Short biography.** Franca Ghitti (1932-2012) was born in Valle Camonica. She attended the Academies of Arts in Milan, Paris and Salzburg and since the 1970s dedicated herself to sculpture, specializing in materials such as wood and iron.

Among her most important international exhibitions there are the ones at: Museo di Palazzo Braschi (Rome), Italian Cultural Institutes (Vienna, Budapest, Munich), New York University (New York), Palazzo Martinengo and ex church of San Desiderio (Brescia), OK Harris Gallery (New York), Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa Foundation (Bilbao), Young Arts Gallery (Vienna), Fortezza da Basso (Florence), Museo Diocesano (Milan), University of Houston, Triennale di Milano, Biennale Internazionale di Scultura (Agliè), Castello di Brescia, Museo della Permanente (Milan), École Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Paris La Villette (Paris), Università Bocconi (Milan), Museo d’Arte Contemporanea Manege (Saint Petersburg).

She made a large number of installation for public and private spaces, for example: the great stained-glass windows for the Church of the Italians in Nairobi; the gate for the Agricultural Museum of Brunnenburg Castle (Merano); the iron installations for the Banca Credito Italiano; the installation *Il segno dell’acqua/The Sign of Water* in Lake Iseo (Brescia); the large sculpture for the San Giorgio Fortress at Orzinuovi (Brescia).

Several publications have marked her artistic career, it is worth mentioning those published by

Scheiwiller, Lucini editore, Electa, Charta e Edizioni Mazzotta.

Leading critics and journalists wrote of her, such as: Giuseppe Appella, Giulio Carlo Argan, Carlo Bertelli, Paolo Biscottini, Rossana Bossaglia, Claudio Cerritelli, Enrico Crispolti, Cecilia De Carli, Raffaele De Grada, Marina De Stasio, Sebastiano Grasso, Flaminio Gualdoni, Fausto Lorenzi, Marco Meneguzzo, Anty Pansera, Pietro Petraroia, Elena Pontiggia, Gianfranco Ravasi, Roberto Sanesi, Vanni Scheiwiller, Francesco Tedeschi.

**Archivio Franca Ghitti** **Foundation.** In 2013, following the artist’s death, the Archivio Franca Ghitti Foundation was established in order to preserve, catalogue and promote her work.

**Maria Luisa Ardizzone**, Professor at the New York University of New York, is the president of the Foundation with a scientific committee which include prestigious personalities, such as: **Cecilia De Carli**, Professor Università Cattolica, Milan; **Fausto Lorenzi**, art critic and journalist; **Marco Meneguzzo**, Professor Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, Milan; **Margaret Morton**, artist, photographer and Professor, Cooper Union, New York; **Elena Pontiggia**, Professor Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, Milan.

Since 2013 the architect Giovanni Cadeo of Studio Cadeo in Brescia has been working on the restoration of the former house and studio of the artist, which is the current headquarter of the Foundation, for the project of the Archive-Museum of Franca Ghitti.

Among the main initiatives of the Foundation stand out the exhibitions at: Sormani Library in Milan curated by Elena Pontiggia; Sirmione Castle (Brescia); Villa Clerici in Milan; Museo dell’energia idroelettrica di Valle Camonica; Università Cattolica di Milano curated by Cecilia De Carli.

Thanks to the technical sponsor Barone Pizzini



**Book information**

Franca Ghitti

curated and with an introductory essay by Elena Pontiggia

**Skira** editore, 2016

bilingual edition (Italian - English)

24 x 28 cm, 128 pages

110 color and b/w, hardcover

ISBN 978-88-572-3411-3

€ 28,00

**Details of the event**

**Title** Presentation of the book “Franca Ghitti”

**With** Cecilia De Carli, Micol Forti, Elena Pontiggia

**Venue** Triennale di Milano - Sala TriennaleLab, ground floor - viale Alemagna 6, Milan

**Date** Thursday 23 March 2017, 6pm

**Entrance** free

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