

Emilio Greco

Emilio Greco (Catania 1913 – Roma 1995) was professor of sculpture at the Fine Arts in Rome. He taught at the invitation of the local Academy in München and in Salzburg. His works are in the main museums around the world. He won the Grand Prize of Sculpture at the Venice Biennial (1956); the gold medal of the President of the Italian Republic for the well-deserving of the Schools, Arts and Culture (1961) and the Prize of Engraving at the Academy of the Lincei (1961), he was awarded National Academy of San Luca and he was member of the Royal Belgian Academy. The Hakone Open Air Museum has dedicated a permanent area of 1800 square meters called Greco Garden to his works. The Hermitage Museum in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) has dedicated a permanent hall to his sculptures and graphics. At the Pushkin Museum in Moscow permanently some of his works are setting.

" I never got tired of human figure, I think it has a multifaceted beauty : it has always been a joy for me to be able to approach all the possible variants of this wonderful theme (...) a woman, in the splendour of her youth, is the symbol of human beauty. "
This statement of Emilio Greco can be taken like a program of his artistic career as a sculptor, drawer, poet and writer.
Furthermore, in contrast to the other sculptors that used drawing for a preparatory time, in his works it gained in completeness

*We heard for days and nights
The rattle of the agony
After the death became
And the stars reappeared
Similar the jasmines I gathered
To cover her body.
They were those you gathered, mother,
To put them among the white sheets.
From the quarry of stone
A lot of poor people came and brought
Wild flowers and true tears.*

(From "Emilio Greco, Memorie dell'estate", 1980)



Visiting hours
Every day from 9 am to 13 pm

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ENGLISH



Museo
Emilio Greco



Il Museo Emilio Greco



Emilio Greco Museum is located in the historical Palazzo Gravina Crujllas, a palace of nineteenth century at number 3, on the 1st floor, in Piazza S. Francesco D'Assisi, in Catania. It was opened in 1994 in the presence of the artist, just one year before his death.

The Museum possesses 174 graphic works in all, from 1955 to 1992. They are always signed "Emilio Greco" or "Greco" rarely with date and place, with pencil in the bottom on the right. Among them there are 15 drawings, almost all with subjects in sports activities, and 159 lithographs and etchings. The marks of the etchings and lithographs are regularly made with black or sepia ink, exceptionally with rust brown or greenish hue ink.

Until the fifties Greco printed about 10 graphic works as "proof by the artist", some printings with Arabic numeration up to no more than 150 copies that later he limited to no more than 99 (the print run of most of these is of 60, 75 or 90 copies), as well as some other printings with Roman numeration that frequently had the print run of 20 or no more than 30 copies.

In the Museum there is also a special interesting Library constituted at the first by the donation of a part of the Maestro's own library.

Emilio Greco Scultore

Emilio Greco as sculptor Bernhard Degenhart underlined that none of the Greco's sculptures could be placed against the wall or could be looked from only one point of view, because they are like cupolas: an uninterrupted succession of prospectives developed all around. In addition of the variations on the women figures as the Bathers and the delicate and refined sculptured portraits, the activity of the artist had extremely importance with the Monument to Pinocchio (1954), the Doors of the Cathedral in Orvieto (1961-1964) and the Monument to the Pope John XXIII (1965-1967).



Emilio Greco - Disegnatore

Emilio Greco as drawer

He is considered among the few modern artists whose realized that an artistic work must be resolved in every expressive details, do not let the function of the easy effect to the sketch or to the creative flitting. His drawings remind the Modigliani style and the manner of the Greek pottery decorators, the Hellenistic component that the artist seems predestined for his nation and for his surname.

The Greco's drawing style unites two qualities that are incompatible in abstraction: the absolute purity of lines and the intense plastic density. In his drawings there are all over the subtlety and the fineness obtained with the arabesque line. The Hellenism of Greco is not evasion and it is not posed as an aesthetic formalism, but it is a research of an historical justification to his expressive inclination. Also to the copper plate or to the lithographic stone, Greco was related as sculptor and by doing so the vision of the print imagine moved beyond the paper.



At these papers one must have a close look to enjoy the beauty of the sign, they claim the plainness and the accuracy of the Craft.

Greco is the Ancient Craftsman who is proud of dominating and moulding the material.

As drawer he reached the climax in the Commiati (The Farewells) where there is the novelty of the couple in the work with the presence of the male figure.

In that production Greco had constancy, time and love to fix his look for twenty years, from 1969 to 1989, towards the behaviour in love: a fixed stare towards a line of shade between a man and a woman who loved each other without wasting any instant of life.

Monumento a Pinocchio

The Monument to Pinocchio is a following of the plenums and vacuums, making light and appropriate to the surroundings a five-meter high monument, otherwise it would be a heavy and monolithic piece of bronze.



The monument is not dedicated to Pinocchio but to the story of Pinocchio, it looks like a tree and for that it merges into the nature: a tree of bronze among some trees of wood. Besides, Pinocchio was just born of a piece of wood from a tree.

In this sculpture Greco reminds the Sicilian Opera dei Pupi (string puppet theatre) and Pinocchio is there with open arms in the usual move of the puppet hindered by the strings.

Le Porte del Duomo di Orvieto

The Doors of the Cathedral in Orvieto was built in 1290, the façade is dated 1305 and it is a work by the architect and sculptor Lorenzo Maitani, maestro from Siena, who succeeded in blending the Italian clarity and classicality with the soaring and the ornaments of the French Gothic. Greco solved the coexistence of the doors with the pre-existent sculptures using a plasticity that reminds to the stiacciato, the manner of Donatello. In the Doors, the style of E. Greco goes from almost brief touch to the precious plasticity of the engraving. The work consists of a central door and two side doors. The central Door is composed of six panels in which the episodes of the Seven Works of Mercy are represented:

- 1) to feed the hungry;
- 2) to give drink to the thirsty;

(These two Works are represented in the same panel in the upper left of the Door)

- 3) to bury the dead;
- 4) to clothe the naked;
- 5) to visit prisoners;
- 6) to lodge pilgrims;
- 7) to assist the sick;

In the central door, E. Greco has created his masterpiece pushing the limits of his valuable refined art and inserting his sensual and precious Hellenism in the harmony of the pre-existing architecture.

The two side doors are remarkable in their simplicity. Except for two angels placed as knockers, the absence of figures accentuates the suggestion of the Luminism style.

Monumento a Giovanni XXIII°

The Monument to the Pope John XXIII

At the unveiling of the monument on June 28, 1967, Pope Paul VI emphasized as Emilio Greco had correctly portrayed John XXIII emerging from different human and composites groups, instead of solitary or stately.



This is represented by a "scene" rather than "portrait".

The work is done on commission in which the size, stage, characters, iconography are required to Emilio Greco and he is aware of the extents to which the inspiration must contain, but in spite of these dictates, the imagination of the artist, his feeling and his technique are created a masterpiece.

The composition of the work spreads from the top to the bottom, in a vertical position, contrasting the canonical reading that contemplates the story extending horizontally, from the left to the right.

The humanity of Pope John was made and shaped by E. Greco, who introduced in St Peter's the representation of a people and their pains.

The Pope does not live in an ideal niche surrounded by symbols, but he is among men with their anxieties. He is moving. He moves towards the suffering of the Christian people. He went to see the pain where it houses: in the prisons and in the hospitals.