

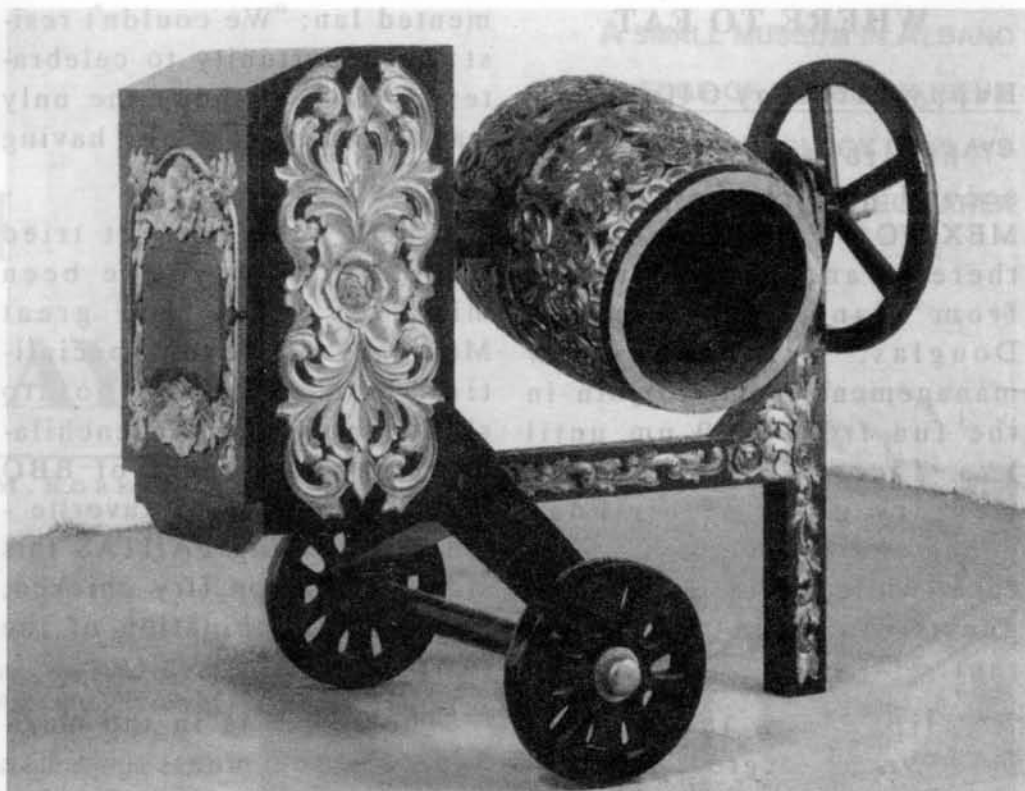
Reviewing what's on

Exhibitions

Carl Milles. *Until 8 April.* Milles, born in Sweden in 1875, was at first a craftsman. In 1892 he went to Paris where he worked as a carver and decorator, studied sculpture and met Rodin. In 1904 he settled in Munich as a sculptor in another important art centre of the time. Back in Sweden Milles was soon launched into a successful career, executing many commissions and public monuments, especially fountains. His first important exhibition outside Sweden was at the Tate Gallery in London in 1927. Then he went to the United States where he completed many elaborate fountains, among them one that graced the restaurant in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He was head of the sculpture department at Cranbrook Academy in Michigan, and he and his wife became American citizens in 1945. In the end, after twenty years in the States, the Milles's came back to Europe, to winter in Rome and spend the rest of their time on their estate in Millesgarden in Sweden designed by the artist himself, where he died in 1955. In Rome a large airy studio was always at his disposal at the American Academy, the very halls which now house his retrospective. This exhibition shows clearly how he progressed from full round flowing forms influenced by Daumier and Rodin, to shapes more stylised and designed like Art Déco, to the neoclassicism of the twenties like Maillol. The exhibition is curiously divided into two distinct parts, not necessarily chronological, by a curator whose predilections we cannot help but share. One hall houses all that is whimsical and spontaneous in Milles. Here is the early flamboyant Loie Fuller and the milkmaid, the late Creation, a procession of little animals parading over the back of a long whale, angels disporting themselves on top of slender columns, a late Icarus shooting sideways. All these fancies are done with a quick hand and the sweet spirit and sentiment of the Nordic fairytale. The second hall consists of Milles's most ambitious bronzes, which, though fluid and ardent, are massive and ponderous. The spring that set off his smaller works, that made them so charming and easily likeable, is often missing in his larger, more laborious would-be heroic allegories. **American Academy.** Via Masina 5 (Porta San Pancrazio), tel. 58461.10.00-13.00, 14.00-18.00 Mon-Sat. 10.00-13.00 Sun.

Enrico Gallian, Luisa Gardini. *Until 8 April.* The painter and poet Gallian, though underrated on the official scene, rightly enjoys a large underground following. His abstractions, thoughtfully and painstakingly made, unravel slowly. Strata and strata of paint, mostly white, but also in pure ultramarines and persimmon, sheets and sheets of them, overlay subtle wire marks. Because they once meant real words to the artist, these fragments and traces convince the viewer like a still but insistent voice. The wide strokes and splintery marks or horizon lines shattered by far weather, can be icy and haunting, blazing red-hot or cool blue like the sea in the morning. All the taut and intensely secret surfaces veil bitter-sweet memory, distilled to deep poetry. Gallian's surfaces are juxtaposed with Gardini's work, not to the advantage of either. Her abstractions only superficially have a kinship with Gallian's. But her woolly marks are more obvious, are of a stylised roughness that verges on the too sophisticated and decorative. **Galleria A.A.M.** Via del Vantaggio 12, tel. 3219151.

Wim Delvoye. *Until 10 April.* This Belgian exhibits elaborately carved dark glass cabinets brimming with rows of buzzsaw disks like plates and kitchen fuel



Wim Delvoye. Concrete mixer. 1990

tanks like fat vases. They are enamelled in classical Delft blue and white and painted with the typical Netherlands patterns. There are also cement mixers and shovels carved from rich mahogany, ornamented with gilt and curlicue swirls and floral patterns. Such loving care to mock the "burghers". Galleria Gian Enzo Sperone. Via di Pallacordo 15, tel. 6893527.

Edith Schloss

Dance

Stephen Petronio danced with Trisha Brown's post-modern American Dance Company until he broke away and formed his own group in the mid 1980s. His works are distinctive for their high energy content, for the solid technique required of the dancers, for the extremely complex and virtuoso choreographies, for the highbrow and metropolitan appeal of the works, for their typical New Yorkese bisexual suggestions and atmospheres. For this Petronio has chosen two of his previous works: *Full Half Wrong* is constructed on Igor Stravinsky's score of the *Sacre du Printemps*; and *The King is Dead* is lifted from Maurice Ravel's *Bolero* in Theodore Presser's arrangement. Reggio Emilia, Teatro Valli. Also at the Milanofestival in Milan.

Carmen. The fascinating story of the cigarette-maker of Merimée has already been put in dance form by Petit, Gades, Alonso and Mats Ek. Amedeo Amodio has found a new key to the story making use of the flash-back technique and of the age-old expedient of theatre within theatre. The story is the one we all know even although it starts with the death of Carmen and ends on the eve of the corrida. The whole is rather confusing and not everything is fully justified, like the scene with the girls in their dressing rooms and showers and the soldiers in underwear. Bizet's music is fragmented by Giuseppe Cali's arrangements. The Aterballetto dancers are generally good and the protagonist, Fara Grieco, is beautiful and sexy. Forlì, Teatro Astra.

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Opera

Macbeth by Verdi. Stage director Henning Brockhaus has put this production in its original mediaeval setting, depriving it of realistic details like bloody hands. The dominating colours, as in Shakespeare's play, are black, red and grey. Transparent and opaque plastic sheets change the dimensions on stage and become screens on which to project the characters' imaginary life and scenes of violence. Albeit its mediaeval setting, this is a modern Macbeth which avoids realism and too much theatrical drama. This is the version Verdi rewrote for the Paris Opera nearly 20 years after its Florentine debut; it has been slightly cut and dances have been eliminated. The young Hungarian conductor, Gyorgy Gyoribanyi Rath, says that this Macbeth is a revolutionary work, almost Wagnerian in conception. Rome, Teatro dell'Opera.

Stiffelio by Verdi. This is the first time after 144 years that Stiffelio has been staged at La Scala. Verdi composed this opera in 1850 after his return from Paris and echoes from *Rigoletto* run through it. The story is based on the French *Le Pasteur, ou l'Evangile et le foyer* by Souvestre and Bourgeois. The religious setting of the story and its original historical setting (the beginning of the 19th century), puts the clergy on the stage, but gives it a contemporary perspective. Stiffelio is a Protestant priest who, taken up by his pastoral duties, neglects his wife, Lina, who is incapable of reconciling the love and admiration she has for her husband and betrays him. The story is imbued with conflicting sacred and profane sentiments, and marriage is investigated with subtle psychological modernity. The music has an Austro-Lutheran resonance that underlines the contrast between husband and minister, between human vengeance and Christian forgiveness. Milan, Teatro alla Scala.

Carmen by Bizet. There are no castenets or false Spanish folklore in this production of Carmen. George Bizet composed his most successful opera in 1875 and stage director, Federico Tiezzi, has placed his Carmen in the artistic and historical climate of the first French colonial ventures. The two female protagonists represent the opposite poles of desire and nostalgia: the Angel and the Demon who, as in a mediaeval morality play, battle for the soul of Don José. The choreographer Misha van Hoecke has created flamenco choreographies for his excellent group of dancers. Reggio Emilia, Teatro Valli.