

## The Project of a Collection

■ *During the course of his entire existence, Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici passionately conducted his research on art works in a learned and systematic manner that has proven to be extraordinarily significant within the structure of the Uffizi Galleries' collections*

Leopoldo was born in Florence on November 6, 1617 to Cosimo II de' Medici and Maria Maddalena d'Austria. An intelligent, ironic, curious and cultivated individual, enthusiast of scientific studies and of works of art, he managed to successfully dedicate his entire existence to the pursuit of beautiful and precious things, becoming one of the most important patrons of the XVII century. The idea of collecting that took shape under the sensitivity and perseverance of Leopoldo de' Medici became a qualified model, a true and veritable prototype for collectors in subsequent history.

A substantial factor in Leopoldo's design was his continuous, passionate and refined method of research on artworks, an operative mode that enabled the construction of a figurative scenario of absolute and exemplary clarity that today can be appreciated above all by visitors of the Uffizi Galleries and the exhibit in Palazzo Pitti celebrating the fourth centenary of his birth.



Giovanbattista Gaulli called il Baciccio, Portrait of Cardinal Leopoldo, Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings.

Leopoldo activated a complex weave of operations and personal relationships creating a method that from its early origins rendered fruits of extraordinary importance in the formation of the Florentine collection.

From his youth, the prince was quick to evaluate purchase opportunities for artworks keeping well in mind the distinct overall design of the collection he intended to create which was already in the making under his own

supervision. Gifted with a strong visual memory, he was able to predefine the collection envisioning its fu-

Miriam Fileti Mazza  
(continua a pag. 2)



Tiziano Vecellio, Portrait of a Knight of Malta (ca.1510-1515), restored by the Amici degli Uffizi in 1997, Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings.



Pieter Paul Rubens, Portrait of Hélène Fourment, Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings.

ture morphology, its underlying structure, its style and the quality of its conceptual framework that resists and maintains its fascination to the present day.

In the history of Leopoldo de' Medici, the *genres* and the *classes* characterizing the organization of other contemporary collections became a guide to the coherency of his choices and to the qualification of the collections that with typological rigor acquired absolute identity, underscoring the importance of manifest principles of classification. In their typological divisions, paintings, sculptures, drawings, scientific instruments, furnishings, gems, coins, medallions, books, tapestries, ancient inscriptions in turn offered analogous distinctions reinforcing exemplifications and varieties.

If we consider the developments in society and, in particular, with regard to the cultural patrimony that took place in the eighteenth century when methods of conservation based on knowledge and classification of the art work were firmly established, the various phases of Leopoldo de' Medici's as a

collector appear to be an extraordinary herald of the age to come. A herald of ordered mentality who began by distinguishing the diverse typologies of artistic creations with a clarity that guided his vision as a collector leading him to establish a protocol of research for his collaborators with precise directives and rules.

His method moreover took into account knowledge of the historical past that in many cases constituted the first step in research procedures.

Leopoldo was not alone in the creation of his grand collection; engaged in his service were cultivated individuals who traveled far and wide opening the doors to commerce and diplomacy. He chose merchants, nobles, ecclesiastics, scholars, appreciating at once the genius and initiative of artists, men of letters, and collectors. They all were part of a unique network that extended throughout the entire Italian peninsula and to the major capitals of Europe. This army of about one hundred collaborators, strategically positioned in the richest and most interesting centers of the art world,

mapped with their presence the geography of Leopoldo's collecting activities.

An open and modern mentality led Leopoldo to conceive his own artistic patrimony as a concrete value to conserve and exhibit. Equally important was instituting an historical and administrative order, a new *status* that guaranteed material dignity to the work of art. The clarity of the stipulations contained in the inventory of his last will and testament explicitly

confirms the evolutionary process he followed in the realization of his grand collection of art.

We also encounter this remarkable *forma mentis* in the attention that the prince regularly afforded to language and vocabulary. For Leopoldo, the valorization of a term that specified, clarified and enriched the significance of a concept or thing became an exercise he adamantly cultivated during his frequentations of the *Accademia della Crusca*. As a member of the distinguished linguistic institution, he collaborated personally in the realization of the third edition of the *Vocabolario*, searching for and recovering technical terms in arts and crafts that for the first time made their appearance within the academic listings. Specific terminology, referring to the manual arts, occupied numerous listings in the *glossary*, anticipating in Leopoldo's time what would be codified only in many decades to come.

We must be thankful to this enlightened prince for dedicating his existence to this extraordinary method of collecting; without it, perhaps his collection would not have become what everyone admires today. ■

Miriam Fileti Mazza

## Leopoldo de' Medici, Prince of Collectors"

On the occasion of the fourth centenary  
of Leopoldo de' Medici's birth

Edited by  
Valentina Conticelli, Riccardo Gennaioli,  
Maria Sframeli

Palazzo Pitti, Tesoro dei Granduchi

November 7, 2017  
January 28, 2018

# Cranach in the collections of the Grand Dukes

— In October, the Detti Hall will host an exhibit on Luther and the Reformation protagonists in the works by Cranach at the Uffizi

When, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther's ninety five theses on the value and effectiveness of indulgences were attached to the door of the Schlosskirche of Wittenberg, the Augustinian monk was unaware of the sweeping consequences of the phenomenon they were generating. The theologian's observations and criticisms of the Roman

sible at various levels of literacy while the invention of imagery conceived as a true and proper manifesto of the new ideology was entrusted to Lucas Cranach the Elder (Cranach, 1472 - Weimar 1553), court painter to the Elector Palatine Frederick III the Wise. This 'figurative doctrine' favored the spread of the new theories also thanks to the more practical and rapid medium of prints, many of which served as illustrations in publications of the reformed sacred texts.

Committed to the political and administrative life of Wittenberg, Cranach founded a veritable manufactory that produced replicas of his models certified by the workshop logos, a coiling winged serpent with a crown on its head and a ring in its mouth. With the support of the political authorities, his workshop guaranteed quality and didactic comprehensibility for this new repertoire of sacred imagery.

An official iconography was formulated, based on the utmost simplicity in the portraiture of the reformers and of Catherine von Bora, Luther's wife, whose portrait alongside that of her husband effectually attested to the abolition of celibacy among priests. Even the Elector Palatine, Frederick III the Wise, and his brother, John I the Constant, were included in the new iconographic program. Complicated allegorical imaginings elaborated and diffused as engravings sa-

tirically described the vices of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Rome, drawing on the imagery of the monstrous and symbolic figurative tradition of the medieval period in contrast with the austere rigor of the reformed Church - a genre that continued to be popular for more than a century at least.

The sacred subjects focused above all on biblical themes and on Christ; in the meanwhile, however, Cranach's workshop continued to fulfill commis-

*Cranach, Luther and Portraits of the Reformation in the Medici Collection"*

*Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings Detti Hall*

*October 30, 2017  
January 7, 2018*

sions of Catholic patrons who requested paintings with sacred themes, populated with saints and images of the Madonna and Child. The artist however introduced an interpretation of this subject, modeled on the simplicity and clarity of the Ital-



Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Portrait of Philippus Melancthon*, Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings.



Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Eve*, Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings.

ian painter Perugino promoting a copious production that spread throughout all of Europe.

The Uffizi exhibit, opening October 30, 2017 in the Detti Hall, includes a small nucleus of paintings from the workshop of Cranach within the museum's collections including portraits of the reformers, Luther and his wife, the Saxon Electors, the autograph masterpiece of Adam and Eve and a group of engravings that attest to the vitality of the intellectual curiosity of the Medici house, despite their public image that emphatically conveyed dogmatic and obsessive orthodoxy on the part of the Grand Dukes of the Golden Century. ■

Francesca de Luca



Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Portrait of Martin Luther*, Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings.

Catholic Church fell on the fertile terrain of a widespread need for spirituality, as the technological revolution set off by the movable type printing press fostered a rapid and capillary diffusion of the new ideas.

An attentive strategy of \*\*\*\*\*linguistics and imagery created a perfectly efficient system of propaganda. The translation of the Bible, edited personally by Luther and his closest followers, into middle and low German made it acces-

# A Feeling for Things

■ *The theme of nature in Japanese art in an exhibit in the Magliabechiana Hall. Screens and sliding doors: decorative objects and spectacular works of art*

Why does Japan continue to fascinate us as much today as in the past? Is there a common trait underlying the Japanese way that helps us to understand their ultimate values despite the distance of our own sensibility? Certainly, the theme of nature and of human rapport with nature is at the

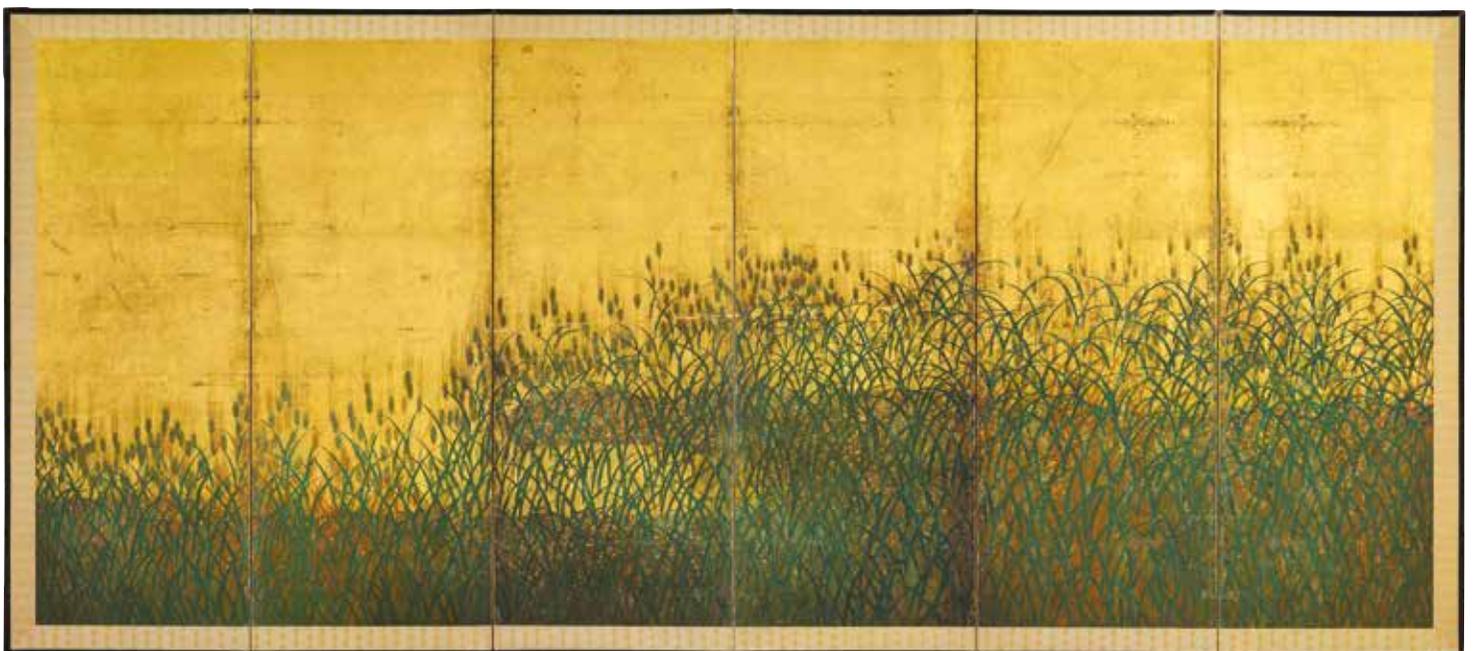
base of Japanese culture, profoundly and universally shaping its entire artistic, literary, architectural and manufactory production.

Thus, the idea of drawing closer to Japanese culture – otherwise distant from Western thought – through the analysis of various facets of the theme

of nature, in particular with regard to two categories of artifacts among the most spectacular and unique in Japanese art and design: the folding screen and the sliding door. Objects that are both artistic and decorative, conceived as functional furnishings for houses, castles, temples corresponding to the

tastes of the patrons and of the master painter-artisans who create them and to that very eastern concept that finds of no distinction between major and minor arts.

For the first time in Italy and in Europe, through a selection of approximately forty grand paintings of landscape



Artist Kano Shigenobu, *Wheat and Poppies*, pair of six-winged screens, color and gold leaf on paper, Idemitsu Museum of Arts.



Up: Artist Watanabe Ryokei, Landscape with Temples, pair of six-winged screens, ink and color on paper, Osaka Municipal Museum. Down: Unkoku Toeki, Landscape, pair of six-winged screens, ink and color on paper, Osaka Municipal Museum.

and nature in the classic horizontal format, the exhibit intends to explore the golden age of Japanese art production from the Muromachi era to the beginning of the age of Edo (from the XV to the XVII centuries). In particular, two major tendencies emerge that have marked the entire pictorial production of Japan affirming those aesthetic ideals that are recognized still today as Japanese: on the one hand, evocative monochrome painting, made of voids and essential, rapid strokes, akin to the Chinese tradition and tied to the *zen* philosophy that the warrior class embraced as early as the age of Kamakura and that decorated temples and

residences of the armed aristocracy (samurai); on the other, the autochthonous painting, with gold backgrounds and fields of flat color, more explicit and of easier comprehension, perfect for decorating the large living spaces of aristocratic and bourgeois homes and castles.

On the one hand, landscape paintings by artists tied to names like Hasegawa Tōhaku, Kaihō Yūshō, Unkoku Tōgan with their rarified and symbolic atmospheres, on the other, names from the tradition of the Kanō e Tosa schools depicting flowers and birds, and the four seasons and places made famous through literature and poetry. Representations of

brilliant color that follow the modality of the *yamatōe*, the native Japanese style widespread as early as the Heian age (794-1185), at the height of Imperial culture.

The beauty and the mutability of nature expressed in the grand dimensions of one or more often two screens with two or six wings, communicate the profound tie that links the Japanese people to the vegetal and animal world of which they see themselves an integral part, following the pantheist religious sentiment of Shintoism at the basis of the literary and visual culture of Japan. One also perceives the capacity of Japanese culture to assimilate stimuli from abroad

(from China, from India, from the West, be it Europe or America in more contemporary times) without ever losing its own most intimate identity: the characteristics of *zen* that relate to austerity, to poverty, to imperfection, to the irregularity of forms and materials combined with different emphases, depending on the period, with a sentiment for nature as a mirror of the human soul. A sentiment already present centuries earlier defined by the term, *mono no aware*, “a feeling for things”: an empathy that ties the human condition to the rhythm of nature, to its foundations that become symbols of the transience of this world and thus a precious lesson and food for thought even in the West, in a reconsideration of the environment and humanity’s relation to it. The thirty-nine works of art, classified as National Treasures, Important Cultural Property and Important Works of Art, will be placed on exhibit in alternation for reasons of conservation. They come from Japanese museums, temples and from the Agency of Cultural Affairs of Japan that organized the exhibit in collaboration with the Uffizi Galleries under the patronage of the Japanese Embassy in Rome. ■

Rossella Menegazzo

## “The Japanese Renaissance. Nature in Screen Paintings from the XVI to the XVII centuries”

On the occasion of the Japan-Italy Friendship 150th Anniversary

Edited by  
Rossella Menegazzo

Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings, Magliabechiana Hall  
September 26, 2017 - January 7, 2018

# The Italian Workshop

■ Le opere di due protagonisti come Giulio Paolini e Jannis Kounellis, allestite nelle sale degli Uffizi in occasione di *Italia*, hanno cancellato la distanza tra le epoche

*Italia* with its twelve contemporary Italian artists and one hundred works on exhibit has stepped beyond the barricades of Forte di Belvedere and invaded the city of Florence in Palazzo Vecchio, the Pazzi Chapel in Santa Croce, the Museum of Novecento and the Marino Marini Museum. A special and highly symbolic presence can also be found in the magnificent halls of the Uffizi Galleries where the history of Italian art from the Duecento to the early Novecento, that is, from Cimabue to Morandi, has been reconciled with the neo-avant-garde and the artists of our time.

Leaving the so-called brief century behind, we now have the certainty that the Italian workshop is a big family, at least for what concerns art. And there is no distance that separates the ages when the experience and knowledge of art is vertical. Artists reclaim their affinity to artists; works live side by side as if at a party, a ritual, and a ceremony. And since the Gallery of Statues and Paintings of the Uffizi represents a course of history at the highest level, it is only right that two of the major protagonists of this history find their place within: Jannis Kounellis and Giulio Paolini, whose self-portrait the Gallery acquired in 2013, thanks to the intervention of the Amici degli Uffizi.



Giulio Paolini, *Inside and Out* (2017), transparent Plexiglas, mirrored Plexiglas, crystal sphere. Courtesy of the artist (on exhibit in the Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings).

The work on exhibit by the recently lamented Kounellis is *Untitled* and dated 1992: a sheet of metal and three stones wrapped in a grey, raw wool blanket hanging next to the *Crucifixion with Magdalena* by Luca Signorelli.

Paolini instead created a new work, *Inside and Out*. The association of these two artists with the entire development of art history was already a point of interest in the

last century for Giuliano Briganti who in a specific comparison of Kounellis and Paolini stated the following: “In every epoch of the history of art, and particularly in periods of most decisive transformation when

creative tension is highest and the risk of facing a new adventure most dramatic, it isn't unusual to encounter cases in which artists motivated by the same interior necessity of profound renewal and thus

forced in the same direction and by the same sentiment and the same thoughts regarding their duty to represent their own time, and thus united in a common ideological condition, have, nonetheless, produced substantially diverse and even opposing poetic expressions. And it often happens that this counter position, in the most innovative eras of history, emblematically takes shape in the confrontation of two artists, two artists who naturally are important enough to be emblematic, who represent, in a complex series of interweaving sensibilities, of accords and discords with their own time, two significantly opposite visions that are in turn expressions of two different human natures” (G. Briganti, *Kounellis e Paolini a confronto*, in G. Briganti, *Il viaggiatore disincantato. Brevi viaggi in due secoli d'arte moderna*, Turin 1991, p. 241). Two opposing visions that for Briganti come to a meeting point in their common modes of weightlessness under the signs of air (Paolini) and of fire (Kounellis).

Weightlessness for Paolini is the manner in which, as Italo Calvino wrote, you reduce the weight of the world's reality and that of language (in I. Calvino, *Lezioni americane. Sei proposte per il prossimo millennio*, cap.1, *Leggerezza*). Weightlessness is art's same metaphysical nature that while it originates in the visible, it reaches the invisible measuring itself with the infinite. Weightlessness is also the condition with which Paolini confronts the museum as he senses the vertigo the collection generates. Aerial weightlessness is that of the imagination, without which the image would be a poor reproduction of reality,



Jannis Kounellis, *Untitled* (1992), iron, stone, wool blanket. Courtesy of the Maccaferri Collection (on exhibit in the Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings). On the right, the *Crucifixion with Magdalena* by Luca Signorelli.

in other words, poor art: poor above all in beauty and mystery.

“Today as always – writes Paolini – the artist searches, or waits, for beauty. Incapable of definition, beauty is the near relative of infinity, of the vertigo of interpretation: but it doesn’t lie beyond an indecipherable perspective, in extreme, an unreachable distance. Always changing, although immobile, beauty appears as a silhouette: we give her features that our eyes have been educated to see in reality and that instead are

not hers. They are not enough to define her visage”.

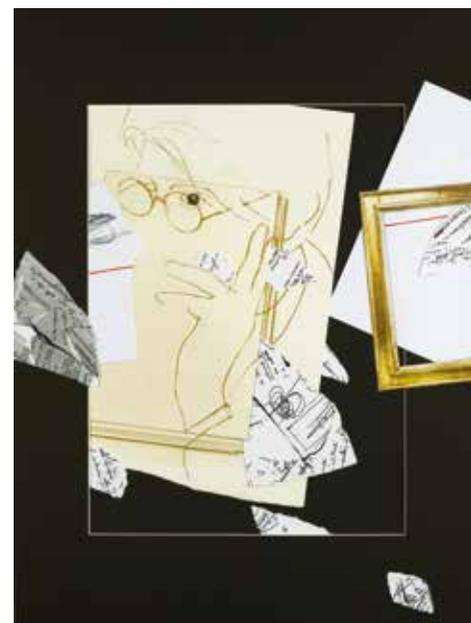
We can use these words as an introduction to Paolini’s work *Inside and Out*, placed at the center of the precious oval chamber known as the *Gabinetto delle miniature* (*Cabinet of the Miniatures*). Located on the short side of Vasari’s architectural masterpiece, it was first arranged by the Grand Duke Ferdinando I de’ Medici, and later perfected to its present day aspect by Zenobi del Rosso during the reign of Pietro Leopoldo. Paolini’s work consists of

an octagonal structure made of Plexiglas with four transparent sides and four mirrored sides. The eight-sided structure rests on top of a sheet of glass that reflects the frescoes in the ceiling and the scores of miniatures lining the walls. Within the structure is a small cube, made once again of Plexiglas that supports a crystal sphere at its center. The ball of glass, symbol of cosmological perfection, creates a vertiginous play multiplying figures and objects, geometries and colors. The entire work has the

power of engulfing every point of space, every detail, reducing it in size, alternating proportions and forms according to a principle of optical distortion and of visual reversal. Inside and outside are confused, container and content interpenetrate exchanging roles.

We verify the existence of reality thanks to a panoptic contrivance in which the spiral of reflections and refractions capture sight multiplying it magically to the infinite. Reflecting glass spheres were found in the chambers of wonder and curiosity and are reproduced for example in some seventeenth century Still Lifes by Gerrit Dou and Pieter Claesz. Glass convex objects appear, enigmatic and magnetic, in Maurits Cornelis Escher and Man Ray. Labyrinth, mirror, double, infinite, illusion are terms used by Giulio Paolini who with his works gives form to an objective and absolute reality that is that of the image with its ancient rules, with its marvelous limitations and with its mysterious power. Classical rules that Paolini subjects to a slight “clinamen”: just enough to provoke stupor and vertigo, marvel and estrangement in a renewed nostalgia for perfection. ■

Sergio Risaliti



Giulio Paolini, *Fuoriquadro (Self-portrait, 2013)*, 3 elements, collage, ink and pencil on paper. Photo Paolo Mussat Sartor, Turin; gifted to the Uffizi Galleries, Gallery of Statues and Paintings, through the Amici degli Uffizi.



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# Life at the Uffizi

## ■ ÈJZENŠTEJN: THE REVOLUTION OF IMAGES

On the occasion of the centennial of the socialist revolution in Russia, the Uffizi Gallery – in collaboration with the Film Archive Foundation of Bologna – pay homage to the greatest innovator of the time with an exhibit on Sergej Èjzenštejn (Riga, 1898-Moscow 1948) at the crossroads of his activities as a film director and designer, observing both in light of his ideas on film editing. A selection of over seventy drawings from the Russian State Archives of Literature and Arts in Moscow (RGALI), the majority unpublished, enter into dialogue with the director's film production, revealing both reciprocal autonomy and intimate correlation as Èjzenštejn himself declared in his writings. The graphics, "mounted" following the scan sequence of the cycles from which they originate, illustrate the "cinématisme" that Èjzenštejn assigned to these drawings. Cinema in the meanwhile embodies the sum and synthesis of all of the arts, taking on the legacy of the drawings and enriching them with the fluidity of life through the



Sergej Èjzenštejn, *Untitled (from the cycle Gedanken zur Musik, 1938)*, blue and red pencil, Moscow, Russian State Archives of Literature and Arts (RGALI).

editor's dismemberment and recomposition.

A *fil rouge* compares these graphic and cinematographic experimentations with Late Medieval and Renaissance Italian art, ensuing assonances suggested by the cinematographer himself, for example, proposing parallels between clips from films and the paintings of Paolo Uccello, Leonardo da Vinci and other masters within the collections of the Uffizi Galleries.

Sergej Èjzenštejn often lamented never having been able to visit the Uffizi: this exhibit makes amends for this minor injustice on the part of History. ■

Marzia Faietti  
Gian Luca Farinelli  
Pierluca Nardoni  
Eike D. Schmidt

### "Èjzenštejn: the Revolution of Images"

edited by Marzia Faietti, Gian Luca Farinelli,  
Pierluca Nardoni, Eike D. Schmidt

Uffizi Galleries, Rooms adjacent the Department of Prints and Drawings

**November 7, 2017 – January 7, 2018**

Openings: from Tuesday to Sunday, 8:15-18:50

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OF THE AMICI DEGLI UFFIZI

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