



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



The Monumental Cemetery - Antella

The monumental Cemetery of the Confraternity of Misericordia of St. Mary in Antella, rising as a first complex in 1856 and extended over the years, is a real art gallery.

Sepulchers and private chapels, always given in an unrefined state, were made more refined by artists freely chosen by the purchasers, while the Misericordia always took care of having open galleries and chapels intended for common burials decorated, putting into practice an unusual philosophy which has never been interrupted and still today continues.

The two commissions have moved in parallel, privileging decorations in antique style typical of the Florentine workshops of the fifteenth century, and commissioned both to great artists like Galileo Chini and also to good local decorators.

The 'workshop' of the Chinis is present here in numerous works of painting, ceramics and glassware carried out in the first half of the XX century and springing from the mind and the hands of Dario, Leto, Galileo and Tito Chini and accomplished in the St. Lorenzo Manufacturing Furnaces.

In 1906 Galileo and Leto paint the dome of a chapel which will be dedicated to St. Matilda for the Misericordia, and exactly in those years the Princess Matilde Carafa di San Lorenzo commissions to the same artists the decoration of her private chapel designed by the architect Roster and carried out by the engineer Guidi. In 1910 they paint a private chapel for the Barocchi family as well as the vault of another dedicated to St. Guido and commissioned by the Misericordia.

In the Spring of 1911 Galileo Chini frescos the dome of the central entrance arch with a glory of Angels and also paints the porch. He leaves to his pupil, Gaetano Ciampalini, the job of decorating the private chapel because, called to Siam to decorate the imperial palace, he has to leave.

Returning to Italy, Galileo has his interest directed elsewhere, but the work of the St. Lorenzo Furnaces, favoured by the relationship of collaboration with the architect Giusti, who became director of works in 1923, continues through the realization of the decorations of Tito between 1924 and 1931. Almost incessantly, in the course of the years, the St. Lorenzo Chini Manufacturing supplies floors and covering, fichtu, lunettes, panels, globes, flower vases and stained-glass windows.

In 1946 Galileo Chini returns to the cemetery of Antella to bury his young daughter, Isotta, and in a painting with tempera above the altar of the chapel dedicated to St. Silvester, he portrays her from behind, at the foot of the Cross, kneeling beside the Holy Women. Galileo also paints the lunette above the door, and ten years later finds the peace of the sepulchre beside his daughter.