**PERUGIA**

**FRIDAY 1 JULY 2022**

**RE-OPENING OF**

**THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF UMBRIA**

**After a year of work, one of Italy’s most important museums opens its doors with a new set-up, new spaces and new methods of visitor experience.**

**A host of new features includes two rooms entirely devoted to the works of Perugino, of which the gallery holds the world’s greatest number, and the inauguration of the section reserved for contemporary art, with pieces by such Umbrian maestros as Gerardo Dottori and Alberto Burri.**

**On Friday 1 July 2022, after a year of work, the National Gallery of Umbria**, one of Italy’s most important museums and home to a wealth of masterpieces, boasting the greatest number of works by Perugino held in a single location anywhere in the world, reopens its doors to the public.

Tradition and innovation are the two benchmarks for the new exhibition experience. Faithful to its history and its identity, the **National Gallery of Umbria is forging its way forward into the third millennium**, proving its state-of-the-art credentials in heritage conservation, the safety and security of both people and property, environmental sustainability, internal and external communication, interdisciplinarity and the international scope of its research.

“Today is a special day for Perugia, for Umbria and for Italy”, **states Professor Massimo Osanna, Italy’s Director General of Museums**. “After a year of work, a location of excellence, custodian of Italy’s artistic and cultural heritage, can once again be enjoyed by the public.

“Financed by the Development and Cohesion Fund, the reorganisation work done in the National Gallery of Umbria has delivered a museum to its visitors that is projected towards the future but does not forget to celebrate Umbria’s tremendous figurative culture, which stretches from the great masters of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to such contemporary artists as Gerardo Dottori, Roberto Paci Dalò, Vittorio Corsini, Piero Dorazio and Alberto Burri, whose works are all now present for the first time along the route of the museum visit.

“This is a tradition that achieved its absolute pinnacle with Pietro di Cristoforo Vannucci, known as Perugino, whose fifth death centennial takes place in 2023, an anniversary for which the Ministry of Culture will be promoting initiatives dedicated to the artist’s memory.”

“The re-opening of the National Gallery of Umbria, an integral part of our Palazzo dei Priori, is a cause for great satisfaction and pride, because it restores a treasure trove of some of Italy’s most priceless works of art to our city,” **declares the mayor of Perugia, Andrea Romizi**. “The refurbishment, starting from the new set-up, was reminiscent of a Renaissance building site, involving various parts of the Palazzo dei Priori, such as the Room of the Gryphon and the Lion, which will house the Gallery’s library. From today, the cultural scene in the city and the region gets a fresh start with energetic drive, aiming at increasingly aware tourism and searching out prominent cultural deposits and complexes. The Ministry of Culture deserves full merit for earmarking conspicuous funding, but even more so the Gallery’s Director Pierini deserves it for his determination to restore Palazzo dei Priori to its original appearance, with a Gallery now on a par with the greatest international museums.”

“Rethinking the museum from the foundations meant first and foremost harnessing the ability to keep a firm focus on history and tradition, so as to grow, develop and improve, knowing very well ‘who we are’ and ‘what we want to become’”, **stresses Marco Pierini, Director of the National Gallery of Umbria**. “The challenge we decided to tackle was one of transforming an accessible museum into a receptive museum. First of all for the works, to whose conservation and fruition we have paid very special attention, and secondly for visitors, who can make their way through the rooms, choosing to enjoy the sight of the works, learning more about them from the printed and digital texts provided, or resting their legs and their eyes by looking through the windows to admire the city whose monuments are the origin of a large proportion of the artistic works on show.”

The work of Daria Ripa di Meana and Bruno Salvatici, financed to the tune of €5 million by the Development and Cohesion Fund, the new set-up offers visitors a simpler, more intuitive user experience, with the addition of several works that have only recently been purchased or brought out of storage.

Notable among these are the ***Imago*** ***Pietatis*** by **Giovanni Baronzio** (c. 1330), the ***Salvator Mundi*** by **Melozzo da Forlì** (1476-1485), the ***Presentation of Jesus at the Temple*** by **Giovambattista Naldini** (1535-1591), purchased in 2018, of which a sketch is present in the Gallery, the ***Madonna and Child with Saint Gertrude*** by **Giuseppe Maria Crespi** (1665-1747) and the ***Saint Anne, Saint Joachim and the Child Mary*** by **Francesco Mancini** (1679-1758).

The National Gallery of Umbria houses primarily paintings of sacred subjects that can be dated from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries. This kind of collection lends itself ideally to chronological exhibition criteria; in fact, the way that the works are arranged in the new layout is based on this logic of the passing of time, with several important innovations compared to the past. The applied arts (works in precious metals, medals, ivories and fabrics) are arranged to dialogue with painting and sculpture, to represent the evolution of figurative languages and the interactions between different techniques over the centuries.

Monographic rooms have also been created to narrate the careers of the most significant artists present in the collections. The rooms with the greatest impact are **the two dedicated to the most important Umbrian master, Pietro di Cristoforo Vannucci**, also known as **Perugino**. One of these is on the third floor, housing the works executed during his youth and early maturity, while the other is on the floor below, where visitors will find his later works, with the most significant pieces from the last twenty years of his career, set up in a highly evocative environment that now brings together masterpieces that were previously distributed in seven different rooms.

In 2023, on the occasion of the fifth centennial of his death, Perugino will be celebrated with a series of research, training, publishing and exhibition activities, as well as by the organisation of cultural events, which will all be emanating from the focus of the National Gallery of Umbria.

Compared to the past, the new Gallery also features a leaner selection from the collections, which was made using methods that have led to the museum providing a more in-depth illustration of the scope and wealth of its collections, while at the same time making the visitor experience more fluid and enjoyable. The creation of an **Exhibition box** for small temporary exhibitions will enable the works held in store to be suitably valorised in specific events.

**For the first time, the National Gallery of Umbria is also opening up to contemporary art**.

**On the rear wall of the Chapel of the Priors, Vittorio Corsini has used the original technique to reinterpret the lost stained glass windows** and shaped the new sacred fulcrum of the Palazzo dei Priori in the wooden altar.

**Room 20** houses the *Ductus* project created by **Roberto Paci Dalò** using watercolour graphite and Indian ink. These are images and words that play on certain watersheds in the history of art in Umbria, offering today’s visitors suggestions, food for thought and remodulations of form capable of triggering mechanisms of direct and intuitive knowledge.

The new layout of the National Gallery of Umbria dedicates **Room 39** to artists either from Umbria or who spent many years working in the region, such as **Gerardo Dottori, Alberto Burri,** **Piero Dorazio and Adalberto Mecarelli**, who played a leading part, with their presence and cultural substance, in the debate about contemporary art in Italy, influencing it profoundly.

**Gerardo Dottori’s *Moonset***, a lyrical Futurist landscape dated 1930, and **Alberto Burri’s *Black and White C2*** dated 1971, which both belong to the Museum’s own collections, dialogue with a work in tar by the same maestro (***Black***) from Città di Castello dating to a score of years earlier and a large canvas by the Roman artist **Piero Dorazio (*Andi(i)Rivieni, 1970*)**, which are both held by the Gallery on loan from private collections.

The visit ends with a work executed in India at the dawn of the third millennium, ***Bissau Hotel à Jaipur*, by Adalberto Mecarelli, a native of Terni**.

The visitor experience is augmented by a **multimedia project developed and created by Magister Art**, which provides further information and unprecedented angles about a selection of the heritage on display. One of the projects is an innovative multimedia system for which a new definition has been coined: animated captions. This is a virtual space where we bring together the missing pieces of certain works that were dismantled in the past, with elements spread all over the world, in an informal learning process that overcomes physical and geographical barriers.

There are many more innovations, which visitors already encounter in the atrium of the Palazzo dei Priori, where the bookshop has an expanded range of services in a larger setting and with new lighting that enhances its architecture, its ceiling vaults, its ribbing and its ogival arch windows, all unmistakeable evidence of the building’s mediaeval origins.

The renovation work has provided space for the creation of **a restoration workshop** and a fully accessible didactic lecture room, fitted with new furnishings, materials and instrumentation, including electronic equipment, to enable the Gallery to host such initiatives as workshops and augmented reality activities, among others. In addition, one of the most significant new features here comes with the inauguration of an **Art History Library**, comprising nearly 30,000 volumes housed in the Room of the Gryphon and the Lion. This new library was made possible by the Municipality of Perugia’s generous concession of this prestigious space, which will now be at the disposal of students and scholars.

There is also plenty of attention for the **‘green’ side**. The Gallery’s new hi-tech lighting system is fitted with presence detectors that adjust the lighting intensity automatically: when there is no-one in a room, the lighting is dimmed to a minimum level, generating substantial energy savings.

To mark this new layout, **Silvana Editoriale** has drawn up a new art history guide, edited by the Gallery’s Director Marco Pierini, with an essay about the Palazzo dei Priori and the history of the Gallery by Marina Bon Valsassina.

**The National Gallery of Umbria and Franco Cosimo Panini Editore** have prepared a guide for children, starring **Pimpa**. The little red-spotted dog drawn by Altan will accompany children as they visit the Perugia museum, telling them all sorts of unusual stories about the masterpieces and involving them in enjoyable little activities to do on the spot or when they get back home, to help them remember the things they have learned. The book also contains plenty of stimuli for playing: stickers, shapes to detach and a cartoon story about Perugino.

**The Gallery’s official website (**[**www.gallerianazionaledellumbria.it**](http://www.gallerianazionaledellumbria.it)**) has also been restyled** to act as a container and a tool to guide visitors as they make their way around the museum, so also functioning as a web app. Now more intuitive, dynamic and versatile than before, the website has been developed to be accessible, including audio recordings that describe the works on display (in Italian and English), videos in Italian Sign Language, multimedia contents and detailed studies, as well as information about thematic visits, such as the one based on music, and a lot more besides. Lastly, the new pages dedicated to the collections offer an unparalleled opportunity to penetrate deep beneath the surface and perceive every single detail of the works, using gigapixel scans made as part of an extensive project conducted in partnership with Haltadefinizione, which combines the requirements of access and use with those of conservation.

The new website is flanked by the **Digital Gallery** project, the systematic organisation of some 100,000 freely accessible documents comprising the Gallery’s **historical archive, restoration archive** and a huge quantity of **photographic material**.

Perugia, 29 June 2022

**Friday 1 July 2022: Re-opening of the National Gallery of Umbria**

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