



FRIENDS OF THE  
**UFFIZI**  
GALLERY

NEWS



Issue no. 19 - August 2014

## A NEW BEGINNING

It is always difficult to set one's hand to museum trails. When the museum in question is the Uffizi Gallery, then any metamorphosis can be regarded as extravagant, an anti-historical accretion. This is why the Amici degli Uffizi were somewhat wary of the request to support the complete redesigning and reconstruction of the first room of the Gallery. The Archeological collections used to be on display in this Hall 1, but for all tourists the visit had always been starting from Hall 2, with the three *Maestà*, the masterpieces by Cimabue, Giotto and Duccio, turning to the left after entering the first corridor. Changing this arrangement, moving to Hall 1 the paintings of the Tuscan Primitives, meant upsetting a deep-rooted custom by starting the visit from the right-hand side.

After careful consideration, we felt intrigued, then absorbed and finally fascinated by the necessity of such a change, extensively studied by the Gallery executives to give due prominence and greater visibility to the artworks of early Italian painting.

Therefore, we supported the renovation project and now nine paintings previously cramped with the three *Maestà* – wooden crucifixes and panels dating from the second half of the twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth century – can now be admired in the new Hall 1. This work rounded out a previous intervention by the Amici, as last year we had funded the restoration of the two painted crosses and the Berlinghieri diptych meant for this dedicated display.

The result is a totally renewed ambiance that enriches the visit for the million visitors flocking to the museum every year, and we feel so proud to have contributed to its realization within the concept of collective patronage that we have been pursuing in over twenty years' activity side by side with our museum.

Maria Vittoria Colonna Rimbotti  
*President Amici degli Uffizi and Friends of the Uffizi Gallery*



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## THE HALL OF THE ORIGINS

*Since last June, the visiting itinerary comprises a section with invaluable medieval paintings from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> collected in the first hall of the Gallery*

The New Uffizi project has been enriched by a new hall that starts the museum's tour: Hall 1, once the Archaeological Room that used to house some of the Medici and Lorraine antiquities such as the Ara Pacis marble reliefs, is now called the Sala del Duecento and hosts nine Tuscan paintings of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the 13<sup>th</sup>-century paintings once displayed in Hall 2, next to the *Maestà* and the works by Giotto.

Besides the two precious crucifixes known as *Cross 432* and *Cross 434* after their inventory numbers, among the works on display are two recent acquisitions of the Uffizi Gallery, the panels by the Maestro di Greve and by the Maestro di Bigallo which exemplify the decorative refinement and chromatic richness characteristic of Duecento art.

The altar-piece with *Christ the Redeemer and Four Saints* is most significant, coming from the collection of Vincenzo Taccoli Canacci who was one of the first collectors with a taste for the "primitives"; the work bears the date 1271 and the signature of its artist, Meliore, a Florentine who fought in the battle of Montaperti in 1260.

Concluding the hall tour is the panel by the Maestro della Maddalena dating to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which depicts Luke the Evangelist, with two devotees kneeling at his feet, a Franciscan monk and a Clarissa nun. Until a few decades ago, the painting was transfigured by an 18<sup>th</sup>-century overpainting, which in turn masked another retouch performed in the first half of the 1300s, testimony to the rapid decline that thirteenth-century painting suffered after the arrival of Giotto.

*An abridgement of the article "La sala delle origini" by Daniela Parenti - IlGiornale degli Uffizi no. 60, August 2014.*



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### ***WOMEN: THEIR AGE-OLD PRIDE***

*The photographs of Francesco Francaviglia, on display in San Pier Scheraggio at the Uffizi Gallery from 13 October through 9 November 2014, document the severe faces of courageous women who, 20 years ago, openly defied the evil of organized crime.*

The Uffizi has two works which serve as evidence of the Mafia attack on 27 May 1993. One is the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, a canvas painted between 1619 and 1620 by Gherardo delle Notti for the apse of the Church of Santa Felicita, that appeared completely and irreparably destroyed, not by the glass shards but by the fury of the blast; however, quick action by restorers succeeded in recovering almost half of its colored surface. Today, whoever enters the Vasari Corridor remains struck by the *Adoration*, which is accompanied by a stone plaque bearing the words of poet Mario Luzi: an indelible reminder of the criminal acts of which man is capable, but equally evidence of a commitment to redemption.”

A witness to that same determination is Roberto Barni’s gilded bronze, which was installed on the Galleria’s outside wall, opposite to where the explosives were placed. A man walks on a blade of stone jutting out from the wall over 20 meters above the ground, with five small figures attached to his body symbolizing the five innocent victims of the bombing; this golden man strides along, accompanied by his travelling companions, high up in the sun, radiating light into the eyes of passersby.

The exhibit of photographs by Francesco Francaviglia presents the faces of courageous women who, twenty years ago, defying evil (including any possible ensuing retaliation against them) openly joined forces against organized criminality. Faces that time had lined with wrinkles but which remained beautiful, with the beauty of a deep-rooted, ancient pride; faces changed perforce, and yet, for this very reason, eloquently capable of demonstrating that daring, rebellion, and resistance remain alive.

And of course, courage and generosity are virtues that take root in women’s hearts, and it is these very virtues that Francaviglia has put on display in his exhibit “The Fasting Women.”

*An abridgement of the article “La fierezza antica delle donne” by Antonio Natali - Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 60, August 2014.*



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## INVESTING IN CULTURE

*The Salvatore Ferragamo company has donated to the Soprintendenza a significant sum, which will enable the renovation of eight halls that will host Florentine and Umbrian works of the late '400.*

The next stage in the re-structuring and re-installation of the Galleria degli Uffizi will involve the group of halls numbers 25 through 32; they continue the thematic of halls 33-34, which convey the spirit of the antiquities collection preserved in the Medici Garden of San Marco and which were inaugurated last February.

The installation of the eight new rooms, which will host Florentine and Umbrian painting of the late '400, will be made possible by the 600,000 euros Salvatore Ferragamo company generously donated to the Soprintendenza. The re-structuring will entail refitting the climate control and security systems, as well as new lighting, though maintaining the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century skylights.

The new displays will include paintings by various Florentine artists of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, such as Alessio Baldovinetti, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Filippino Lippi, Piero di Cosimo, Lorenzo di Credi, by the Umbrian painter Pietro Perugino and by Luca Signorelli, for a total of some 50 works introducing to Cinquecento painting and to the adjacent hall of Michelangelo. The masterpieces already on display in the halls dedicated to Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, and Leonardo will be joined by numerous paintings that have been held up to now in the repository, such as Jacopo del Sellaio's panels on the *Story of Esther*.

The color selected for the walls of the new halls, according to the project of identifying chronologically consistent sections through a common chromatic element, will be the same green already adopted for the rooms of the San Marco Garden (33-34) and for one of the walls of hall 20, with Mantegna's triptych.

Antonio Natali and Daniela Parenti are curating the operation, which will re-open the eight halls to the public by summer 2015.

*An abridgement of the article "Investire nella cultura" by Daniela Parenti – Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 60, August 2014.*



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## ARIADNE'S ANCIENT HUES

*The financial support of a transatlantic Friend made it possible to restore a monumental statue of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, acquired by Ferdinando de' Medici*

The project of systematic preservation of the Uffizi Gallery's classical statuary heritage, which the Amici degli Uffizi have been supporting for over a decade, has just been enhanced by a significant new work. The so-called Ariadne, a colossal statue almost two and a half meters tall, has undergone a meticulous operation of restoration and conservation, financed by the Patrick S. Parker family of the Friends of the Uffizi Gallery. The statue, once part of the Della Valle's Roman collection, was purchased in the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Ferdinando de' Medici.

The conservation not only restored the statue's splendor and legibility, but it also revealed so far unsuspected traces of ancient coloration: the woman's iris is visible under UV light, and the optical microscope reveals tiny but unmistakable traces of red color in various parts of the drapery. It bears noting too that the statue served as a real "restoration school," with the participation of ten students of the Istituto per l'Arte ed il Restauro Palazzo Spinelli, under the expert guidance of restorer Daniela Manna. It was thus possible to reconstruct a complex system of tesseræ and props, barely discernible in several parts of the left side of the figure, which originally functioned as supports for a knotted grapevine against which the woman leaned.

*An abridgement of the article "Le antiche cromie di Ariadne" by Fabrizio Paolucci - Il Giornale degli Uffizi no. 60, August 2014*



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## **LIFE AT THE UFFIZI**

### **“VIE DELLA SCULTURA” AT FORTE DEI MARMI**

The exhibition *Vie della scultura* (Routes of Sculpture), held at the Villa Bertelli in Forte dei Marmi, 26 July through 27 October 2014, curated by Giovanna Uzzani, pays homage to the great artists from across the globe who have recognized Forte dei Marmi and its surrounds as the heartland of sculpture.

Participating are thirteen 20<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary artists, from Italy and abroad, with twenty-six works on display: each artist is represented by a self-portrait or graphic work from the Galleria degli Uffizi, juxtaposed next to a sculpture coming from the Apuan Alps and Versilia territory, selected from the local marble laboratories and bronze foundries, from local public or private collections, or from collections closely linked to the places around Forte dei Marmi.

The objective of the exhibition is to trace the presence in Tuscany of the great international artists who wanted to leave a tangible sign of their visit to Italy by donating to the Galleria degli Uffizi a work that would go to enrich the collection of self-portraits in the Vasari Corridor, or one that was a tribute and artistic compensation to the Galleria for the tragic Mafia bombing in Via dei Georgofili.

### **“PURO SEMPLICE E NATURALE”**

The exhibit *Puro Semplice e Naturale nell'Arte a Firenze tra Cinque e Seicento* (The Pure, Natural, and Simple in Art in Florence between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) officially opened on 17 June and will run through 2 November 2014.

Designed as a close comparison between painting and sculpture, the works on display exemplify the peculiar character of Florentine art between the Cinquecento and Seicento, marked by a declared adherence to the values laid out by Andrea del Sarto and Fra Bartolomeo in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, which Vasari considered fundamental for the “rebirth” of modern art.



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