



FRIENDS OF THE  
**UFFIZI**  
GALLERY

NEWS



Issue no. 12-April 2012

## **SPLENDOR AND PASSION OF THE MEDICI AND FLEMISH TAPESTRY MANUFACTORY**

**This Uffizi exhibition once again allows visitors to admire the magnificent tapestries collected by the Grand Dukes - some of them newly-restored. Masterpieces that for reasons of preservation were removed in 1987. They are superb examples of Flemish and Florentine artistic workmanship.**

Among the Uffizi's collections, the tapestries represented for decades a superb touch of elegance in the corridors; unfortunately, they have remained unknown to many visitors, since the group was removed from view in 1987. The collection that had been visible in the Gallery since the second half of the 1800s included priceless series such as the *Months*; the celebrated *Feasts at the Valois Court*, in which Catherine de' Medici appears with her son Henry II at the sumptuous celebrations staged at the French court between 1565 and 1573; the *Passion of Christ*; and the *Stories of Jacob*.

The decision to protect these magnificent art works was understandable, since time was mercilessly destroying them, through damage from light, dust, and tensile stress. They were therefore placed in the repositories, where they will remain until the opening of the new ground-floor rooms, designed to exhibit them in rotation.

Currently, 17 of the tapestries are exhibited on the first floor, near the loggia. Here, exemplars of the 16th-century Flemish tradition can be compared with examples of Florentine workmanship, a production introduced by Cosimo I in 1545 but ended in 1738 by the Lorraine Regency.

Restorer Carla Molin Pradel coordinated the restoration work carried out by the staff of Laboratorio di Restauro di Opera. The tapestry restoration process and the restorations themselves, among them the *Torneo* and the Medici coat-of-arms, both made possible by the Amici contributions, convey the complexity of the work and the high artistic level of the Florentine restoration school, one of the most highly-respected in the world.

*An abridgement of the article "Fasti e passioni dall'arazzeria medicea e fiamminga" by Giovanna Giusti – Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 53, April 2012.*



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“Christ before Herod” (detail), tapestry series *The Passion of Christ*, Medici manufactory, cartoon by Ludovico Cigoli and Alessandro Allori, 1598-1601 (restorer Opera Laboratori Fiorentini).



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### A HIGH-QUALITY ACQUISITION

#### **Thanks to the donation of an art collector, four paintings by Giovanni Domenico Ferretti will enrich the Gallery holdings of Eighteenth-century art**

The four large canvases, a generous gift by a private collector in Rome, are from the hand of one of the most important 18th-century Florentine artists, Giovanni Domenico Ferretti (Firenze, 1692-1768). Three of the paintings show families of satyrs, gambolling about with fruit, gathering grapes, drinking or playing in water; the fourth features the goddess Diana with her bow and arrow, asleep beneath a tree, along with sleeping putti and hunting dogs.

The series, marked by the emphatic musculature of the satyrs, was most likely designed to adorn one of the main rooms of an as-yet-unidentified palazzo, presumably in Tuscany. The series is in stylistic syntony with other works by Ferretti, such as the *Baccanale*, a sketch preserved in the Palatine Gallery, and in particular with a drawing in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe that shows a satyr from the back, a baby satyr, and a figure asleep. As Giuliano Briganti and Francesca Baldassari observed, because of their stylistic character and their similarity to other works of the same period, the canvases can be dated to the fourth decade of the 1700s.

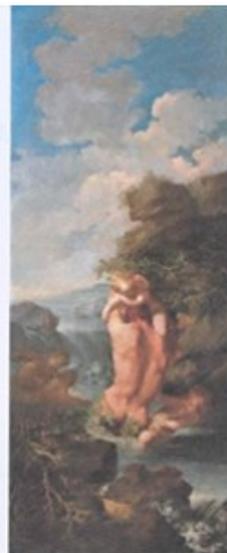
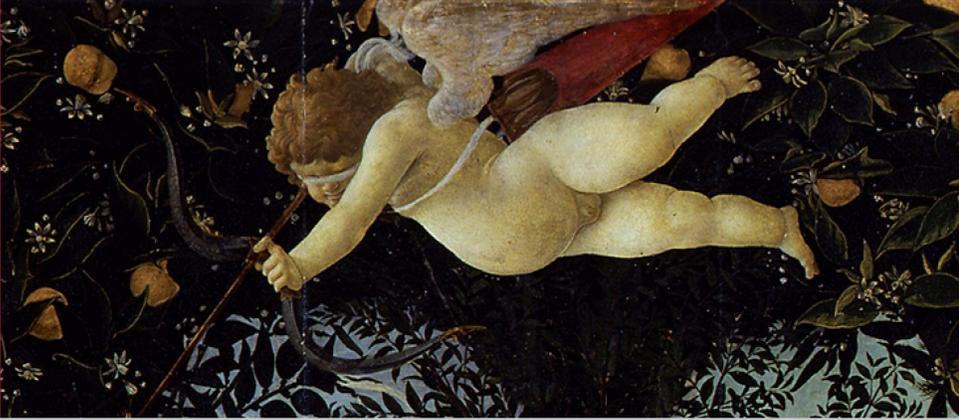
The acquisition of these paintings will enrich the representation of Ferretti in the Uffizi, which already possesses his self-portrait, a Crucifixion, and several drawings. Of outstanding quality and remarkable fascination, these four works will give even higher relief to the 18th-century Florentine art period in the new Uffizi collection.

*An abridgement of the article "Un'acquisizione di qualità" by Valentina Conticelli- Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 53, April 2012.*



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### “THE GLEAM OF GOLD” AT THE UFFIZI

**The great masterpieces of the Late Gothic period will go on display to document Florence artistic production during the period 1375-1440. The newly-restored *Battle of San Romano* exemplifies that period’s magnificent synthesis of intellectual and spiritual ferment.**

Beginning 19 June 2012, the Uffizi will present an ambitious exhibit of paintings and sculpture, both sacred and profane, a broad array of works, all of the highest artistic value and historical importance, which come from prestigious public museums and private collections, both in Italy and abroad. The objective is to offer to the Gallery’s huge family of visitors a unique panorama of Florentine artistic production in the crucial cultural period that runs from about 1375 to 1440.

Florentine sculptural works will play a prominent role in the exhibition, including Lorenzo Ghiberti’s *St. John the Baptist*, Donatello’s *St. Mark*, and the *St. Peter* attributed to Filippo Brunelleschi, all statues that adorn Orsanmichele, one of the city’s most important building yard, together with the Duomo of course.

A period closer to the Renaissance will be represented by works of such great masters as Masaccio, Beato Angelico, Masolino, and Domenico Veneziano.

Paolo Uccello’s *Battle of San Romano* is the concluding piece in the exhibit. Recently restored and separately previewed to the public, this masterpiece constitutes a superb synthesis and artistic summation of the intellectual and spiritual richness in a great artistic season of Florentine art. As a consequence of the restoration carried out by Muriel Vervat, one can now fully appreciate, as never before, the gleaming flash of arms and armor that fill the painting.

*An abridgement of the article “Bagliori dorati” agli Uffizi” by Angelo Tartuferi– Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 53, April 2012.*



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### A TWO-FOLD PAPAL ENCOUNTER

**The “Madonna della Gatta” will be exhibited in Bresso on the occasion of Pope Benedict XVI’ visit to the archdiocese of Milan for the 7th World Meeting of Families. It was possibly painted by Barocci, on the occasion of Pope Clement VI’s visit to Urbino in 1598.**

At the end of 2011, the exhibition *Condivisione di affetti* (Shared affections) opened in the medieval village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, an assemblage of works from the Uffizi, pieces restored or acquired thanks to the generosity of the Amici. The showing was a gesture of solidarity with this area of the Abruzzo, hit hard by the 2009 earthquake.

Many private art sponsors and public bodies contributed to the effort, among whom stood out the above-mentioned Lombard town of Bresso. This was one of the reasons why the Uffizi decided to honor the request of the Mayor of Bresso to put together a small exhibit for the visit there of Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of *7th World Meeting of Families*, 30 May-3 June 2012. The conference theme, “The Family: Work and Celebration,” provided a motif appropriate to the exhibit.

The Uffizi possesses a painting of overwhelming beauty that pictures an imaginary visitation by the family of Elizabeth to the family of Mary: the *Madonna della Gatta*, by Federico Barocci. It will be accompanied in Bresso by a *Self-Portrait* by Barocci, by four preparatory drawings, and by an 18th-century tapestry. Many experts think that the *Madonna* was painted on the occasion of a 1598 visit to Urbino by Pope Clement. Nothing could be more appropriate to mark the visit by the Pope to Bresso.

*An abridgement of the article “Due volte incontro al Papa” by Antonio Natali, Director of the Uffizi Gallery– Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 53, April 2012.*



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***Madonna della gatta (1605)***

Federico Barocci (Urbino 1535-1612) Oil on canvas, cm 233 x 179

Firenze, Galleria degli Uffizi



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## MASTERPIECES IN THE BLUE

**Against an ultramarine blue backdrop that echoes the tradition of Northern Europe, the Uffizi prized possession of Dutch, Flemish, French, and Spanish masterpieces find in the new rooms a more modern installation that underscores their celebrated quality.**

In the beginning of December, the first ten rooms of the New Uffizi were opened to the public, dedicated to foreign artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. These rooms are on a level with the first floor of the Gallery, and they are accessible by a new stairway on the west, also part of the New Uffizi project.

These spaces host works by Dutch, Flemish, French, and Spanish artists, and specifically masterpieces by Chardin, Liotard, Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Goya, but they feature many other first-rate artworks as well, for an overall total of more than 120 paintings. Only very few of them have been heretofore exhibited, remaining in storage for lack of space. The principal nucleus is composed of Flemish and Dutch works, divided according to the respective cities of their artists. The French and Spanish follow, with works acquired in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (for the French) and more recently (for the Spanish).

For the paintings' installation, the Director of the Uffizi Gallery decided on a blue background, which echoes 18<sup>th</sup>-century French interiors but complements the Dutch and Flemish paintings as well. One can frequently observe colors of this type in paintings of interiors characteristic of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch school, and blue is noted often in the clothes of figures in the paintings, but also, and above all, in furnishing textiles--hangings, wallpaper, curtains, and tablecloths. Various foreign museums, such as the Isabella Stewart Gardner in Boston and the Jacquemart André in Paris, have adopted blue, largely influenced by the preference for this hue by antiquarian-collector Stefano Bardini, who in the period between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries greatly influenced other prominent collectors. Thus it is a color that already boasts a history in the museum context. These rooms, then, will give the visitor a very different experience with respect to that in the more historic areas of the Gallery; one will encounter here rooms of a more modern character, but populated by works of the highest artistic character.

*An abridgement of the article "Capolavori nel blu" by Valentina Conticelli – Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 53, April 2012.*



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## UFFIZI LIFE

### **Touching itinerary opened**

Just inaugurated in the Gallery is an itinerary of tactile experiences, designed by Isabella Puccini, for the blind and near-blind. Unescorted and with no need for reservations, such visitors can now “read” and appreciate 16 works of classical statuary.

### ***Torero* restored**

March saw the completion of the restoration of the so-called *Torero* from the Contini Bonacossi collection, one of three paintings by Francisco Goya in the Uffizi holdings. The cleaning operation, carried out by Daniele Rossi and directed by Valentina Conticelli, has given new legibility to the figure’s intense face, previously marred by a heavy layer of yellowed varnish.



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