

SIDE GALLERY

PIETRO CHIESA (1913-2016)



Ceiling lamp

Manufactured by Fontana Arte
Italy, 1950s
Plaster, lacquered wood, brass and
glass

Measurements

92 cm diameter x 60,96 cm height
36,22 in diameter x 24 in height

Provenance

Private collection, Milano.

Biography

Pietro Chiesa (born 1892, Milan—died 1948, Paris) was a leading Italian Modernist designer best known for his artistic glass furnishing pieces. He studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera and then trained as an apprentice at the studio of furniture designer Giovanni Battista Gianotti. In 1921, he opened his own studio in Milan, the Bottega di Pietro Chiesa, and showcased his work at the seminal 1925 Paris Exposition.

In 1932, Gio Ponti approached Pietro Chiesa to join him and Luigi Fontana—who were partners of Luigi Fontana SA, one of the largest manufacturers artistic stained-glass products in Italy—to become the company's artistic director. In 1933, Pietro Chiesa merged the Bottega di Pietro Chiesa with Luigi Fontana SA, and together, Chiesa, Luigi Fontana, and Gio Ponti formed Fontana Arte which specialized in furniture, lighting, glass windows, and furnishing accessories.

It was during Chiesa's tenure as artistic director of Fontana Arte that he created hundreds of extremely creative pieces—all bearing his imprimatur of the highest excellence in glass craftsmanship and the techniques he applied to modern materials. His most well-known pieces include the Fontana table, which was made from a single band of bent clear glass; the Cartoccio vase; and the lacquered brass Luminator floor lamp. Despite the obvious modernity of most of his pieces, one can see how Chiesa was influenced by the classical forms. He also created what would become Fontana Arte's signature colors of the time, deep blue and green, which Chiesa integrated successfully into many of his creations.

Pietro Chiesa remained artistic director of Fontana Arte, until his unexpected death in Paris in 1948, and his artistic impact deeply influenced Max Ingrand, who became artistic director of Fontana Arte after his death.