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KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS:
REASSESSING THE INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN HERITAGE IN ITALY

Museo Villa del Balbianello

Via Comoedia 5, 22016 Lenno (CO)

Form compiled by Lucia Borromeo (Head of Research for the Villa), in collaboration with Anna Bottesi

Introduction

The American collections preserved at Villa del Balbianello were gathered during the numerous journeys that its last owner, the mountaineer Guido Monzino, undertook around the world to explore and get to know the main mountain destinations of the planet. Other objects were purchased by Monzino on the antiquarian market. Overall, the Monzino collection includes more than 400 objects from Inuit (Arctic) contexts, Mesoamerica, Central America and the Central and Southern Andes. Particularly noteworthy are the rich collection of Inuit artefacts and the important series of Maya terracotta figurines from Jaina (Campeche).

Following the death of Guido Monzino in 1988, the materials were bequeathed to FAI – Fondo Ambiente Italiano together with Villa del Balbianello, a property that had been purchased by Monzino in 1974.

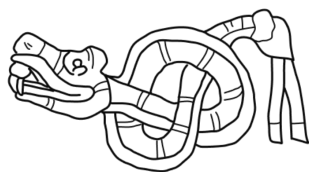
Cultural Areas (tags)

Arctic; Mesoamerica; Central America; Central and Southern Andes; Pampas

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Collections

#01

<i>Name of the collection</i>	American Arctic collection
<i>Collector</i>	Monzino, Guido (1928–1988)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Arctic
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Inuit (Greenland)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The collection consists of almost 400 objects, mainly anthropomorphic and zoomorphic ivory figurines, models of sledges and canoes, ivory paper knives, ivory necklaces, harpoons, other tools and a few masks in wood, ivory and whalebone.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was assembled in the 1970s during a mountaineering expedition to the North Pole. In 1988 it was bequeathed to FAI (Fondo Ambiente Italiano).
<i>Online Database</i>	Catalogo Regione Lombardia
<i>Web page</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	

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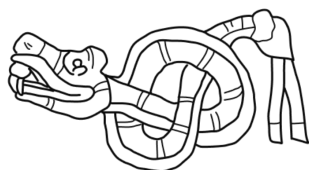
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#02

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Mesoamerica and Central America collection
<i>Collector</i>	Monzino, Guido (1928–1988)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Mesoamerica; Central America
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Olmecs (Mexico) Veracruz (Mexico) Western Mexico (Mexico) Mezcala (Mexico) Teotihuacan (Mexico) Mixtecs (Mexico) Nahua (Mexico) Maya (Mexico) Costa Rica
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	A wide variety of anthropomorphic figures in terracotta and stone, dated variously between the sixteenth century BC and the sixteenth century AD. Of particular importance is a group of 18 Maya terracotta figurines probably from Jaina (Campeche), several smiling figures from Veracruz, clay statues from western Mexico, Mezcala stone heads and two fine Teotihuacan masks.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was largely acquired on the antiquarian market in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1988 it passed by inheritance to FAI (Fondo Ambiente Italiano).

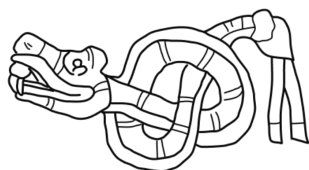
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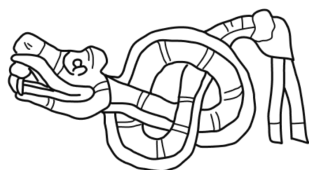
Online Database	Catalogo Regione Lombardia
Web page	https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/ricerca/?tipologia=0&autore=&ambito=Messico&intestazione=&materia=&annop=0&annoa=0&provincia=&comune=Tre mezzina&istituto=&ente_sanitario= https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/ricerca/?tipologia=0&autore=&ambito=Costa+Rica&intestazione=&materia=&annop=0&annoa=0&provincia=&comune=Tremezzina&istituto=&ente_sanitario=
Bibliography	

#03

<i>Name of the collection</i>	Central and Southern Andes collection
<i>Collector</i>	Monzino, Guido (1928–1988)
<i>Cultural areas</i>	Central and Southern Andes; Pampas
<i>Ethnic group / community / cultural context</i>	Inca (Peru) Ica-Chincha (Peru) Pampas (Argentina)
<i>Description of the Collection</i>	The small and heterogeneous collection includes: An anthropomorphic wooden figure from the southern

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	coast of Peru, attributable to the Ica-Chincha area (fourteenth–fifteenth century), wearing a headdress and skirt and with its hands on its hips. An Inca conopa in the form of a camelid, in stone, with a cavity on its back intended to be filled with animal fat as an offering, dating to the fifteenth/sixteenth century. Several artefacts (bolas, belt, spurs, etc.) from the Argentine Pampas region, dating to the twentieth century.
<i>History of the collection</i>	The collection was gathered in the second half of the twentieth century during Guido Monzino's mountaineering expeditions in the Andes. In 1988 it was bequeathed to FAI (Fondo Ambiente Italiano).
<i>Online Database</i>	Catalogo Regione Lombardia
<i>Web page</i>	https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/ricerca/?tipologia=0&autore=&ambito=Per%C3%B9&intestazione=&materia=&annop=0&annoa=0&provincia=&comune=Tremezzina&istituto=&ente_sanitario= https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/ricerca/?tipologia=0&autore=&ambito=argentina&intestazione=&materia=&annop=0&annoa=0&provincia=&comune=Tremezzina&istituto=&ente_sanitario=

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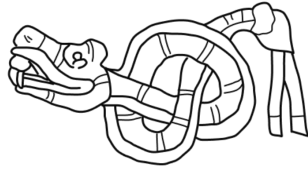
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