



ARTIGIANATO PALAZZO
botteghe artigiane e loro committenze

25° edizione

Medal of the President of the Republic of Italy
MAM Prize (Maestro d'Arte e Mestiere) Supporter of Artistic Trades

Under the aegis of the
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“ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO: MEMORIES OF RUSSIA IN FLORENCE”

A TRIBUTE TO THE MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE CITY AND ITS HISTORICAL BOND WITH THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY

ROME, 5 February 2019

This edition marks the milestone of **twenty-five** years of the **ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO** Exhibition (Giardino Corsini, Florence, 16-19 May), developed from a project by **Giorgiana Corsini and Neri Torrigiani** to **promote, preserve and carry into the future** the arts linked with the best Italian and foreign artisan traditions. But also, to **create a network** between those who practise their manual crafts with passion, giving them the opportunity to compare notes on skills, knowledge and resources.

*“Our commitment in these years has been to place the focus of attention on two principles which we consider fundamental for the development of our country: **preserving** the age-old artistic trades, fruit of Italian ingenuity; giving space to **dialogue** in order to build a bridge between history and innovation”, underline **Giorgiana Corsini and Neri Torrigiani**.*

“At the same time, our ambition is to bring young talented people into contact with Master craftspeople, to help them plan their future, through the preservation and promotion of artisan traditions”.

In a unique setting, in the seventeenth century Italian-style Giardino Corsini, designed by Gherardo Silvani, this year the Exhibition will present a new selection of over **100 artisans** from Italy and abroad who will come to Florence, not only to display their products, but also to put themselves to the test, in live demonstrations of their skills. And they will interact with the visitors, revealing the secrets of their unique creative works.

The event continues with a **“fund-raising campaign to promote the Florentine cultural heritage”** addressed to private citizens and businesses. In 2018 it was dedicated to the reopening of the Richard Ginori Museum of the Manifattura di Doccia.

*“For the 25th year of the Exhibition we wish to pay a tribute to the multicultural and international identity of our city by setting ourselves a challenge, as patrons of the arts, where history and modernity meet”, explain **Giorgiana Corsini and Neri Torrigiani**.*

The campaign **“ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO: MEMORIES OF RUSSIA IN FLORENCE”** will be dedicated to the restoration and conservation of some extraordinary works of art, that testify to the cultural bond between **Florence and the Russian community** which, in the course of the 19th and early 20th century, embellished the city with residences, churches and important art collections.

Throughout the century, poets, artists, intellectuals, but also aristocrats and clerics, came to Florence, bringing their cultural and spiritual knowledge with them, bursting with ideas and artistic ferment, turning the city into an international melting pot of creativity.

FUND-RAISING

Retracing the steps taken by the so-called “**Russian colony**”, the aim of the international fund-raising campaign “**ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO: MEMORIES OF RUSSIA IN FLORENCE**” is to renew the links between the Florentine community and Russia. But also, as always, to promote the great Florentine tradition of craftsmanship and its new talented exponents.

The target is to collect over **€308,000** in order to be able to carry out urgent restoration and conservation works on the masterpieces of the **Demidoff Collection** housed in the **Stibbert Museum**; on the **Hemicycle of the Evangelical Cemetery “agli Allori”**; and to complete the restoration works on the **Church of the Nativity of Christ and Saint Nicholas the Thaumaturge** (the icons of St Andrew and St John the Theologian, the large iron entrance door by the Officine Michelucci and the fresco of the Annunciation in the narthex).

By taking part in the campaign, the donors will become an active part of the history of ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO, but also of Florence itself, since their names will appear in these important *lieux de mémoire*, witnesses to the history of Florence and its profound cultural exchanges with the Russian community.

The organisers of ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO, Giorgiana Corsini and Neri Torrigiani, have decided to offer some sculptures of the young Florentine artist Riccardo Prospero - aka “Simafra” - and the donations collected for these works will be channelled into the fund-raising project: ten unique numbered pieces, presented in a special Catalogue, with an introduction by Natalia Parenko, Director of the St. Petersburg Art Academy in Florence.

Specifically, there will be sculptures of various diameters (roughly from 25 to 50 cm) that transform the idea of the folkloristic Russian Matryoshka dolls into concentric globes in which the “geological eras” are represented by materials that can be traced to the Siberian mines: gold, malachite, diamonds, hard coal, gas...

ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO EXHIBITION MEMORIES OF RUSSIA IN FLORENCE is open to everyone and all donations are appreciated.

Supporters will receive different **rewards** depending on the donations they make: invitation to the ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO Exhibition preview cocktail, exclusive meetings, visits to historical private buildings in Florence, guided tours of the city’s museums and to places that are not usually open to the public, seats in the stalls for the next Maggio Musicale Fiorentino festival, straw hats hand-crafted by the companies of the “Il Cappello” consortium of Florence, inspired by the greatest figures of Russian literature, sculptures by the artist Simafra and a host more besides.

For details on donations/rewards, see: www.artigianatoepalazzo.it/raccolta-fondi/

Donations may be made until 31 May 2019 by:

Bank Transfer:

ASSOCIAZIONE GIARDINO CORSINI

c/c no. 16968/00

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Reason: “**MEMORIES OF RUSSIA IN FLORENCE**”

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RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION

The proceeds of the campaign will finance urgent restoration and conservation works on:

1. 1) THE HEMICYCLE OF THE EVANGELICAL CEMETERY “AGLI ALLORI”

opened on 26 February 1878 as a burial ground for the mortal remains of the members of non-Catholic communities. Founded as a Protestant cemetery according to a design by the architect Giuseppe Boccini - who also designed the Russian Orthodox Church of Florence together with Michail Preobrazenski - this is the cemetery for six Florentine Evangelical Churches, although ever since its foundation it has welcomed the dead of all religions, including many leading figures of the Russian community.

This monumental cemetery has given a resting place to artists, painters and sculptors, writers and art collectors from all over the world: Frederick Stibbert, Henry Percy Horne, Charles Loeser, Olga

Basilewskij, Arnold Böcklin, Lysine de Pilar Pilhau Rucellai, Roberto Longhi, sir John Pope-Hennessy, sir Harold Acton, father Vladimir Levickij, Nina Harkevič, Maria Olsufieva Michahelles, Thayaht, Anna Banti, Oriana Fallaci, Adriana Pincherle. (*Florence, via Senese 184*).

Quote for total restoration and preservation works: €274,000

2. THE MASTERPIECES OF THE DEMIDOFF COLLECTION EXHIBITED AT THE STIBBERT MUSEUM

Extraordinary objects such as the large malachite table decorated with gilt bronze statues, the hard-stone fireplaces and chandeliers purchased by Frederick Stibbert from the Demidoffs, the exceedingly rich Russian princes, owners of malachite mines, who lived for many years in Florence, where they purchased - among other properties - the Pratolino estate from the Savoy family in 1872. (*Florence, via Federico Stibbert, 26*)

Quote for total restoration and preservation works: €4,300

3. COMPLETION OF THE RESTORATION WORKS ON THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST AND SAINT NICHOLAS THE THAUMATURGE

built between 1899 and 1903 at the behest of the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, daughter of Tsar Nicholas I.

The works particularly concern the icons of *St. Andrew* and *St. John the Theologian*, the fresco of the *Annunciation* in the narthex and the *large iron entrance door*, work of the Officine Michelucci foundry.

A unique monument in Europe, the Church of the Nativity is a rare and precious example of artistic collaboration between some of the best Russian and Italian artists and craftsmen. While the murals and icons adorning the inside of the Church are by Russian artists, some of the masonry structures, carvings and majolica decorations were created by the Italian workforce.

The exquisite two-leaved door leading to the upper church is finely carved in walnut, depicting stories from the Old Testament, by one of the most famous woodcarvers of the mid-19th century, **Rinaldo Barbetti**. With regard to the Church's exterior, the multi-coloured majolica tiles of the **Manifattura Cantagalli** factory, with their characteristic "fish scale" shape, adorn its domes and the high stringcourses of its main façade. The iron crosses and the elaborate railings enclosing the grounds of the building, adorned with imperial eagles and the Florentine lily enshrining the Italo-Russian artistic partnership, is the work of the **Fonderie Michelucci of Pistoia**. The Russian Orthodox Church is one of the greatest manifestations of the Russian presence in the Tuscan regional capital and it is a historical monument under the protection of the Special Superintendency for the Historical and Artistic Heritage of the city of Florence which is responsible for the High Level Surveillance and Artistic Direction of the conservative restoration works of the architectural complex. (*Florence, via Leone X, 8*)

Quote for total restoration and preservation works: €30,000

THE RUSSIANS IN FLORENCE

Right from the outset of the nineteenth century, the art, society and mild climate of Florence and Tuscany exerted a great attraction on the Russian community, who chose this city and this area not only as a popular destination for leisure trips, but also for long regular stays, or even as a permanent place of residence.

The Demidoff family, splendid hosts of Florentine society, first in the sumptuous villa of San Donato in Polverosa, then in the Medici villa of Pratolino, and in the spacious rooms of Palazzo Serristori, spent huge sums of money funding large projects for prestigious Florentine monuments, such as the façade of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore and that of the Basilica di Santa Croce. Florence rewarded their efforts by naming after them the square overlooking the River Arno, where the splendid monument of the Neoclassical sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini (1777-1850) stands. This was commissioned by the Demidoff children in commemoration of their father Prince Nikolai Demidoff, Tsar Alexander I's ambassador to Florence.

Leading figures of the arts such as **Fyodor Dostoevsky**, **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** and **Leo Tolstoy**, - who, after having visited the city at an earlier date, appears to have returned to Florence in 1891 to take part in a conference on the possibility of melding the various Christian churches - stayed there during their travels in Europe.

The same applies to a host of illustrious *immigrées*: writers Boris Zaytsev, Vasily Rozanov, Aleksey Tolstoy, Mikhail Osorgin, painters Karl Bryullov and Ivan Aivazovsky, the architect Vasily Stasov, the symbolist poet Aleksandr Blok and the art historian, Pavel Muratov. While in more recent times, the poet **Joseph Brodsky** and the film director **Andrei Tarkovsky** have paid tribute to the city through their works. A large community of anarchists such as Mikhail Bakunin – cousin of Sofia Besobrasoff, wife of Angelo de Gubernatis – and intellectuals in exile from all eras - such as the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize **Andrei Sakharov** who was made an "Honorary Citizen" in 1989 - found in Florence a safe haven and a place to stay.

In the field of poetry, Pyotr Vyazemsk of Pushkin's pleiade composed a lyric poem entitled *Florencija* the *incipit* of which is the introduction of Goethe's *Mignon's Song*: [Do you know the land. There the Arno flows] The poem calls Florence the "fabulous city of Flora".

Some people, like the Buturlin counts and the Demidoff princes, stayed there for the rest of their lives; many married into the most important families of the aristocracy: Borghese, Corsini, Pandolfini, Pucci, Rucellai...

CATALOGUE

The catalogue of the 25th ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO Exhibition on this theme will be enriched by the original contributions of:

Lucia Tonini, University of Pisa

Mikhail Talalay, Russian Academy of Science, Moscow

Grazia Gobbi Sica, President of the Association "Amici degli Allori"

Enrico Colle, Director of the Stibbert Museum

Anne Worontzoff, Lay Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church of Florence

Natalia Parenko, Director of the St. Petersburg Art Academy in Florence

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25th ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO

May 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2019

Open 10 am - 8 pm

Giardino Corsini

Via della Scala, 115 | Florence

www.artigianatoepalazzo.it

ARTIGIANATO E PALAZZO - Presentation of the 25th edition 2019

International Promotion Committee

Stefano Aluffi Pentini, Barbara Berlingieri, Jean Blanchaert, Fausto Calderai, Matteo Corvino, Michel de Grèce, Maria de' Peverelli, Elisabetta Fabri, Bona Frescobaldi, Anna Gastel, Mario Augusto Lolli Ghetti, Fabrizia Lanza, Ginevra Marchi, Raffaello Napoleone, Carlo Orsi, Alvar Gonzales Palacios, Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi, Natalie Rucellai, Luigi Settembrini, Simone Todorow and Christian Witt-Döring.

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