

Marcello Guasti, *Monument to the Three Carabinieri*, bronze, 1964

The *Monument to the Three Carabinieri* is a monument located in Fiesole,¹ Italy, commemorating the sacrifice of three Carabinieri (National Gendarmerie of Italy)² who were killed by Nazis on August 12, 1944. Their tragic and heroic story began the day before, when Florence was liberated from the occupying German troops.³ The three Carabinieri —Alberto La Rocca, Vittorio Marandola, and Fulvio Sbarretti—together with their commanding officer, Francesco Naclerio, received orders to escape from Fiesole, in order to play a role in the liberation of Florence.⁴ Unfortunately, the roads were blocked, and so the soldiers decided to hide within Fiesole's Roman ruins. The next day, when the Germans discovered that the Carabinieri barracks were empty, the commanding officer threatened to kill the ten civilian hostages that the Germans had taken captive. When informed of this situation, the Carabinieri decided to turn themselves in. Though Naclerio was forced to return to service, the other three soldiers were brutally interrogated before they were shot to death against the wall of Hotel Aurora. Their sacrifice earned the three Carabinieri the Medal of Honor for Military Service.

In 1964, the city of Fiesole decided to honor the memory of these three Carabinieri by commissioning a major monument. Living in Fiesole at the time was Giovanni Michelucci, one of the most important Italian architects of the twentieth century.⁵ He was given the responsibility of adapting the Park of Remembrance (*Parco della Rimembranza*) for the purpose of hosting the new monument. Originally built in the 1920s to honor local soldiers who died in World War I, the park was expanded by Michelucci with

1 See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiesole>.

2 See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carabinieri>.

3 See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Campaign_\(World_War_II\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Campaign_(World_War_II)).

4 See (in Italian) https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martiri_di_Fiesole

5 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Michelucci.

a new terrace, complete with beautiful views of Florence and the Arno valley. Michelucci also organized a competition for the monument commission, in which four Tuscan artists were invited to submit project proposals: Vitaliano De Angelis, Marcello Guasti, Mino Trafeli, and Iorio Vivarelli. Guasti (see below), a Florentine engraver, painter and sculptor born in 1964, was awarded the opportunity to design a large bronze sculpture, measuring over five meters high. The artist faced two main problems while designing this work; on the one hand, he needed to find a way to honor the three Carabinieri, reminding viewers of their heroism, and on the other, he needed to work in harmony with Michelucci, creating a work in harmony with its physical location in the Park. Guasti's solution involved creating a statue with an aggressively dynamic shape, one that allowed a multitude of interpretations. Tangled tongues of fire emerge from the heart of a large pincer, alluding to the symbol of the Carabinieri: a flame. Guasti himself wrote about the statue, "I developed the research that I had been carrying out in my studio. My research was based on the vitalization, through materiality, of structures-surfaces that were articulated in space. This vitalization was reproduced in a great flame, a symbol of liberty, that rips open a large pincer-like tentacle on which the light falls, emphasizing its dramatic tension."⁶ Not only does the monument commemorate a vigorous fight for life, but it also materializes the ongoing pursuit and triumph of liberty.

The Monument to the Three Carabinieri is the focus of an exhibition organized by the City of Fiesole, in the Sala Constantini (February 17-September 30, 2019) and at the Archeological Museum of Fiesole (May 11-September 30, 2019).

based on entries written by Ashlyn Brooks Buffum and Natalie Pashaie (Syracuse Florence, undergraduate interns, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019)

⁶ As quoted by Artemisia Viscoli, "Biografia," in *Marcello Guasti: tra natura e geometria, 1940-2004*, ed. Giorgio Di Genova, Francesco Gurrieri e Marco Fagioli (Bologna: Bora, 2005), p. 333 (Italian), 339 (English translation, here slightly adapted).

