

Biography

Maria Cristina Carlini, (1942), was born and spent the first years of her life in Varese. The daughter of an industrialist, she moved with her family to Milan in 1952.

Her artistic journey began in the early 1970s in Palo Alto, California, where she attended a two-year specialized ceramics course. Upon returning to Europe in 1975, she continued her artistic activity in Brussels while simultaneously teaching pottery wheel techniques. She later returned to Milan, and in **1978** opened her own studio, "Le Terre", in the Brera district.

In **1983**, she inaugurated her first solo exhibition at the Rocca di Angera (Varese) and, from **1984**, attended specialization courses at the California College of Arts and Crafts in San Francisco, where she drew close to the new artistic movement *New Ceramics*. During these years, she held solo exhibitions and participated in group shows, including the **1990** solo exhibition "*Il colore delle terre*" (The Color of the Earths) at the Civica Raccolta della Terraglia in Cerro, near Laveno (Varese).

In **1992**, with the exhibition "*Découvertes '92*", she showcased her work at the Grand Palais in Paris, presented by Elena Pontiggia; the following year, the Christine Colmant Art Gallery in Brussels hosted her works.

From this moment on, in addition to stoneware and lava stone, materials such as Corten steel, iron, and wood increasingly became part of her expressive language, used especially for monumental-sized works. Their imposing scale became a distinctive hallmark of her work.

In **2003**, she exhibited at the Galleria Borgogna in Milan, presented by Luciano Caramel.

In **2004**, she was the protagonist in Rome at Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza - State Archives with a solo exhibition promoted by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities entitled "*Tracce e Luoghi*" (Traces and Places), curated by Carlo Franza.

Between 2004 and **2005**, she participated in the exhibition "*Nutrirsi con l'arte*" (Nourishing Oneself with Art) at the Museum of Antiquities in Turin. Also in Turin, in 2005, she held a solo exhibition in the monumental complex of Palazzo Reale titled "*Stanze*" (Rooms), curated by Carlo Franza; in the same year, the National Museum of Villa Pisani in Strà, Venice, hosted the solo exhibition "*Reperti*" (Finds / Artifacts).

In **2006**, she exhibited at the Central State Archives in Rome Eur with the exhibition "*Terre*" (Earths), curated by Carlo Franza; on this occasion, her large sculpture titled *Fortezza* (Fortress) was permanently placed in the square in front of the building. In the same year, she held a solo exhibition at the Galleria delle Battaglie in Brescia, curated by Claudio Cerritelli, who also invited her to participate in the Suzzara Prize.

The year **2007** saw the permanent installation of three monumental sculptures: *La Porta della Giustizia* (The Gate of Justice) in Milan in the square of the Court of Auditors; *La città che sale* (The Rising City) at the Fiera di Milano-Rho, presented by Philippe Daverio; and *La vittoria di Samotraccia* (The Winged Victory of Samothrace) in Cosenza at Piazza dei Valdesi, accompanied by a solo exhibition at the city's National Library.

In **2008**, the Italian Cultural Institute in Prague hosted her solo exhibition, and at the same time, the artist designed the set for the opera "*Ecco la mia bell'Orsa*" (Here is my beautiful Bear) with music by Federico Gozzellino, staged at the National Theater. Subsequently, Maria Cristina Carlini exhibited at the Palazzo del Senato of the State Archives of Milan with a solo exhibition curated by Gillo Dorfles.

The sculptor's exhibitions during **2009** were of great international significance.

The city of Paris hosted her monumental sculptures in the exhibition "*Maria Cristina Carlini. Sculture nella città*" (Maria Cristina Carlini. Sculptures in the City), curated by Luciano Caramel, held in the Mairie of the 5th arrondissement and in the streets of the historic center - Place du Panthéon, Place de la Sorbonne, Rue Soufflot, and Boulevard Saint-Michel. From May to July, her large-scale works arrived in Madrid, displayed in Calle Mayor, Paseo de la Castellana, Calle de Juan Bravo, Plaza Alfredo Mahou, and at the Italian Cultural Institute, with an exhibition curated by Gillo Dorfles.

In Loreto (Ancona), several works were featured in the exhibition "*Maria Cristina Carlini. Inventario Contemporaneo*" (Contemporary Inventory) in the Bramante cellars; the imposing sculpture *Pellegrini* (Pilgrims) remained on permanent display in the Gardens of Porta Marina. She was later awarded the Ignazio Silone Prize for Culture on Capitol Hill in Rome. 2009 concluded with an important presentation at the Guggenheim Collection in Venice, conceived and curated by Luciano Caramel, where the monograph "*Maria Cristina Carlini*", edited by Yacouba Konaté, was launched.

Exhibitions continued throughout **2010**: in Reggio Calabria, the Aragonese Castle hosted a solo exhibition, and the sculpture *Monumento al Mediterraneo* (Monument to the Mediterranean) was placed on permanent display on the Italo Falcomatà Promenade.

Carlini was invited to participate in the Expo 2010 Shanghai with several monumental sculptures and in the exhibition organized for International Women's Day. Her monumental work *Viandanti II* (Wayfarers II) was permanently installed in front of the Italian Embassy in Beijing, and she inaugurated the solo exhibition "*Colloquio tra giganti*" (Dialogue Between Giants) in the Forbidden City.

She also exhibited in Jinan, capital of Shandong Province, China, with a solo show at the Shandong University of Art and Design. Also in 2010, the monumental sculpture *Letteratura II* (Literature II) was officially inaugurated in Tianjin, permanently placed inside the Italian Quarter. Back in Beijing, on the occasion of the 4th Art Biennale, she participated with the unreleased work *Le Danzatrici* (The Dancers) at the NAMOC (National Art Museum of China). Shortly after, coinciding with the World Expo 2010, Shanghai welcomed her with an exhibition of monumental works in People's Square, and the sculpture *Legami II* (Ties II) remained permanently at the Sculpture Park.

Still in 2010, she exhibited in France on the seafront of Cap d'Agde and in the United States in Denver on the university campuses of Auraria and the Rocky Mountain College of Art+Design, where the two monumental works *Madre* (Mother) and *Out & Inside* remained permanently.

She participated with the installation *Labirinto* (Labyrinth) in the International Sculpture Biennale titled "*Scultura Internazionale a Racconigi, 2010*" (International Sculpture in Racconigi, 2010), curated by Luciano Caramel.

In **2011**, she participated as guest of honor at the third edition of the Contemporary Art Fair *aam – arte accessibile milano*, held at the headquarters of the 24 ORE Group. Subsequently, she traveled to Miami for the inauguration ceremony of one of her major monumental works, *Icaro* (Icarus), which opened the new Sculpture Park adjacent to the Corpus Christi Church; additionally, the imposing *Vittoria di Samotracia* (Winged Victory of Samothrace) was placed in front of the entrance of Miami Dade College. In December, she was in Rome for the group exhibition "*Lo scultore, la terra. Artisti e ricerche 1920-2011*" (The

Sculptor, the Earth. Artists and Research 1920-2011), curated by Flaminio Gualdoni, which featured major 20th-century and contemporary exponents dedicated to ceramic sculpture. In **2012**, Maria Cristina Carlini's works were exhibited at the headquarters of the Province of Varese on the occasion of the exhibition "*Scultori a Villa Recalcatti*" (Sculptors at Villa Recalcatti), curated by Flaminio Gualdoni.

Between November 2012 and January **2013**, she held a major solo exhibition in Milan at the Mudima Foundation and the Stelline Foundation, on the occasion of which the artist's monograph, edited by Flaminio Gualdoni, was presented.

The Royal Castle of Govone (Cuneo) welcomed her with the retrospective "*Maria Cristina Carlini. Fare secondo natura*" (Acting According to Nature), curated by Martina Corgnati; she later participated in the group exhibition "*Futuro Anteriore. Le Arti della Ceramica*" (Future Perfect. The Arts of Ceramics), curated by Mara Ruzza at the Ex-Macello in Padua. Between 2013 and **2014**, she took part in the group exhibition "*Wunderkammer. Arte, Natura, Meraviglia ieri e oggi*" (Wunderkammer. Art, Nature, Wonder Yesterday and Today), curated by Lavinia Galli and Martina Mazzotta at the Poldi Pezzoli Museum and the Gallerie d'Italia in Milan. During 2014, on the occasion of the Italian semester of the European Presidency, the solo exhibition "*Terra, fuoco, ferro, legno. Maria Cristina Carlini*" (Earth, Fire, Iron, Wood. Maria Cristina Carlini), curated by Martina Corgnati, was exhibited at the Italian Cultural Institutes of Cologne, Strasbourg, and Zagreb.

On the occasion of **EXPO 2015**, at Fieramilano in Rho, South Gate, the imposing 10-meter-high monumental sculpture *La nuova città che sale* (The New Rising City), made of Corten steel and reclaimed wood, was permanently installed, having been presented at the Triennale di Milano by Philippe Daverio.

In **2015**, she took part in the group exhibition "*Teresa de Ávila - mística y transgresora*" (Teresa of Ávila - Mystic and Transgressor), curated by Guadalupe Luceño and Ilse-Maria Dorfstecher at the Palacio de Pimentel in Valladolid and the Inselgalerie in Berlin. For EXPO 2015, at the proposal of Martina Corgnati, the large sculpture *Vento* (Wind) was permanently installed at the Parco dell'Arte at the Idroscalo in Milan. In the same year, the documentary video "*Maria Cristina Carlini. Sculptures*", directed by Matteo Bernardini, was produced.

She participated in the Milan Design Week **2016** at Superstudio Più with the exhibition of the new monumental sculpture *Obelisco* (Obelisk), in Corten steel and reclaimed wood, placed outside, and medium and small-sized *Libri* (Books) at the entrance of the Central Pavilion. In the same year, she presented the solo exhibition "*Maria Cristina Carlini. Le ragioni del luogo*" (The Reasons of the Place), curated by Flaminio Gualdoni at the MyOwnGallery of Superstudio Più.

The year **2017** saw her participate in the group exhibition "*Sequela*" (Sequel), curated by Leonardo Regano, hosted at the Former Church of San Mattia in Bologna, inaugurated in conjunction with Arte Fiera.

In **2019**, her imposing sculpture *Origine* (Origin) was exhibited in Paris at the striking Beffroi in Place du Louvre, while three works from the *Alberi* (Trees) series were chosen as prizes for the winners of the "Made in Steel Award" at Fieramilano in Rho. In the same year, the work *La Chiusa. Omaggio a Leonardo* (The Lock. Homage to Leonardo) was set up under the historic arches of the Roman Bridge in Parma on the occasion of the 4th edition of "*PARMA 360 Festival della creatività contemporanea*" (PARMA 360 Festival of Contemporary Creativity), curated by Camilla Mineo and Chiara Canali. In Milan, the

Artespressione gallery hosted the solo exhibition *“Concepire la materia”* (Conceiving Matter), curated by Matteo Pacini.

In **2020**, she was invited to hold a solo exhibition at the Studio Museo Francesco Messina in the former church of San Sisto, curated by Chiara Gatti and Maria Fratelli. For the occasion, a docufilm on the sculptor directed by Stefano Conca Bonizzoni, titled *“Geologie, memorie della terra”* (Geologies, Memories of the Earth), was produced by Storyville.

In **2021**, she participated in the XIII Florence Biennale at the Fortezza dal Basso in Florence, with the work *“Foresta”* (Forest) exhibited in the Cavaniglia Pavilion curated by Fortunato D’Amico. Furthermore, a major monograph dedicated to her, edited by Chiara Gatti, was presented at the Studio Museo Francesco Messina as part of the BookCity 2021 events.

The year **2022** saw her involved in the group exhibition *“Oro&Blu”* (Gold&Blue) at the Nuova Galleria Morone; she participated in the Genoa Design Week at the invitation of Fortunato D’Amico, and during the Salone del Mobile in Milan, she exhibited at the Superstudio Più venue, where her evocative work *Foresta* (Forest) welcomed visitors. An important solo exhibition, curated by Vittoria Coen, occupied the indoor and outdoor spaces of the Stellite Foundation, where monumental, medium, and small-sized works fully expressed her poetics.

In **2023**, she participated in the Nineteenth Contemporary Art Day promoted by AMACI (Association of Italian Contemporary Art Museums) by opening her studio to the public.

In **2024**, the work *Obelisco* (Obelisk) was permanently placed in Piazza Berlinguer in Milan, artistically and culturally enriching the city.

In the same year, the docufilm *“Maria Cristina Carlini. Il coraggio della grandezza”* (The Courage of Greatness), directed by Pino Farinotti and Tiziano Sossi, was produced and presented at the MEET Digital Culture Centre in Milan, offering a narrative on the sculptor's life and art.

In January **2025**, the sculptor officially opened the Fondazione Maria Cristina Carlini ETS to the public, under the artistic and scientific curation of Flaminio Gualdoni. The foundation was established with the aim of preserving and promoting the artistic heritage created over more than fifty years.

At Villa Panza in Varese, as part of the “Primavera del Premio Chiara” (Chiara Prize Spring), the “meeting between Maria Cristina Carlini and Gabriella Belli” took place, during which the film *“Maria Cristina Carlini. Il coraggio della grandezza”* (The Courage of Greatness), directed by Pino Farinotti and Tiziano Sossi, was screened.

In Milan, in the autumn, her major solo exhibition took place at the Paula Seegy Gallery, enriched by the presentation of the “tirage de luxe”, books containing an authentic work by the artist.

In **2026**, Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico was appointed as the new artistic and scientific director of the Fondazione Maria Cristina Carlini ETS. In March, Carlini participated as the only selected artist with three sculptures at the Chamber of Deputies during SUSTART – Sustainable Art, an international forum under the artistic and scientific direction of Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico. For the Milan Design Week, she was invited to Superstudio Maxi, within the context of SuperCity curated by Giulio Cappellini, to exhibit monumental sculptures, including the unreleased work *Le Tribù* (The Tribes). Concurrently, she inaugurated the new Ex-Koelliker courtyard, as part of the Milan Certosa District, with a large-scale work.

The art collection of the Horti of the Almo Collegio Borromeo in Pavia was enriched by the acquisition of the monumental sculpture *Origine* (Origin, 2019), set within the permanent itinerary of the park. At the Palazzo Reale in Milan, as part of SUART 2026, the exhibition "*Materie viventi*" (Living Matters) is scheduled to run from July 10 to August 30, curated by Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico.

www.mariacristinacarlini.com