

UNESCO
Art Collection
Selected works

**Published in 2021 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France**

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ISBN: 978-92-3-100474-2



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Suggested citation: UNESCO, *Art Collection, selected works*. UNESCO, Paris, 2021.

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Editing and translation provided by UNESCO

All photos in this publication were taken by Nora Houguenade © UNESCO/N. Houguenade

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Cover photo

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 1955-58. Breuer-Nervi-Zehrfuss Architectes. Conference Building with Calder Mobile.

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Pages de garde

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Printed in Belgium by Graphius

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#8

Aspiration



Aspiration

La Freccia (The Arrow)

Arnaldo Pomodoro

/ Giorgio Zanchetti

The idea of permanently placing one of his works in a public space in the French capital was conceived immediately after the successful retrospective exhibition of Arnaldo Pomodoro's monumental sculptures, held in the Gardens of the Palais-Royal in Paris from April to August 2002.

With the support of the Italian Ambassador, Francesco Caruso, it was decided to offer one of the sculptures to UNESCO Headquarters, Paris.

On 4 July 2003 Pomodoro proposed *The Arrow* and the *Torre a spirale* (*Spiral Tower*, later placed in front of the Piccolo Teatro Strehler in Milan), and the former was chosen.

The monumental bronze sculpture was installed outside UNESCO Headquarters in Place de Fontenoy and was inaugurated in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, as a gift from the artist to the Italian Government for UNESCO, on 29 September of the same year. In 2004 *The Arrow* was moved to the Plaza facing the UNESCO Building in rue François Bonvin.

A smaller study in bronze for the work (1993-94) also exists (50 × 75 × 26 cm, edition of 1 + 1 artist's proof. See *Arnaldo Pomodoro. Catalogue raisonné*, n. 921 [AP 687]).

Reflecting on the absolutism of the abstract plastic forms of the twentieth century avant-garde, but also developing archaic, primitivist and primary suggestions, in the late 1950s Arnaldo Pomodoro embarked upon research aimed at turning inside out the very idea of volume and many of the established working methods of Western sculptural tradition. In his works, the abstract form opens and seems to explode, projecting outside and thus offering its internal mechanisms to the viewer. Here, instead of concentrating on the moulding of forms, the sculptor gives a new negative shape to the fragmented and cracked voids that break through it. This shape, which seems to emerge as a negative volume from the polished curved surfaces, is obtained through repeated casting processes. The entrails protruding from these cracks and slashes seem to evoke both the gears and electronic circuits of complex science fiction or alien equipment and the pattern of an archaeological excavation, a necropolis or the ruins of an ancient civilization.

Even though dynamic and linear geometries were present in Pomodoro's production from the start, he did not use large triangular shapes systematically until the 1970s, in works such as *Cono tronco* (*Truncated Cone*, 1972) and *Uccello: a Brancusi* (*Bird: to Brancusi*, 1972-74), to tear apart, enliven and challenge the polished and centripetal volumes of his most distinctive forms: the column, the





disk and the sphere. In the following decades, the wedge and arrowhead were developed in monumental works intended for public places and memorials, such as *Colpo d'ala. Omaggio a Boccioni (The Flap of the Wing. Tribute to Boccioni, 1981-84)* in Los Angeles, the gigantic *Lancia di luce (Lance of Light, 1984-91)* for Terni, the *War Memorial* in Desenzano sul Garda (1990-91), the installation *Frecce al cielo (Arrows toward the Sky, 1991-92)* for the facade of the Maeda House Foundation in Tokyo and *La grande prua (The Great Prow, 1993-94)* for the tomb of Federico Fellini and Giulietta Masina in the cemetery of Rimini.

As David Ebony said in his review of Pomodoro's exhibition at Marlborough Gallery in New York in "Art in America" (September 1996), *The Arrow*, along with other works of the same decade, was a brilliant demonstration that Arnaldo Pomodoro, then entering his seventies, still had "his eye on the future".

"In the years between 1993 and 1995," the sculptor said of *The Arrow*, "I concentrated my research into sculpture and my inventive work on planning and making this sculpture, which resembles a solidified curve that rests on the ground." (A. Pomodoro, *Untitled Statement*, September 2003).

The shape was initially conceived as the main part of a project, devised by Pomodoro in collaboration with the architect Vittorio Gregotti, but never implemented, for a memorial to the Italian judge Giovanni Falcone, killed by a Mafia bomb in 1992. In this Memorial *The Arrow* was supposed to run plunge into the ground under the highway near Capaci, in Sicily, on the exact spot where the bomb attack occurred. Only later was it developed to lie above the ground.

In its final location in Paris, *The Arrow*, preserves its essential character of evidence and harbinger of a civil and social rebirth that from a national perspective extended to become global, and launches its gigantic point like a marker "to indicate UNESCO: this is to signal and symbolize the place where we work together for the improvement of the common values of life and human thought." (*Ibid.*).





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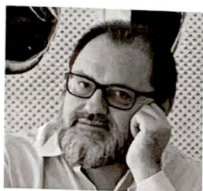
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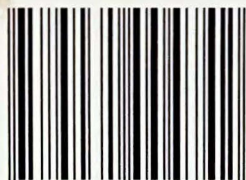
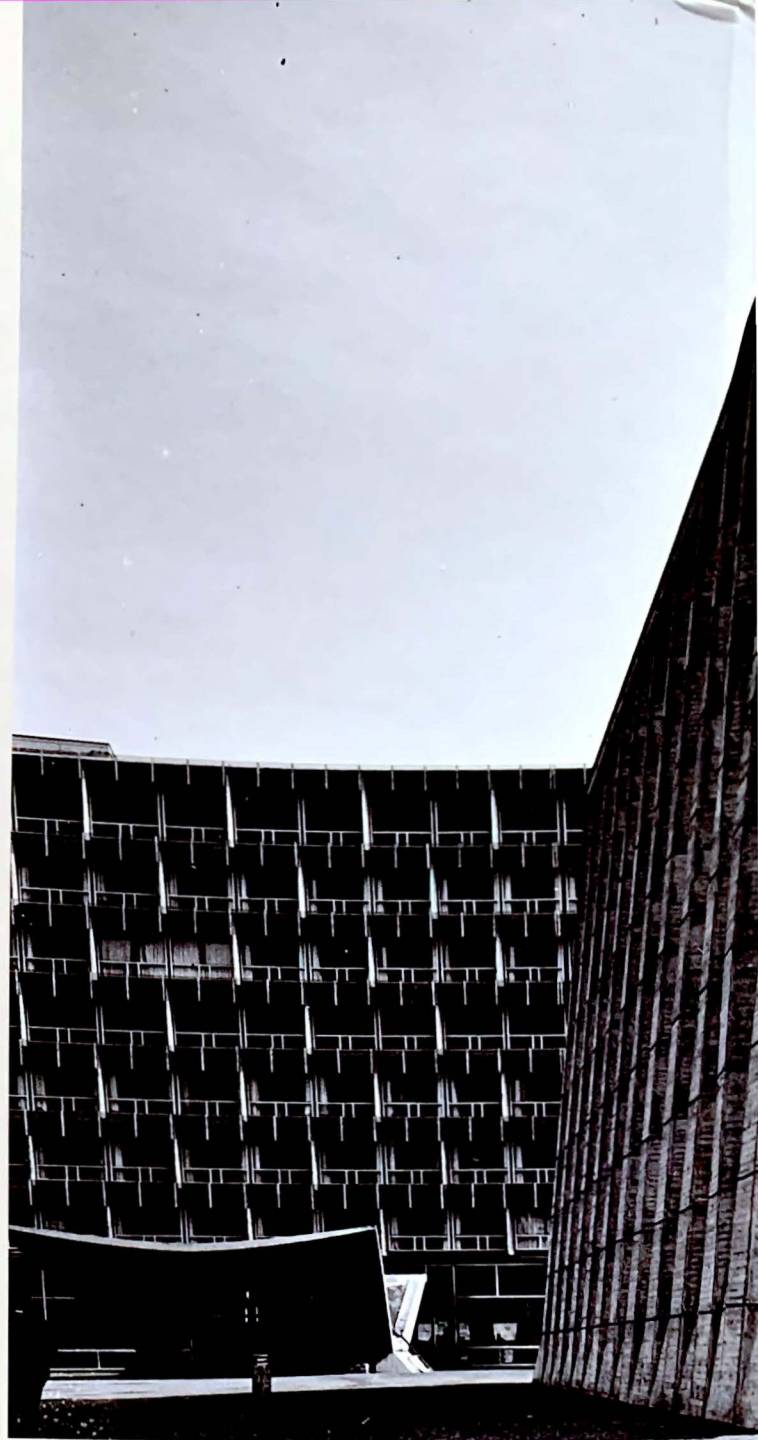
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UNESCO has established, since its creation in Paris, a notable and diverse collection of artworks. The works currently exhibited in the UNESCO buildings bear witness to the richness of artistic diversity in the world over the last 6 000 years.

The collection reflects decades of cultural diplomacy as well as the resolve and generosity of Member States. The composition and character of the collection recalls the basic values of the Organisation. In this publication, 75 key concepts in UNESCO's work have been chosen to enter in dialogue with 75 works selected from the collection, which reflect the cultural, geographical, and temporal diversity of the legacy. The testimonies of art historians, archaeologists, curators, artists, gallery owners, landscape architects, etc., make this work a truly unique product.

The UNESCO Art Collection joins in the UNESCO's 75th anniversary and celebrates the diversity of the world's artistic cultures. The volume provides substantial arguments for a continuing enrichment of the legacy.



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