



FONDAZIONE PIRELLI

“SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH” by Renato Guttuso - 1961

On the first floor of the Pirelli Foundation, the North wall is totally covered by a large painting depicting men and women in white coats, intent on studying the world through instruments and microscopes. The title of the work is “Scientific Research” and the artist is Renato Guttuso, who created it for Pirelli in 1961.

That year, in fact, the Expo “Italia ‘61” opened in Turin, dedicated to the first centenary of Italian Unification. Pirelli was among the exhibiting companies, with its own pavillion focusing on scientific research and its methods.

Sicilian *maestro* Renato Guttuso was asked to visually synthesize the following: “...*the long march of mankind in his knowledge of nature and the laws of nature. To the primitive scientist who studied the sky and the stars, the earth appeared flat and barren. To modern scientists penetrating slowly, with better and better tools, the mysteries of matter and of life, the earth reveals itself like a fascinating portal reaching out spatially.*” (“Arrivederci to 2011” editorial attributed to Arrigo Castellani, Pirelli Magazine, 4 August 1961)

Guttuso drew a giant, wildly colorful sketch of more than five meters at the base and more than three meters high. It was a panel so big that it had to be divided into three parts.

The drawing was then entrusted to the Maestri Mosaicisti dell’Accademia delle Belle Arti di Ravenna (Mosaic Masters of the Arts Academy of Ravenna), who transformed Guttuso’s vision in a mosaic in scale 1:1. The mosaic was camped in the Pirelli pavillion in Turin for the entire duration of the Expo.

Once the centenary celebrations had ended, the mosaic was transferred to the Cables Laboratory in Bicocca – which had just been entirely renovated – and then, in recent years, was hung in the Tyre Research and Development building. With the renovation of Building 134 and the decision for it to house the Pirelli Foundation, the mosaic found its definitive place in the Consultation Room on the first floor.

But after 1961 there was no trace of the original drawings. Divided in three parts, they actually went down different paths, though they all stayed within the confines of Bicocca which was an area changing from day to day. In 2009 a “treasure hunt” lasting several months finally led to all three and made it possible to reunite them. Although they were found in good condition, they were sent to a specialized laboratory for restoration that would preserve them well for the future.

So starting today, the original of “Scientific Research” by Renato Guttuso – in its original triptych form – can be viewed by the public at the Pirelli Foundation.