

# BARBARA MATHES GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Fausto Melotti: Sculpture and Ceramics

November 17, 2011 – January 14, 2012



*Il viaggio della luna*, 1973 (1974), silver and gold,  
28 ¼ x 61 ¾ x 7 1/8 in



*Coppa con orlo mosso*, c. 1955, glazed  
polychrome ceramic, 9 x 12 5/8 x 8 5/8 in

Barbara Mathes Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of “Fausto Melotti: Sculpture and Ceramics.” The exhibition will feature the artist’s signature metal sculptures, as well as a selection of his rarely seen polychrome ceramics of the fifties and sixties.

Though Melotti’s art has received renewed interest in recent years, his work in ceramics—one of his foremost artistic preoccupations for the duration of his career—has often been overlooked. Melotti belonged to a generation of Italian artists that sought to revive traditional techniques of ceramic craftsmanship. These artists viewed the medium as an indigenous art form whose ancient Roman and Etruscan origins represented a direct link to Italy’s golden age. Besides Melotti, other luminaries of the Italian avant-garde such as his good friend Lucio Fontana, Arturo Martini and Marino Marini, pursued ceramic practices with the same creative energies they applied to more traditional fine art materials.

Melotti’s first experiences as a ceramist occurred in 1929 after meeting the renowned architect, designer, writer, and ceramics enthusiast, Gio Ponti, who at that time was the artistic director for the Ricardo Ginori ceramic and porcelain manufactory. Melotti assisted Ponti with the execution of several of his designs, and the collaboration marked the beginning of his twenty-year relationship with the firm. While he would continue to work with ceramics for his entire career, his most concentrated involvement with the medium came in the aftermath of World War II. After discovering that his studio had been destroyed in the bombardment of Milan, he renewed his practice by renting out a kiln, thus initiating a fifteen-year period in which he only produced ceramics and terracotta sculptures. The objects in this exhibition date from this prolific period, when his work as a ceramist earned him numerous exhibitions and awards. With their searing palette and boldly undulating volumes, these objects reveal a side of Melotti that will shock viewers accustomed to his ethereal, filamentous sculptures in brass and gold.

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These unexpected contrasts in Melotti's art will be on full display in this exhibition. A selection of sculptures from the sixties and seventies complement the ceramics, demonstrating the breadth of his practice. In his final decades, Melotti dematerialized his sculpture into a unique form of drawing in space. These works possess a joyous and lyrical quality while retaining an exacting sense of balance and pacing. When seen alongside the ceramics, a more complete portrait of the artist emerges, one that shows him equally invested in fine art and craft, line and volume, color and form.

**Contact information:**

Barbara Mathes Gallery is located at 22 East 80<sup>th</sup> Street. The gallery is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm; and Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm. For more information or images, please contact Marie Kim at (212) 570-4190, or visit the website: [www.barbaramathesgallery.com](http://www.barbaramathesgallery.com)