Istituzione Bologna Musei | Museo Civico Medievale, in collaboration with the Museo Carlo Zauli of Faenza and the Del Monte Foundation of Bologna and Ravenna, presents the exhibition Carlo Zauli: Le Zolle [Clumps of Clay], dedicated to one of the grand figures of 20th-century Italian sculpture.

In this exhibition project, the collections of the Museo Civico Medievale join in dialogue with 14 works by Zauli, constituting a concise but exhaustive nucleus of one of the essential themes in the artistic quest of this sculptor from Romagna: the Earth in its most natural form, the primogenital and constituent element, the “clump of clay”.

Created from the early 1970s up to 1984, the works were selected by exhibition curator Matteo Zauli for their rough material qualities that combine well with the stratified materials used to build the exhibition spaces.

Works such as “L’oro della zolla” [the gold of the clump], “Inquinamento nero” [black pollution], “Zolla” [clump], and “Arata” [ploughed], by which Carlo Zauli, in parallel with the British adventure in Land Art, debates the difficult relationship between man and nature, bringing out the generative power of the earth and the need for man to find a relationship with it based on primogenital and archetypical values. To express this violent and almost erotic tension, the artist uses the material, “the earth”, of his own daily life, with which he “fights” and lives every day: clay.

With the changes in society over the course of the 1980s, Zauli expresses the harshening of the relationship between man and nature, bearing witness to the detachment through new works such as “Genesis” and a new type of “Zolla”, where the clear relationship with the soil is expressed through primogenital, monolithic geometrical forms with clean, sharp lines that concede nothing to the generative and magmatic sensuality found in the works of the 1970s, appearing to represent bona fide portions of land.

Claudio Spadoni wrote in 1975: “Zauli thus tends to naturalize his technical work through lumpy surfaces, ruptures, gashes, outpourings of magmatic material: on the other hand, the naturality, when it manifests in a whole and in an absolutely ‘true’ corporeal pregnancy (for example a section of a clump that does not fulfill a mimetic function but remains a clump), undergoes a technical mental purifying process that may be an architectural structure or simply an enamel bath that produces an eerie effect of fixity.”

**Biography**

Carlo Zauli (Faenza, 1926-2002) is one of the great names in post-war Italian sculpture. Like other masters of previous generations, from Martini to Fontana and Leoncillo, his technical training was in the field of ceramic art. Zauli moved away from its formal principles in the sixties, however, when his work moved towards a complex form of sculptural research of great expressive richness. The shift from informal territories towards a reasoning about geometrical forms as rhetorical structures brought him into the heart of the sculptural debate of those years. The solo exhibition at the Montenapoleone Gallery of Milan in 1957 fitted in perfectly with other works that were part of a trend towards an integration of the arts (frieze for the palace in Baghdad, 1958; frieze for the government printing office in Kuwait City, 1961; participation in the Milan Triennales in 1954, 1957, 1964 and 1968) and with his close friendship with artists like Fontana, Valentini, Pomodoro, and Spagnulo. In the late sixties his sculpture started entering intricate, problematic areas in which the formative disposition of matter, the relationship between the substance and skin
of the sculptural body, the dialectic between biomorphism and geometry, and the structural behaviour of form all came to the fore. The great solo exhibitions (Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels and Hetjens-Museum in Düsseldorf, 1972; a travelling exhibition in Osaka, Tokyo, Nagoya, and Kyoto, 1974; and another in Fukuoka, Tokoname and Tokyo, 1981) and works of architectural integration gave his work truly international scope, as can be seen in the recent travelling retrospectives.

Carlo Zauli died in 2002. His works are now in over forty museums around the world.

«I am a man who deeply loves a “clod” of clay, who wants to vitalize it, shape it slowly, exalting and reorganizing its endless rhythms, the mysterious strains hiding in it. I do not contrast the matter, I conform myself to it, trying to understand it, melting it with my fantasy, moulding shapes that follow a genesis, a life, a series of possible exaltations. Rather than compressing forcedly and twisting unnaturally, I try to seize as sharply as possible the natural invisible forms that are hiding inside them, that breath and want to come into surface and live».
[Carlo Zauli, 1987]

“Carlo Zauli: Clumps of Clay”
curated by Matteo Zauli
with project support from Vera Fortunati and Renata Bianconi

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18 January - 6 April 2015

Opening times  ART CITY Bologna
Friday, January 23: 9 am - 8 pm
Saturday, January 24: 10 am - midnight
Sunday, January 25: 10 am – 8 pm

Ordinary opening times
Tuesday-Friday: 9 am - 3 pm
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays: 10 am - 6.30 pm
Closed: Mondays

Entrance
free entrance for holders of any Arte Fiera ticket (from 23 to 25 January 2015)