



*...the secrets of fresco painting
in the Italian Renaissance Art*



A PROJECT FOR A UNIQUE EXHIBITION

The Renaissance greatest masters : Giotto, Beato Angelico, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raffaello, Leonardo..... are brought together in this special exhibition by a leading thread : **the art of fresco painting**.

In the spotlight of the exhibition are the unique frescoes created in Antonio De Vito's Florentine atelier, telling us the intriguing and spectacular story of the art of the fresco. De Vito's own interpretations of the works of these immense artists guide us to the discovery of their secrets.

The exhibition offers a path that leads visitors to the discovery not only of the technical aspects of fresco painting, but also of the artistic concepts characteristic of the Renaissance.

The uniqueness of this project lies in the fact that it presents real frescoes, detached from the walls with a special technique, giving the visitors the opportunity to see works that traditionally can be admired only on the spot where they were painted.

THE EXHIBITION

Our project provides a variable number of fresco paintings depending on the available space. Preparatory cartoons and sketches will be displayed with some of the works.

Each fresco is displayed with caption and photographs.

The initial section displays a rich gallery of frescoes, supported by an introduction to the technique of fresco painting with texts, photographs and videos to illustrate the different steps in painting.

Besides the gallery, in a unique development, **a second section** offers an area set up full of various features recreating the atelier of a Renaissance painter.

To end the exhibition tour, an area is dedicated to the reconstruction of Leonardo Da Vinci's lost masterpiece, **the fresco of the Battle of Anghiari**, accompanied by the fascinating studies that led to its achievement.

The "bottega" area can become the stage of workshops to give callers an opportunity to experiment with fresco painting.

This particular area can be set up to perform live fresco painting : Master Antonio De Vito will create a fresco before the visitors' eyes, on a purposely built "wall".

A journey through time to discover a forgotten art that comes back to life .

THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

- * Required space between 100 and 300 square metres.
- * Our project provides a variable number of fresco paintings depending on the available space : from 20 to 30 (measuring between 50 cm up to 250 cm wide).
- * Framed drawings connected with a theme.
- * Each fresco is displayed with its caption.
Photographs, preparatory cartoons and sketches will be displayed with some of the works.
- * 60 x 180 cm and 80 x 180 cm informative panels with texts and pictures.
- * All captions and texts are both in English and in the language of the host country.
- * Multimedia material.



THE "BOTTEGA" AREA

Another originality : the exhibition gives visitors the opportunity to discover tools, machines and instruments used by painters of the past to plan and create their works.

This area is set up according to the layout of the space. Basic elements, carefully reconstructed from antique models, will recreate the atmosphere of the workshop and illustrate the different stages in painting.

- * **Preparation of plaster** : sand, lime plaster, pitchers, basins, trowels. . .
- * **Design of the painting** : models in plaster for drapery study, instruments to transfer the drawing on the wall (pouncing technique), instruments to divide sketches into squares for enlarging purposes, dark room. . . .
- * **Painting steps** : powdered pigments (natural clay based pigments), jars with colour paste, brushes, palettes, easels. . .
- * **Fragments of wall**, to illustrate the different stages of fresco painting.



THE BATTLE OF ANGHIARI

Preparatory cartoon cm 252 x 183



Reconstruction of the "Battle of Anghiari", lost masterpiece from Leonardo Da Vinci. It was painted for the first time using the fresco technique and displayed in Palazzo Pitti (Florence) in November 2007.

The study to recreate the painting was based on sketches from Leonardo as well as on his writings on painting and on the copies and descriptions made by artists of his time.

This battle scene described by Leonardo marks an important stage in the history of art : it changed for ever the way of depicting battles. From composed and rather static scenes, they became vortexes of fury. It also marked the first step in the gradual abandonment of the fresco technique, no longer suitable for such complex representations.



Fresco of the Battle of Anghiari cm 260 x 183

The fresco is displayed along with the preparatory cartoon and is accompanied by a video-documentary .



EXTRAS

**It is possible to set up a purposely built structure to perform live fresco painting in the “bottega space” (the resulting fresco will remain the property of Master Antonio De Vito). The performance will last from 4 up to 7 days, with dates to be agreed.*

** It is possible to organize workshops to experiment with fresco painting.*



Live painting of the "Battle of Anghiari" in Florence



Live painting of the Christ from "the Last Supper" in Melbourne.



EXAMPLES of FRESCOES

WITH CAPTION



from MICHELANGELO



MICHELANGELESQUE HEAD cm 189 x 92

....This work illustrates one of the difficulties of fresco painting :
in spite of its dimensions, it had to be done in a few hours only. The time granted to the painter before the plaster gets dry...

All the ideals of the Renaissance seem to be incarnated in this picture of a head, inspired by one of the angels in the Sistine Chapel.

...the eyes looking in two different directions to embrace the whole world : a way used by many artists
to give a more enigmatic and livelier expression to their subject.

(simplified caption)

from MICHELANGELO

MICHELANGELO had drawn a sketch for a fresco
"The BATTLE OF CASCINA"
The fresco was never realized. . .

. . . . This sketch got lost . . . the only traces of it
are copies, made then by other artists.

Through the study of those sketches
and going back to the anatomical proportions
of the Sistine Chapel nudes, this interpretation
recreates some typical aspects of Michelangelo's art.

(simplified caption)



Detail from the Battle of Cascina cm 99 x 82



detail of Eve cm 178 x 70

from MASOLINO

These two interpretations are very important to understand better the stylistic transformations that occurred during the history of the art of the fresco and in this, the paintings of Masaccio and Masolino in The Brancacci Chapel in Florence play a vital role.

With this image, Masolino represents Eve in the Garden of Eden, before the original sin... he marks both symbolically and stylistically the end of the formal elegance and of the calm, composed beauty typical of the courtly background of Masolino's late gothic period... On the opposite wall, Masaccio who was younger than Masolino, but still contemporary, painted the "The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden" : a real rupture from Masolino's style : the composure and formality are gone, he represents the desperate and upsetting humanity of Eve , marking thus the starting point of a new era, getting to the heart of the Renaissance...

In these interpretations, the antique look is carried to the extreme, highlighting a peculiarity of the fresco technique : the use of foundation colours... under the flesh colour, you can make out the light green colour, used to give brightness and transparency...

(simplified caption)

Eve cm 48 x 164





Musician Angels cm 113 x 85

from BEATO ANGELICO

... the use of gold leaf in frescoes played an important part, especially in churches, often very dark...
 even a dim candle light, shining on the golden background was enough to illuminate the figures, diffusing a mystic glow...
 (simplified caption)

LEONARDESQUE FIGURE

This fresco presents a double challenge : to render, in the little time allotted, both the famous "Leonardesque sfumato" and the enigmatic expression of this angel, and create a "meditative image", typical of Leonardo's paintings.

This angelic figure, inspired by the two versions of the "Virgin of the Rocks", shows a surprising ambiguityheavenly or earthly creature?...male or female? ...manifestation of virtue or insidious temptress? Taken out of any context, it emerges, ghost-like, from a very dark background which enhances the sidelong glance of the character, soft and gentle, yet slightly disturbing. This arouses curiosity in the observer, who is anxious to know what is hiding behind this graceful face.

(simplified caption)

"The good painter must chiefly paint two things : man, and the concept of his mind. The first one is easy, the second one is difficult, because it must be depicted with gestures and movements of the limbs."(Leonardo)

Preparatory drawings made on antique paper.



These sketches, essential for the study of the painting, are displayed along with the frescoes to illustrate the first steps of the whole work.



Florence - Palazzo Pitti



Anghiari - Palazzo della Battaglia



Melbourne - South Banks - the recreated "Bottega"

EXHIBITIONS

...around the world



Florence - Fortezza da Basso - the recreated "Bottega"



Melbourne - South Banks - exhibition hall

Dresda - Kulturrathaus



Florence - Fortezza da Basso - exhibition hall



Florence - Pizzo Strozzi - "Botticelli and the florentine painting"



*At the end of this journey in search of fresco painting,
after being brought close to the hands and souls of the greatest masters of the Renaissance,
the visitor gets the essence of this forgotten art, that marked our culture with unforgettable masterpieces.
The fresco reveals itself as a thought, firmly held by the wall, then, from the wall, takes on eternity. . .*

Antonio De Vito was born in Apulia, Italy. After his degree at the University of the Arts he started honing his skills in fresco painting under the tutelage of a restorer. These experiences prompted him to move to Florence, Italy, famously steeped in art, with a view to complete his artistic and cultural studies and to undertake complex research on the works of the great Masters.

That's how he decided to open his workshop « **I Muri dell'Arte** » in the Tuscan hills .

Fresco painting is a very characteristic technique, which demands great speed and confidence, and leaves no room for error or second thoughts, which is why very few artists use this traditional method today..

This art was typical of the golden age of Italian history of art, from the end of the Middle Ages until the Renaissance, but surprisingly enough, it is little known.

This is why , as we have learnt over the years, exhibitions on this particular topic never fail to generate great interest.

WORKS AND TECHNIQUE

Within the walls of a fourteenth-century tower that shelters the workshop unique works are created, using the purest fresco technique, the same technique used by the great Masters, from Giotto to Michelangelo.

To achieve it, plaster prepared with lime and sand is spread on the wall and painting begins on its fresh surface .All colours used are natural clay-based pigments. The actual process of painting must be completed in just a few hours, as it has to be done on fresh plaster (hence the name of « fresco » which in Italian means « fresh »). Only this way can the pigments permeate the wall and show the magic of this technique : absorbed by lime, colour becomes part of the wall itself.

The uniqueness of Antonio De Vito's art arises not only from the fact that there are few painters left in the world using this technique, but from another characteristic as well : by using a particular method, his works, all of them painted in the workshop , can be detached from the walls and taken around the world.

Each and every one of his works is the result of painstaking research ,not only from a scholar's point of view, but from a painter's point of view as well. His experience and intuition as a painter allow him to capture the secrets behind the works he gets inspiration from. Such is the experience Antonio De Vito shares with the public during the exhibitions, giving them the opportunity of grasping the art of fresco painting and its artist.

SOME EXHIBITIONS

Antonio De Vito has displayed his work on various occasions throughout Italy and abroad, never failing to arouse interest.

In particular, he has exhibited his art at the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence on the occasion of Botticelli's exhibition .

His own reconstruction of the "Battle of Anghiari" was presented in the Palazzo Pitti of Florence in November 2007.

His works have been on display in Melbourne and Sydney (Australia) in an outstanding exhibition on Leonardo's genius and over the next few years they will tour New Zealand and South East Asia.

On that occasion, he started a live performance in a world premiere challenge , painting in fresco his own personal life-size reconstruction of Da Vinci's Last Supper.

for all the Exhibition Bookings please contact:



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