



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



The Furnaces

When the Ceramic Arts in Fontebuoni closed down, Galileo and Chino founded a new manufacturing in Borgo San Lorenzo in 1906, naming it San Lorenzo Furnaces and adopting the image of a grating, attributed to the Patron Saint of the village. Returning to their homeland, the Chinis were able not only to consolidate a bond, never interrupted, with a family past rich in ferment, but also put to interest the capacities and experiences of all the components of the family itself.

Over a period of forty years of activity, which terminated in 1944 when the factory was destroyed by bombing, the Furnaces realized products of remarkable quality in many fields of decorative and applied art. In fact, apart from the traditional production of ceramics, there was also that of stained-glass windows, wrought iron and furniture, without excluding activities of urban and architectonic nature.

Inside the Chini manufacturing, the work was the result of everyone's efforts, through an organization which involved and enhanced the expertise of each one, permitting the supply of accomplishments of great structural commitment to each prospective customer.

At least until his departure for Siam (1911), Galileo was the principal author and inventor of the decorations, while the technical direction was taken care of by Chino. Subsequently the Furnaces were enriched by the contribution of Chino's sons, Tito and Augusto, while the intervention of Galileo, nevertheless present, lessened because of his numerous commitments, as a consequence of his affirmation as a painter and stage designer.

From the stylistic point of view, the intense production of the village factory initially accentuated the tendency towards a rarefaction of the naturalistic aspects, creating decorations of an almost abstract elegance, mindful of the projects of the European Liberty culture. However on this updated component, references and citations of the great Italian - and particularly Tuscan - artistic tradition are grafted, perceptible, above all, in the accomplishments of an official or religious nature. In fact, the tributes to medieval and Renaissance art are frequent.

Often the contemporary presence of these two cultural trends is amalgamated in results of great stylistic uniformity and of undeniable effectiveness.