

PAN
AMSTERDAM

THE MILLEN HOUSE



Diavolo

Diavolo (devil) Mask, 1956
Copper with polychrome enamels
Designed by Gio Ponti, executed by Paolo De Poli
12 × 18 × 13 cm

Signed on the reverse

Bibliography: Ugo La Pietra (ed.), Gio Ponti, Rizzoli, Milan, 1995, p. 314.
Alberto Bassi and Serena Maffioletti (eds.), Paolo De Poli: Artigiano, Imprenditore, Designer, Il Poligrafo, Padua, 2017,
p. 228.

Created in 1956, *Diavolo* belongs to the celebrated collaboration between Gio Ponti and master enamellist Paolo De Poli, one of the most accomplished partnerships in post-war Italian decorative arts. Combining Ponti's expressive designs with De Poli's extraordinary mastery of vitreous enamel, these sculptural objects occupy a unique position between design, craftsmanship and autonomous art.

With its mischievous expression and boldly simplified features, Diavolo reveals Ponti's lifelong fascination with theatricality, humour and fantasy. The vivid enamel palette heightens this playful character: deep reds, burnt orange and near-black tones evoke the fiery world suggested by the title, while the reverse is finished in a brilliant cobalt blue – a striking contrast that transforms the object into a sculpture to be appreciated from every angle. The reverse is signed by both Gio Ponti and Paolo De Poli.

Although created in the 1950s, *Diavolo* echoes the imaginative spirit of Ponti's celebrated work for Richard-Ginori in the 1920s, where masks, mythological figures and playful decorative motifs became recurring themes. Throughout his career, Ponti believed that beauty and wit belonged not only in architecture but also in the smallest domestic objects. This philosophy finds one of its purest expressions in his enamel collaborations with De Poli.

Today these works are regarded among the most desirable objects in Ponti's oeuvre, admired for their exceptional craftsmanship, vibrant colour and sculptural presence. More than a decorative object, *Diavolo* embodies the optimism, elegance and creative freedom that made Gio Ponti one of the defining figures of twentieth-century Italian design.