



Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza

The visit tour

The starting point is the **bookshop**/ticket-office that offers a wide range of popular and scientific publications dedicated to ceramics, as well as artefacts from the artisan workshops of Faenza. It houses the large panel by Pietro Melandri, from the hotel Roma in Bologna purchased by the Museum in 1989. It is beside the **didactic section**, preparatory to a visit to the museum, a small space of fundamental importance for understanding the various ceramic materials and the processes used to create the works.

From here, you can access the international collections, representative of the great civilizations. The first collection is dedicated to the **Far East: China, Japan, South-East Asia**. Visitors can admire about 400 artefacts of rare beauty, from the first century to the present day. They are representative of the main centres of ceramic production in Far Asia, those that have made the history of international porcelain trade from the time of Marco Polo to the time of the East India Companies, thanks to which Europe knew, appreciated and imitated the technical and artistic genius of Asian potters. The collection has recently been expanded with contemporary Korean and Japanese works.

The **Pre-Columbian Ceramics** collection shows more than two hundred very rare objects coming from the Mesoamerican, Caribbean, Amazonian, Peruvian, southern Andean, Pampas areas: a ceramic production of many archaeological cultures which, although they share the quality of "pre-Columbian", are very different from each other. (A section of pre-Columbian fabrics will soon be set up in the two chests of drawers placed at the end of the room, to document a unique and rare decorative tradition that finds many similarities in ceramic material).

The Hall of **Classical Ceramics** follows, with examples of materials representative of the most important productions of the Mediterranean basin, chronologically located from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period. Of interest are the **Roman ceramics** with a sampling of objects of use: amphorae, oil lamps and sealed earthenware.

On the mezzanine floor there is an important permanent collection dedicated to **ceramic floor and wall tiles** between West and East, from the Middle Age to the contemporary age. A sample of tiles that testify to the use of ceramics in architecture and show the evolution of techniques and styles.

This is followed by the **Ancient Near-Orient and Egypt** collection. It, in addition to renewed exhibition supports and educational equipment, proposes a considerable increase in the collections, enriched with new objects from both the MIC deposits for the Palestinian area and the MuCiv in Rome, with a significant nucleus of ceramics from Iran from the Iron Period (1200-800 BC). Worthy of note is the enrichment of Ancient Egypt, with precious vases from the pre-dynastic period (4th millennium BC) and a wide selection of fragments from the New Kingdom, in faïence (1539-1077 BC), until the Roman age. On the Iranian front, a rare example are the Persian bricks from the **Palace of Darius** of the Achemenides period, from the 6th century BC.

The **Islamic Section** joins the path, which encloses the inner courtyard, to the bookshop. The material on display is able to provide an overview of the production of the ancient Islamic world, one of the most interesting collections in Italy. They are works of lusterware with an enchanting aspect, siliceous faïence imitating porcelain, white and blue cobalt decorations, Iranian, Syrian, Egyptian and Turkish works accompanied by a sample of more than a thousand fragments on display in 64 drawers for easy consultation.

At the end of the Ancient Civilizations route, visitors go up to the first floor. On the entrance they can admire "Nero e Oro", a monumental work by **Alberto Burri**, executed by the artist in the *Bottega Gatti* in Faenza and donated to the Museum in 1993.

The upper floor opens to the visit with the **"time line"** that allows you to retrace the evolution of ceramic art through a selection of works on display at the MIC, divided chronologically, describing technological

achievements and stylistic innovations. The time line is in close dialogue with the central showcase that shows works organized by cultural and temporal themes: the great civilizations of ceramics.

This is followed by the **collection of Faenza majolica** from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century housed in the evocative space of the former convent of San Maglorio, respectful of the ancient architecture. The exhibition opens with works in "archaic" style, characterized by a sober two-tone green and brown, next to the decoration of the "zaffera", which includes the precious cobalt blue. The rich production of the Renaissance follows in a succession of styles such as Moorish Hispanic, love pottery, porcelain majolica, the decoration "a berettino", until the achievement of technical perfection in majolica "istoriato". It concludes, in the mid-sixteenth century, with the "whites" of Faenza that mark the establishment of the association between the words Faïence and majolica, which still remains today.

Continuing along the tour, you can admire the **Section of Italian Majolica in the Renaissance**, divided into regional areas. We start from Lazio, with its peculiar archaic shapes and decorations, and move on to Umbria, with the evocative majolica with iridescent metallic reflections of Gubbio and Deruta. Next to it there are the ceramics of Castelli d'Abruzzo with the Corredo Orsini - Colonna in evidence. We continue towards the Marche Region with the sumptuous majolica "istoriato" represented by the production of Urbino and Casteldurante, to conclude with Veneto and Tuscany, where the "Bowl in Medici porcelain" stands out, a very rare example of Italian Renaissance research aimed at porcelain production.

A subsequent section illustrates the development of **Italian ceramics from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century** exhibited in geographical and chronological order: a rich representation of unique and valuable works representing many production centers including Faenza, Bologna, Nove, Florence, Pesaro, Naples, Castelli, Milan, Savona. The seventeenth century continues on the line of "Bianchi", acquires details from the Baroque, approaches the popular language in a succession of truly unique works. A large room is dedicated to the eighteenth century in Faenza with a considerable production of the **Manifattura Ferniani**, which expresses a decorative taste that was influenced on the one hand by European fashions, especially French, and on the other by exotic suggestions, such as "chinoiserie". The nineteenth century is represented both by painting on ceramics, in line with contemporary painting movements, and by the revisited "revival" of Renaissance pottery.

We then move on to the new building which houses the **modern and contemporary ceramics** collection and includes the Italian section on the first floor and European ceramics on the ground floor. The former offers a wide-ranging vision from the refined Art Nouveau creations of Galileo Chini to contemporary production. All of them are narrated through the works of Domenico Baccarini and the artists of the *Cenacolo* that took its name from him, Arturo Martini, great interpreter of twentieth-century sculpture, Gio Ponti refined creator of porcelain created by Richard Ginori di Doccia, Tullio D'Albissola, protagonist with Riccardo Gatti of a futurist season. The second **post-war period** is characterized by the sculpture of great artists such as Angelo Biancini, Nanni Valentini, Fausto Melotti, Lucio Fontana, Carlo Zauli and many others.

The **European section**, which shows a new exhibition, illustrates the most representative production realities from the 16th to the 20th century. The retrospective nucleus has been divided according to ceramic materials (majolica, stoneware, earthenware, porcelain) to facilitate dialogue and comparison between nations. The ceramics of the twentieth century are the expression of the major artistic currents: from German Jugendstil, Austrian Secessionism, Catalan Modernism, French Art Nouveau and Deco, Scandinavian, Dutch, Central European, English and Hungarian manufactures. In the same room there is a "museum within the museum" with works resulting from a donation of excellence, by **Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall and Fernand Léger**. Of 1949, and expressly dedicated to the Museum, is Picasso's oval plate depicting "The dove of peace", to which the master attached a note bearing the inscription "pour un céramiste, qui dit l'Italie dit Faenza".

In the basement will be set up in 2021, the section dedicated to **Ceramics of use, Design and ceramic coverings**. The room now includes a rare example of a 19th century Faenza **nativity scene** composed of terracotta statues plasticised by Filippo Galli and the great set design on paper by Romolo Liverani.

Along the route of the Museum you can admire installations and suggestive sculptures by contemporary artists.