



Franco Monti

Milano 1931 – Ibiza 2008

Franco Monti was born in Milan in 1931. From an early age he was interested in the arts, particularly sculpture and in the early 50's he began modeling clay and carving stone anthropomorphic figures of abstract tendencies, encouraged by the sculptor Lorenzo Pepe who later became the art school's director of the prestigious Brera Academy in Milan.

He dedicates himself to the study of the French school of ethnology and his interest in African art leads him to travel extensively in the West Sub-Saharan Africa since 1954 to further his learning of those cultures. Later his trips to Peru, Mexico and New Guinea contribute to expand his knowledge about the cultures which at that time were called "primitive". In the following years he promotes initiatives and organizes exhibitions to divulge the non-European arts in Italy and abroad.

Fully integrated into the cultural world of the '60s, particularly active in Milan due to the number and fame of Italian and foreign artists active then, he is friends with the most important representatives of culture in Italy like Franco Russoli, Lamberto Vitali, Guido Ballo, Luigi Carluccio, Raffaele Carrieri; with artists such as Alberto Giacometti, Marino Marini, Fontana, De Chirico, Morandi, Mario Negri, and other influential characters in the art world like Peggy Guggenheim, director John Huston or Eugene Bermann, designer of the Metropolitan Opera House and La Scala.

Corresponding member of the Syndicat Français des Experts Professionnels en Œuvres d' Art de Paris since 1962, he is considered an expert on African sculpture to which he has dedicated over 30 years of field research. He collaborates as an expert for "primitive arts" publications of the publishers Fabbri and De Agostini. For some time he writes for "Corriere della Sera" in the renowned art page directed by the writer Dino Buzzati. Due to his in depth knowledge of primitive arts the Mondadori magazine "Panorama" interviews him in August 1965 to find out how his particular experience in Africa, in direct contact with those cultures, enabled him to form a group of collectors of an art hitherto almost unknown in Italy. In 1967 the Civic Museum - the Kunsthalle - of the city of Darmstadt (Germany) organised a retrospective exhibition of his African art collection. In 1971 he is in charge of the section of Non-European arts in the exhibition "Il Cavaliere Azzurro" (Der Blaue Reiter) at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna di Torino and in 1979 coordinates the same section of "Origini dell 'Astrattismo" the most important and extensive exhibition on the subject ever held at the Palazzo Reale in Milan.



Franco Monti

Since the early Eighties, he no longer travels to Africa and dedicates himself nearly exclusively to his passion, being a sculptor, which he has not stopped thinking about all these years. He chooses the island of Ibiza as a place to work as here he can find the right retreat to create forms that seem to take inspiration from the surrounding colours and nature.

He begins experimenting with different materials - wood, metal, cardboard, stone – and then chooses concrete to develop forms which he gives shades of color thanks to mineral pigments added to the concrete mix in the development phase. The works thus created are always unique specimens obtained by the artist's accurate work of "subtraction" from the raw shape once it is free from its mold.

In October 1996, the Swiss newspaper "Galatea European magazine", that already knew him as an African art expert, is interested in his sculptural work and interviews him in his atelier in Ibiza.

In the summer of 1999 the Town Hall of Palma de Mallorca organises the exhibition entitled "The geometry of the shadow. 1995-1998 "(maig-setembre 1999) with 16 monumental works located in the "Parc de la Mar". A sculpture (" S98/1 Grizzly Shadows" on page 25 of the catalogue) is acquired by the Town Hall and remains in permanent exhibition underneath the wall of the Almudaina Palace.

The local television station "Television in Ibiza and Formentera (TEF)" aired a short documentary on the work of Franco Monti filmed in the same place where the artist works in the summer of 2000.

In June 2001, he participates in a collective exhibition held in Verona (Italy) of artists present in the famous Panza di Biumo collection.

In September 2001, the "Consell Insular di Ibiza and Formentera" (the local government) invited him to participate with three art works in the Art Fair of Ibiza.

In the summer of 2002, together with the acclaimed international painter Erwin Bechtold, he exhibits his work at the Van der Voort Gallery (Ibiza), in the exhibition "Encounters".

In June-July 2003 he is invited to participate with one of his sculptures in the exhibition "Mallorquins d' adopció", Krekovic Museum, Palma de Mallorca.



Franco Monti

July-August 2003, the photographer Daniel Buhl exhibits photos from the series "el tríptic de l' artista" in the Ramón Llull centre (Palma de Mallorca) and projects a short movie of Erwin Bechtold, Rafa Forteza and Franco Monti portrayed while working in their respective ateliers. Some of the pictures of Monti appear in the June 2003 issue of the magazine "Galatea".

In August 2003 he participates in a group exhibition at the Van der Voort Gallery in Ibiza.

In September-November 2005 his sculptures are exhibited at "Ambit Gallery, Barcelona. The opening of the exhibition coincides with the launch of the monographic book "Steles of colour - The sculpture of Franco Monti" by the renowned Spanish critic and art historian J.F. Yvars.

Between May and August 2006 he presents five sculptures expressly made for the exhibition space of the "Church of the Hospitalet", managed by the Museum of Contemporary Art of Ibiza.

The Santa Barbara Castle in Alicante hosts an outdoor exhibition of 39 of his sculptures between May 2006 and February 2007. In the "Sala Taberna" exhibition space of the same Santa Barbara Castle, from October 2006 to February 2007, he exhibits 9 of his sculptures together with 30 ancient African Art works in the exhibition "Out of Africa".

In November 2007 to February 2008 he exhibits 20 of his most recent sculptures in the "Galeria Maneu" of Palma de Mallorca. This will be his last exhibition as he passes away on January 9, 2008.

Between February and March 2009, Ambit Galeria D'Art in Barcelona presents 17 works by Monti to commemorate the first year of the absence of this enigmatic sculptor.

The "Espai Micus" in Ibiza organizes an exhibition of 38 sculptures between April and July 2011.

Sculptures by Franco Monti are found in important collections of contemporary art, including those of Giuseppe Panza di Biumo (Milano, Biumo and Lugano), Giuseppina Gabriele Caccia Dominioni (Milan), Vincenzo and Giuliana Novembre (Milan), Aberto Galaverni (Parma), and Mayte Victor Rahola (Barcelona), Ventura Garcia (Barcelona), Estela Matutes (Barcelona), Christina Erwin Bechtold (Ibiza), Rafael Tur Costa (Ibiza), Leszek Muszynski (Ibiza), Marcel and Mary Floris (Ibiza) among others.



Franco Monti

About Franco Montis' Sculptures:

- Ottolina Negri, "La scultura oltre il tempo", *Galatea*, October 1996.
- "Franco Monti. La geometría de la sombra. 1995-1998", Ses Voltes, Ajuntament de Palma, 1999. Institutional introductions by Joan Fageda Aubert, Mayor of Palma and Carmen Feliu Álvarez de Soto Mayor, the councillor responsible for Culture. Art introductions by Giuseppe Panza di Biumo and M^a José Corominas Madurell, curator of the exhibition.
- "Franco Monti: Me interesa la escultura africana", *Diario de Mallorca*, 12/5/1999.
- María José Corominas Madurell, "Die Geometrie des Schattens", *Palma Kurier*, 17/9/1999.
- Le guide del FAI. "Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza e la collezione Panza di Biumo", *Ed Skira*, 2001.
- "La Collezione Panza", Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese. *Ed Skira*, 2002.
- "Franco Monti", *Galatea*, junio 2003, servicio fotográfico de Daniel Bühl.
- "Mallorquins d' adopció", *Museo Krekovic*, Palma de Mallorca, June-July 2003.
- Daniel Bühl, "el tríptic de l' artista". Exhibition of the photos taken of three Balearic artists (Erwin Bechtold, Rafa Forteza e Franco Monti), *Espacio Ramón Llull*, Palma de Mallorca, July - August 2003.
- Carles Torres, "Franco Monti – Escultor" in "*Mola*", 29/9/2004.
- Vicente Valero, "Coincidencias insulares: Con Franco Monti", in "Viajeros contemporáneos", *Ed Pre-textos*, Valencia, 2004 (p. 211- 213).
- J.F.Yvars, "Estelas de color – La escultura de Franco Monti", *Ed Àmbit*, 2005.
- J.F. Yvars, "Franco Monti", *Galatea*, September 2005.
- Julio Herranz, "Franco Monti presenta en Barcelona una exposició y un libro sobre su obra", Culture section, *Última Hora Ibiza*, 4/9/2005.
- "Franco Monti – Esculturas", *Àmbit Galería d' Art*, Barcelona, 15th September – 15 November 2005.
- Josep Maresma i Pedragosa, in "*Crítica d' Art – ICOM*", September 2005.
- "*El Periódico*", in Agenda, 16/9/2005.
- C. Domènec/ J. Herranz, "Franco Monti convence en Barcelona con una exposició de sus esculturas", "*Última Hora Digital*" 18/9/2005.
- "*El punto de las Artes*", Editorial, 23-29/9/2005.
- *El punto de las Artes*, "La escultura de F. Monti", Editorial, 30/9- 6/10/ 2005.
- Ricardo Mas, "Franco Monti. Àmbit Galería d' Art", "*Avui*", 8/10/2005.
- Josep M. Cadena, in "*El Periódico*", 14-16/10/2005.
- Juan Bufil, "El color de la escultura", "*La Vanguardia – Dinero*", 23/10/2005.
- Anabel Herrera, en "*Curator*", Oct.-Nov. 2005.
- J.F. Yvars, "Estelas de color", *La Vanguardia*, 27/11/2005.



Franco Monti

- "Franco Monti – La belleza callada de las piedras", L'Hospitalet, *Museu d' Art Contemporani d' Eivissa*, 13th May– 31st of August 2006.
- José Manuel Piña, "El alma de las piedras", *Diario de Ibiza*, 13/5/2007.
- "Franco Monti: "Sueño mis esculturas y en la duermevela las pienso", *Balearia Magazine*, February – April 2007 (pág. 34-38).
- "Franco Monti ", *Joan Oliver "MANEU" Galeria d'Art*, 15th November 2007– 8th of February 2008.
- Ana Largo, "Fallece en Eivissa Franco Monti", *Ultima Hora*, 17/01/2008.
- Joan Olivier Maneu "En memoria de Franco Monti", *Ultima Hora*, 17/01/2008.
- Redaccion, "Muere el Eivissa el ecultor Italiano Franco Monti", *Diario de Ibiza*, 18/01/2008.
- Lourdes Duran, "Fallece Franco Monti, el escultor que hizo poesia del hormigon", *Diario de Mallorca* 18/01/2008.
- Maria Jose Corominas, "Franco Monti en el record", *Diari de Balears*, 20/01/2008.
- R.C. "El Espai Micus se entrega a la escultura de Franco Monti", *Ultima Hora*, 20/04/2011.
- P.R. " El Espai Micus expone esculturas de cemento de franco Monti", *Diario de Ibiza*, 20/04/2011.
- *Ibiza Actual*, "Fascinating forms and colours", pg. 72-73, April 2011.



Franco Monti

About Franco Monti and African Art:

- F. Monti, "Introduzione all' arte africana", "Arte Figurativa" n° 16, ed Alfieri & Lacroix, November-Dicember 1959.
- F. Monti, "Le arti primitive", volume IX of the collection "Capolavori nei secoli", Fratelli Fabbri Editore, Milano, 1961-1964 dedicated to extraeuropean arts.
- F. Monti, "Arti primitive. 35 sculture d' Africa e d'America" published in "Collezione Le Presenze" ed Galleria Blù, 1961-1962", vol. V
- F. Monti, "Sculture africane" for the congress "Colloquio Artistico Euro-Afro-Asiatico", 6th-20th of July 1963, Livorno, under the auspices of Italian commission of U.N.E.S.C.O. Introduction to the African Art section by Franco Russoli.
- L. Terzi, "Il cacciatore di idoli", "Panorama", ed. Mondadori, August 1965 (interview).
- F. Monti, "Maschere Africane", Fabbri Editore, 1966.
- F. Monti, "Terracotte Precolombiane", Fabbri Editore, 1966.
- F. Monti, "Arte dell' Africa nera", published in the magazine "il Capitale", ed. Giada, July - August 1972.
- F. Monti, "I misteri dell' arte nera", "Bolaffi Arte", ed. G.A. Salamon, March 1973.
- Roberto Tabozzi, "Puntare sul NERO", in the magazine "Capital" n° 10, December 1980, Milano.
- Maria Pia Quarzo Cerina, "Afrikanische Kunst aus europäischer Sicht", in the magazine "du", Zürich, April 1984.
- Marisa Vescovo, "Stupore e sacralità", in the magazine "Leader", Roma, March 1986.
- "Juliet art magazine", n1 24, 1986, Trieste, review of the exhibition "Sculptura monumentale della Nigeria. Le figure degli Ibo".
- F. Monti, "Black Africa. The Legacy", FMR, N1 49, 1991 (international English edition).
- F. Monti "L' arte africana. Primitiva? No, primaria.", Giornale dell' Arte, N° 142, March 1996.



Franco Monti

Selection of exhibitions of African, Pre-Columbian and Oceanic Art organised by Franco Monti:

- Galleria F. Monti, "Arti Primitive", Milano, Italy, 1957 in collaboration with the friend Jean Pierre Dubosc.
- Galleria L'Ariete, Milano, Italy, 1958. African and Pre-Columbian Art exhibition.
- Galleria il Sestante, "Arte Negra", Milano, Italy, 1959.
- "Arte dell' Oceania", Galleria dell' Ariete, Milano, Italy, 1959.
- Galleria Cichi, "Sculture dell'Arfica Nera", Roma, Italy, 1960.
- La Frezzaria, Venezia, Italy, 1960. Exhibition organised by Paolo Barozzi with the collaboration of di F. Monti.
- Galleria La Palma, Locarno, Switzerland, 1960, Pre-Columbian Art exhibition.
- Galleria La Nuova Pesa, "Arti Primitive – Africa / America precolombiana / Oceania", Roma, Italy, December 1961.
- Galleria La Bussola, "Arti Primitive", Torino, Italy, 1961. African and Pre-Columbian Art exhibition. Catalogue introduction by Guido Ballo and texts by F. Monti.
- Galleria Blu, "Costanti Poetiche nell'Arte", Milano, Italy, 1962. African and Pre-Columbian Art exhibition. Catalogue introduction by Franco Russoli followed by text on African Art by Franco Monti.
- Galleria Le Stagioni, "Arti Primitive", Padova, Italy, May 1962. African and Pre-Columbian sculptures on show.
- "EUROPA OGGI Colloquio Artistico Euro-Afro-Asiatico", "Les Sources du XX Siècle –Sculture Africane della Collezione Franco Monti – Milano". Touring exhibition: Livorno, Montecatini – Isola d'Elba, Italy, July 1963.
- "Festival dei due Mondi", Spoleto, Italy, 1965. African Art exhibition curated by F. Monti and organised by Giancarlo Menotti.
- Galleria Milano, "Scultura tradizionale dell' Africa", Milano, Italy, May 1966. Exhibition curated by F. Monti.
- Kunsthalle Darmstadt, "Plastik Aus Schwarz Afrika", Kunstkalle, Darmstadt, Juni- Juli, Germany 1967. General introduction by Hans- Gunther Sperlich. Exhibition introduction by F. Monti.
- Galleria Civica d' Arte Moderna, "Il Cavaliere Azzurro. Der Blaue Reiter." Galleria Civica d' Arte Moderna, Torino, Italy, 1971. Introductions by L. Mallé, L. Carluccio. The section of "Le arti primitive nella cultura d' oggi" curated by F. Monti.
- Limited edition, not for sale, of 50 African Art photos taken by Mario Carrieri of pieces pertaining to the Monzino Collection with provenance F. Monti, Milano, Italy, 1976. In the introduction, Carlo Monzino pays tribute to F. Monti.
- Palazzo Reale, Comune di Milano, "Origini dell' astrattismo. Verso altri orizzonti del reale" Silvana



Franco Monti

editoriale, Milano, Italy, 1979. The section on non european art is curated by Franco Monti.

- Galleria Arte e Altro, "Capolavori della scultura africana", Milano, Italy, 1984.
- Studio Carlo Grossetti, "Scultura monumentale della Nigeria. Le figure degli Ibo", Milano, Italy, 1985-1986.
- Centro Culturale di Arte Contemporanea Internazionale, "Sculture Africane", Rocca Borromeo di Angera, Lago Maggiore, Italy, 1990. Exhibition organised by F. Monti with the artistic collaboration of Pierre Restany.
- Studio Carlo Grossetti, "Masterpieces", Milano, Italy, 1995. Exhibition of Igbo sculptures confronted with a selection of contemporary paintings.
- Museo e Villaggio Africano, "Africa dalla memoria all'immagine", Basella di Ugnano, Bergamo, Italy, 2002. Introduction by Pierre Restany. Texts by Daniela Bognolo and F. Monti.
- Sala Tabera, Castillo Santa Barbara, "Memorias de Africa", Alicante, Spain, 2006. African art confronted with a selection of concrete sculptures created by F. Monti.