



press release

**TOKYO - ENRICO CASTELLANI'S *WHITE SURFACE (SUPERFICIE BIANCA)*
RETURNS TO ITALIAN EMBASSY
ARTWORK DISPLAYED AGAIN AFTER METICULOUS RESTORATION**

Milan and Tokyo - April 17th, 2019 - The Embassy of Italy in Tokyo, the Prada Group and the Enrico Castellani Foundation are pleased to announce that on 17 April 2019 the work *White Surface (Superficie bianca)* by Enrico Castellani, part of the Farnesina collection held at the Italian Embassy, was returned to its original site – the entrance hall of the Residence of the Diplomatic Mission – after being delicately restored with the support of the Prada Group.

The artwork, now restored to its original condition after the careful intervention of Studio Restauri Formica in Milan, was created in 1966 before being earmarked by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Embassy of Italy in Tokyo.

The restoration was preceded and guided by a thorough investigation into the condition of the artwork and possible intervention methods, with the full involvement of the Enrico Castellani Foundation from the earliest stages.

All the parties involved in the restoration – the Enrico Castellani Foundation, the Prada Group, the Embassy of Italy in Tokyo and Studio Restauri Formica – came to the joint decision to proceed with a careful cleaning of the work and repairs to deep cuts. The perfectly executed intervention led to the full recovery of the work's chromatic and volumetric values.

The Italian Ambassador in Japan, Giorgio Starace, said: “The restoration, carried out by Studio Restauri Formica in Milan and supported entirely by Prada, has restored to its original beauty the work by Enrico Castellani, *White Surface (Superficie bianca)*, which we are honoured to keep at the Embassy. This is a very successful example of collaboration between Italian institutions and a large business that is highly sensitive to the artistic and cultural heritage of our country: Prada. My most sincere gratitude goes to Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli. I am also grateful to the President of the Enrico Castellani Foundation, Lorenzo Wirz Castellani, for attending our event today and for his invaluable support over the past few months.”

Lorenzo Wirz Castellani, President of the Enrico Castellani Foundation, said: “I am particularly grateful to all those who have contributed to the success of this important recovery project. I was greatly moved to see Enrico Castellani's work before the restoration and then to be able to admire it again once the work was completed. I am particularly pleased that others can now enjoy the exceptional textured surface, and that this unique work of art is again on display at the Embassy of Italy in Tokyo, especially given that my father had links to Japan going back to the early sixties, renewed by the conferment of the *Praemium Imperiale for Painting* in 2010, and further confirmed today.”



Patrizio Bertelli, CEO of the Prada Group, said: “I enthusiastically accepted the proposal of Ambassador Starace to support the restoration of this important painting by one of the most emblematic Italian artists of our time, to whom I was bound not only by admiration for his work, but also from a personal friendship. Contributing to the restoration of this work was not only an opportunity to recover an important testimony to the artistic heritage of Italy, but also to pay tribute to the memory of a friend.”

The Embassy of Italy in Tokyo and the Prada Group celebrated the return of *White Surface* (*Superficie bianca*) to its original location with a presentation event for the work, which was attended by representatives of the worlds of art, culture, business, fashion and international diplomacy.

For more information:

Prada Press Office

Tel. 02 567811

Email corporatepress@prada.com

Press Office of the Embassy of Italy in Tokyo

Email stampa.tokyo@esteri.it



ENRICO CASTELLANI AND JAPAN

Castellani, who died in December 2017, declared in a 2011 interview that, "Japan was the first foreign country that became interested in my work back in the 1960s," a bond that continued unabated, further confirmed by the conferment in 2010 of the *Praemium Imperiale for Painting*, Japan's most important international art award.

Enrico Castellani's first participation in group exhibitions in Japan dates back to those years¹ and the subsequent purchase of his works by museums and institutions is further confirmation of how much his pieces were appreciated in Japan even then. In 1968, he held his first personal exhibition in Tokyo at the Tokyo Gallery, the most important private gallery of contemporary art in the capital. Founded in 1950 and still active today, it has contributed to the spread of Western art since its opening by organising and holding exhibitions of works by artists such as Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein and Jackson Pollock. At these exhibitions, some museums bought works by Enrico Castellani including *Yellow Surface (Superficie gialla)*, now in the collection of the Ohara Museum of Art in Kurashiki, or the circular *White Surface (Superficie bianca)*, part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in Osaka.

He would later participate in several other collective² and individual exhibitions, including shows at the Jiyugaoka Gallery in Tokyo in 1977, the Koh Gallery in Tokyo in 1981, the Kodama Gallery in Osaka in 1988, accompanied by a publication with commentary by Pier Giovanni Castagnoli, and the Kamakura Gallery in Tokyo in 1991, documented by a catalogue with commentary by Iseki Masaaki.

¹ In 1966, Enrico Castellani featured in *Third Exhibition Dept.*, organised by the Nagaoka Museum of Contemporary Art, with *White Surface (Superficie bianca)*, and in 1967 he participated in an exhibition dedicated to contemporary Italian art organised by Palma Bucarelli and Yukio Kobayashi at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo.

² Two particularly noteworthy exhibitions were *Contemporary Art. Dialogue between the East and the West* at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo in 1969, and *100 anni d'Arte Italiana Moderna 1880-1980* (100 years of Modern Italian Art 1880-1980), also at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo in 1982, curated by Giorgio De Marchis. In 1984, some of his works were included in the travelling exhibition *Mistero e mito. Momenti della pittura italiana 1930-1960-1990* (Mystery and myth. Moments of Italian painting 1930-1960-1990), which was displayed at the Fukuyama Museum of Art, the Chiba Prefectural Museum of Art and the Iida City Art Museum and which also arrived in India, with a stop at the Kochi Museum of Art. The subsequent exhibition entitled *Arte italiana 1945-1995. Il visibile e l'invisibile* (Italian art 1945-1995. The visible and the invisible), between 1997 and 1998, appeared in several locations: the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art in Nagoya, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, the Yonago City Museum of Art in Tottori, and the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art.