Il percorso espositivo

I capolavori di arte antica esposti alla Centrale Montemartini provengono dagli scavi realizzati durante le importanti trasformazioni urbanistiche di Roma Capitale alla fine del XIX secolo e del ventennio fascista, negli anni Trenta del Novecento.

Il percorso espositivo si snoda attraverso quattro spazi distinti, individuati in attinenti ambienti della Centrale Montemartini che conservano il nome dell’originaria funzione: la Sala Colonne, la Sala Caldaie 2 (oggi Sala del Treno di Pio IX), la Sala Macchine e la Sala Caldaie. Le opere sono esposte in modo da illustrare la storia dello sviluppo monumentale della città, dalle fasi più antiche di Roma repubblicana fino al IV secolo d.C.

Sala Caldaie

Da una ricca galleria di ritratti di epoca repubblicana, si passa nelle sale in cui sono documentati i momenti più significativi dello sviluppo di Roma, dai grandi trionfi militari all’introduzione del lusso nella sfera privata a seguito della conquista del Grecia e dell’Oriente. Un settore è stato riservato alla sfarzosa funeraria attraverso l’esposizione di sarcofagi di grande suggestione e al prezioso arazzo funerario intitolato la Concezione della Trapania, uno dei primi esempi di un sarcofago con incisioni a rilievo in marmo.

Sala Macchine

Il frontone del tempio di Apollo Sosiano domina la sala, che prende il nome dai due imponenti motori diesel Tosi da 7500 Hp risalenti al 1933. Le tre vetture del treno di Pio IX, risalenti al 1858, sono aperte al pubblico nel 2016, ospitate tra gli alti pilastri in cemento armato.

Sala Caldaie 2 – Sala del treno di Pio IX

Aperta al pubblico nel 2016, ospita tra gli alti pilastri in cemento armato, le tre vetture del treno di Pio IX, risalenti al 1858.

Sala Macchine

Il frontone del tempio di Apollo Sosiano domina la sala, che prende il nome dai due imponenti motori diesel Tosi da 7500 Hp risalenti al 1933, che si ergono al centro dell’ambiente assieme a una turbina Tosi da 3000 Kw, installata nel 1915. Tra le macchine trovano suggestivo allestimento gruppi stanziali provenienti da complessi architettonici del centro monumentale di Roma, dai templi di largo Argentina al teatro di Pompeo.

Sala Caldaie

Gli appunti decorativi delle ricche dimore urbane e suburbane sono stati ricostruiti in questo ambiente, intorno a un grande mosaico con scene di caccia, proveniente da una ricca residenza di età imperiale. Nella sala si conserva ancora una caldaia a vapore, costruita nei primi anni ‘50.

The exhibition itinerary

The ancient masterpieces on display at the Centrale Montemartini originally come from the excavations carried out at the end of the Nineteenth Century, and during the Fascist regime, in the 1930s, when Rome underwent significant urban transformations.

The exhibition itinerary runs through four separate areas, matching four different halls bearing the name associated with their original function: the Column Hall; the Boiler Room 2 (today, Hall of Pope Pius IX’s train); the Engine Room; and the Boiler Room. The art pieces are displayed in order to mark the most significant turning points of the City’s monumental phases, from the most ancient Republican phases until the fourth century AD.

Column Hall

From a Gallery of portraits dating back to Ancient Rome’s Republican times, we move on to the rooms displaying the most significant moments of the City’s development, including the military triumphs and the introduction of luxury items into private homes, following the conquest of Greece and the East. One section is dedicated to the funerary ritual: evocative sarcophagi are on display, along with the funerary dowry once belonging to the young girl named Creperia Trapania, which included an ivory doll with articulated limbs.

Boiler Room 2 (today, Hall of Pope Pius IX’s train)

Opened to the public in 2016, the Hall hosts, amongst tall pilasters made of reinforced concrete, three train carriages once part of pope Pius IX’s train, dating back to 1858.

Engine Room

The temple of Apollo Sosiano’s pediment dominates the Hall named after the two massive Tosi 7500 Hp diesel engines dating back to 1933 at the center of the space, together with a 3000 Kw Tosi turbine, installed in 1915. On display amongst the machines are striking sets of statues coming from the architectural complexes of Rome’s monumental center, such as the temples of large Argentina and the theater of Pompeii.

Boiler Room

The decoration of the rich urban and suburban residences have been recreated in this room, around a large mosaic with hunting scenes, coming from a rich residence of the imperial age. In the hall there is still a steam boiler, built in the early 1930s.
The Museum

The Centrale Montemartini -Rome’s first ever public thermoelectric power plant- is an extraordinary example of conversion of an old industrial plant into a museum, nowadays part of the Capitoline Museums. In 1997, due to refurbishments and a new set up of Palazzo dei Conservatori’s collection (Capitoline Museums), a selection of those art pieces was moved to the Centrale Montemartini, displayed in an exhibition entitled “The Gods and the Machines”. Ever since 2011, the exhibition has become permanent, and what was once a thermoelectric power plant was turned into a museum, constantly enlarged with new spaces and enriched with new art pieces.

The thermoelectric power plant

The Centrale Montemartini’s history is intertwined with the history of ACEA, Rome’s Electricity Company established in 1909 following a referendum amongst Rome’s citizens, approving the municipalization of public services. The power plant was built on the Via Ostiense between the Mercati Generali (Wholesale Market) and the Tiber’s left bank. It was inaugurated in 1912 by Ernesto Nathan, Mayor of Rome at the time, and was subsequently entitled to Giovanni Montemartini, the City government’s “Technology Assessor”, who was in charge of the building and died soon after, in 1913. Steam turbines and boilers were at work along with diesel engines: the combined production system efficiently responded to the City’s various needs for electric consumption as the turbines guaranteed an uninterrupted service, whereas the diesel engines were in use at high consumption times.

In the mid of the 1960s the power station was abandoned. At the end of the 1980s, ACEA’s management opted for a complete renovation of the historic plant. The Engine Room and the new Boiler Room, as well as the spaces below them, became an Art Center and a multimedia center. The rest of the building was used for offices, workshops and warehouses.