

Way is supported by Gagens. Exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California.

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ENGLAND

A Master's Work

Organized in collaboration with the Archivi Emilio Greco and Il Cigno GG Edizioni of Rome, to mark the centenary of the artist's birth, *Emilio Greco: Sacred and Profane* will be on view at the Estorick Collection from September 25 to December 22, 2013. Greco was one of the key figures of 20th century Italian art and this exhibition, the first of sculpture to be staged at the Estorick, presents 40 works, including bronze and terracotta, as well as a number of his elegant and vigorous drawings. Emilio Greco (1913–1995)



Emilio Greco, Study for the Monument to Pinocchio, 1953, bronze, 88 x 27 x 20 cm. Private collection.

was born in Catania, Sicily, where he was apprenticed to a stonemason and sculptor of funerary monuments at an early age. From the 1950s, he taught sculpture in Rome, Carrara, and Naples, and it was during that

decade that his own work first began to receive recognition.

Strongly influenced by Etruscan, Greek, and Roman art, Greco is best known for his powerful portrait busts and sensual nudes that are classicized, yet

volumetric, often characterized by perfectly rounded heads.

Whilst life-size female figures dominated his oeuvre, Greco also received important religious commissions such as his contemporary Giacomo Manzù. These included a monument to John XXIII for St Peter's in Rome, depicting the Pope visiting the city's Regina Coeli prison.

Both aspects of Greco's work will be considered in this exhibition, which will feature sculptures and drawings from the Estorick Collection, as well as other works on long-term loan there. These include an emblematic *Crouching Nude* (1956) that is echoed in a 1973 sculpture on the same theme by Greco located in Carlos Place, Westminster.

One of Greco's first major works was his *Monument to Pinocchio* (1953). Taking Collodi's famous tale as its theme, the artist's maquette won a nationwide competition. This moving study in bronze captures the moment when the fairy transforms Pinocchio from a puppet into a boy. The base of the sculpture represents a significant departure from Greco's signature style—abstract, spiraling forms evoking a hollow tree trunk.

In 1959, Greco began to work on a set of monumental bronze doors for Orvieto Cathedral, representing merciful actions from the life of Christ. Initially unenthusiastic about the commission as the proposed themes (including episodes from the Crusades) left him uninspired, Greco's attitude changed dramatically once the subject matter was confirmed. He later said: "When, finally, the Corporal Works of Mercy—those capital commands of human behavior—were suggested to me, I accepted immediately because I felt strongly that this theme was congenial to my beliefs. It is an eternal theme, perpetually occurring, not only a historical one; a human theme, not only one connected with the Church."



Emilio Greco, Wrestler, 1947, bronze, 30 x 21 x 18 cm. Private collection.



Emilio Greco, Crouching Nude, 1956, Bronze, height 67.3 cm. Private collection.

Completed in 1964, Greco's doors reveal debts to Renaissance masters such as Donatello in their subtle bas-relief modeling, as do later works such as *Dormitio Virginis*. However, they also exhibit more modern tendencies, as in the two lateral doors depicting angels in flight set against a geometric-abstract background.

Working studies for these monumental commissions will be on display, both in bronze and on paper. These were the materials favored by Greco throughout his long career and there are strong similarities in the artist's approach to both media. For instance, Greco's drawing style is extremely sculptural in its evocation of volume, revealing a particular fascination for conveying a sense of depth, and for exploring and defining the space between forms, rather than the forms themselves—which, by contrast, tend to be cursorily traced with simple, flowing lines. Conversely, the surfaces of Greco's heads are often scored with lines recalling the dense cross-hatching characteristic of his works on paper.

This exhibition offers an opportunity to explore the riches of an extraordinary archive as well as putting the spotlight on an artist whose work is under-appreciated in the United Kingdom. The Henry Moore Foundation supports the exhibition.

The Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art's core collection is of Futurist works, including major paintings by the movement's main protagonists. It comprises some 120 paintings, drawings, watercolors, prints, and sculptures by many of the most prominent Italian artists of the Modernist era. There are six galleries, two of which are used for temporary exhibitions, on three floors. The library of over 2,500 books, primarily on 20th century Italian art, is an unrivalled resource for students of important modernist movements. Since opening in 1998, the Collection has established

a considerable reputation as an important venue for bringing Italian art to the British public and has achieved both public and critical acclaim for its artistic and educational programs.

Il Cigno GG Edizioni, Rome, publishes the fully illustrated catalogue. Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art is at 39a Canonbury Square, London N1 2AN. Tel: (44-20) 7704 9522. Website: www.estorickcollection.com. General admission is £5.

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FRANCE

Seeking Spiritual Space

Taiwan sculptor Li Chen's monumental works will be on view at Place Vendôme in Paris from September 2 to 29, 2013. This is the first time his sculptures have been publicly shown in Europe. Twelve monumental works from four series—*Pure Land, Clear Soul, Landscape in Heaven, Soothing Breezes Floating Clouds, Float to Sukhavati, Angelic Smile, The Pursuer, Flickering Moonlight, Dragon-Riding Buddha, Floating Heavenly Palace, Lord of Wind, and Lord of Fire*—will

be on show at the square.

Li's sculptures are full and rich in form, mellow in line, and of a seemingly self-sufficient world. His success is in finding a solution to a problem based on lofty aspirations and allowing the unity of the language of perception and reasoning. Despite problems of making contemporary sculpture, there are three ways in which Li's sculptures resolve many contradictions to realize a new kind of achievement.

Firstly, his works are combination of the worldly as well as the transcendent. Most of Li Chen's earlier works are from Buddhism. This indicates his presence in common life and his yearning for the spiritual appeal of a world beyond mortal life. Yet he is not a Buddhist artisan; rather he is an artist with a profound understanding of Buddhism who has immersed himself in the world of Buddhist studies. His Buddhist figures possess the forms, expressions, and details of ordinary life, and so make people feel as if the figures are close to the human world.

Secondly, aesthetically Li's sculptures unite the Western and the Eastern. His works reflect his understanding of both Western sculptural language and his profound understanding

of Eastern philosophy. In addition, while pursuing the inner character of his sculptures, Li never sacrifices the aesthetic form.

Thirdly, the language of his sculptures moves from the material toward the spiritual, and yet is a unification of both. All his materials are pure, with a particular integration of color and luster. They are also forged skillfully, which endows the materials with an aesthetic appeal. For instance, his use of black, grey, and white based on Eastern aesthetics emphasizes his subjects in an extreme manner. Through his ingenuity, the bronze and stone become light and delicate as if floating on air.

Li Chen said, "In a time of rapid change, I yearn for a spiritual space." If we could find such comfort and warmth within by personally experiencing the energy of Li's sculptures on site, maybe it is exactly the healing this generation needs.

After his outdoor exhibition at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in 2011, Li has received invitations from international organizations to show his art. In 2012, Frye Art Museum in Seattle, USA, selected Li's new series as part of the exhibition celebrating its 60th anniversary.

This Paris exhibition was organized by Asia Art Center in Taipei and Global Art Center Foundation.

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Li Chen's outdoor exhibition at Place Vendôme in Paris, September 2013. Image: Courtesy of Asia Art Center, Taipei.