

# VIIVA ITALIA

*Italian Masters from the  
Rolando and Siv Pieraccini Collection*

Lönström Art Museum

8 June – 8 September 2013



ALBERTO BURRI: *Alvar Aalto*, detail, 1977

The 2013 summer exhibition at the Lönström Art Museum presents graphic art by 20th century Italian artists, whose use of a sensitive and expressive line also gives the exhibition its title: “Viiva” is the Finnish word for “line” as well as an allusion to the Italian word “viva” (long live). *Viiva Italia* showcases the collection of prints, drawings and watercolours donated to the Ateneum Art Museum by **Rolando and Siv Pieraccini**. Works in the show were selected in cooperation with **Erkki Anttonen**, Project Manager in charge of collections at Ateneum Art Museum.

Rolando Pieraccini is a book publisher who began collecting art in the 1960s. Having lived in Finland for nearly 40 years, he has in many ways promoted the cultural relations between Finland and Italy. Rolando and Siv Pieraccini donated their collection of 20th century modern Italian art to the Ateneum Art Museum in 2008. The *Viiva Italia* exhibition was produced by the Ateneum Art Museum, where it was on show 2010–2011. In 2013, the exhibition has toured the Mikkeli Art Museum and the South Karelia Art Museum in Lappeenranta. The touring exhibition also includes new works added to the collection in recent years.

Rolando Pieraccini was originally inspired to collect art by prints made by artists of the Urbino School. The unifying characteristic of the artists of the school was the purity of technique. The school’s creator and leading figure was **Leonardo Castellani** (1896–1984). While emphasising the importance of technical perfection, he allowed students to experiment stylistically and to develop their own personal expression. **Giorgio Morandi** (1890–1964) employed a systematic method of hatching in his pictures, an approach that had a significant influence on other 20th century Italian printmakers.

Several of the artists featured in the Pieraccini Collection used not only printmaking but also painting and sculpture as their medium. Italian artists played an important role in post-World War II figurative sculpture. **Marino Marini** (1901–1980), **Giacomo Manzù** (1908–1991) and **Emilio Grego** (1913–1995) shared an interest not only in sculpture but also in ancient art, Etruscan sculpture in particular, a fact clearly visible in their works in the present exhibition.

Many artists were writers themselves, but their literary interest also comes across in the form of direct references and even words in their pictures. Some of Marino Marini’s works are illustrations to **William Shakespeare’s** poems, which represent the colourful climax of his printmaking career. The print portfolio of **Afro** (Basaldella) (1912–1976) references **Charles Baudelaire’s** (1821–1867) volume of poems *Les Fleurs du Mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*). **Renzo Vespignani** (1924–2001) depicts the harsh life of people living on the outskirts of Rome, which also links his work to Italian neorealist cinema and literature. Music and rhythm are clear influences in many of the works in the exhibition.

Interaction between artists was lively in the 20th century, and gave rise to new art movements. Many Italian artists travelled to Paris, where they met such avantgarde figures as **Pablo Picasso** (1881–1973) and **Georges Braque** (1882–1963). **Giorgio de Chirico** (1888–1978) is generally considered one of the fathers of Surrealism, along with the Russian artist **Marc Chagall** (1887–1985). In the late 1910s, de Chirico and **Carlo Carrà** (1881–1966) developed a new style of painting called *Pittura metafisica* (metaphysical art). Both artists are represented in the Viiva Italia exhibition.

The Pieraccini Collection only features two female artists: in addition to work by **Fiorella Diamantini** (b. 1931), the show includes prints by **Federica Galli** (1932–2009). Rolando Pieraccini sought to acquire more work by female artists, but Italian women born before World War II seldom made a career in art, and even more seldom as printmakers.

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