

Guarino Roscioli

Italian sculptor
(1895-1978)

Certainly not admitted to the group of artists who marked a time or a current, Guarino Roscioli is remembered above all for the busts of popes, mainly of his contemporaries.



Born in Montottone on 24 October 1895, emigrated with his family to look for work in the unhealthy Pontine countryside, orphaned of his mother, he contracted typhus and returned to be treated in the Montottone Hospital where, during his long hospital stay, he began to make the first models, always fascinated, as he will tell, by the beauty of art, particularly by sculpture.

Called up in 1915 and discharged for a severe form of pneumonia, he managed to enter the school of the art museum in Rome, where he graduated brilliantly, coming into contact with the workshops of the artists of the name. After the difficulties of the beginning (he participated without success in tenders and competitions) and the creation of decorations and fountains for some churches and villas, in 1929 he was called to work in the Vatican. These were the years of the constructive and architectural fervor of Rome, which the Holy See did not escape for the new palaces and new structures of the small state.

Within the walls he created some fountains (the famous ones "of the shell" in Piazza del Governatorato in 1930 and in the Vatican railway station, 1933) but, after having sculpted the statue of Pius XI in the atrium of the Governorate, he was commissioned several busts of pope Ratti, no less than 28. A vein, that of the papal busts, of vague classical flavor, which will not interrupt with the successors: there will be 24 those of Pius XII, 4 of John XIII, two of Paul VI (one can be admired in the papal apartment in San Giovanni in Laterano).

Finally affirmed, decorated with the Order of the Crown of Italy, he worked for the Italian state, making busts of great scientists (Galilei, Galvani, Leonardo, Marconi) for the new CNR headquarters (1938) and for the Post Museum and telecommunications, of the king and Mussolini for the INAIL palace.

He often returned to his land, creating works that can still be admired in Montottone, Fermo, Sant'Elpidio, Porto San Giorgio, Grottammare, San Benedetto. During the war he was called to Loreto to make the bronze panels with the mysteries of the Rosary along the Scala Santa. He was also active after the war, still signing busts for the Chamber of Deputies, the Catholic University, some museums, and sculptural and decorative groups in churches in the capital and throughout Italy.

His works were commissioned abroad, in Santo Domingo, Chile, Colombia, as well as in Italian cities (Cosenza, Tortona, Catanzaro, Reggio Calabria, Salerno etc.).

As it has been written, Roscioli, who died in Rome on April 1, 1978, "does not find a precise historical position in the context of the artistic trends of the twentieth century" but taking the experiences of the past as a model "he still managed to be contemporary".

by Giovanni Marinelli (Rotary Club Fermo Magazine, 12/11/2018)

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