

"I Marmi Torlonia. Collezionare Capolavori. The Torlonia Marbles. Collecting Masterpieces"

Curated by Salvatore Settis and Carlo Gasparri

Gallerie d'Italia - Piazza Scala | Piazza della Scala 6, Milan

from 25 May 2022 to 18 September 2022

Images at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/6br26pvzs7qg1jkzeraaf/h?dl=0&rlkey=699zxq5thatohsnq3bz0wwyr1>

From 25 May to 18 September 2022, Gallerie d'Italia in Piazza Scala, Milan, an Intesa Sanpaolo museum, will be presenting **the exhibition "I Marmi Torlonia. Collezionare Capolavori. The Torlonia Marbles. Collecting Masterpieces."** 96 marbles from the Torlonia Collection, the most important private collection of classical sculptures, in a major exhibition that, with five new restored works, inaugurates the Collection's worldwide exhibition programme.

The majestic consular sarcophagus from Via Ardeatina will welcome visitors, with a group of Roman togate statues, in the large spaces of the Gallerie, where the colossal *Dacian prisoner*, similar to those of the Forum of Trajan, will be located alongside the recently restored portraits of Domitian and Antinous, part of the Collection's famous gallery of 122 busts. The exhibition will conclude with a section entirely dedicated to the restoration work where the 112-piece *Hercules*, already exhibited in Rome, will dialogue with the sculpture of *Leda and the swan*: different phases of the cleaning process will be visible in both works to underline the challenges that contemporary restorers have to face.

The **"I Marmi Torlonia. Collezionare Capolavori. The Torlonia Marbles. Collecting Masterpieces"** exhibition stems from an agreement between the Torlonia Foundation and the Ministry of Culture - with the Directorate General for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape and the Soprintendenza Speciale for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of Rome - an authentic example of public and private sector collaboration in the name of culture. Following the success of the Roman opening, the May 2022 event is the first leg of a tour of important international museums that will end with the identification of a permanent exhibition venue for the new Torlonia Museum; in the meantime, the restoration of the Collection's sculptures continues at the Torlonia Laboratories in Via della Lungara.

The scientific project curated by Salvatore Settis and Carlo Gasparri is presented in an exhibition which, maintaining the *common thread* of the chronological retracing of the history of art collection, highlights the exceptional historical relevance of the Torlonia alla Lungara Museum, founded by Prince Alessandro Torlonia in 1875. The works - over 620 busts, reliefs, statues, sarcophagi and decorative elements described in the catalogue of the *Torlonia Museum of ancient sculpture (1884-85)* published by Carlo Ludovico Visconti, the first fully illustrated in phototype - are not only distinguished examples of ancient sculpture but also a highly representative snapshot of the history of the collection of antiquities in Rome from the 15th to the 19th centuries. This 'collection of collections' is the result of multiple acquisitions and some significant transfers of sculptures between the Family's various residences prior to the creation of the Torlonia Museum, and represents - the

beginnings of antiquity collection and the birth of the great Roman collections - a cultural process of fundamental importance in which Italy and Rome were undisputed leaders.

The Torlonia Collection was born from the Torlonia Family's fondness for collecting antiquities, a passion further underlined by the creation of the Torlonia Foundation, established with the aim of preserving and promoting "*the cultural heritage of the Family for humanity*" and passing it down to future generations. Thanks to an agreement signed with the Foundation, and in light of the Brand's Greek-Roman roots, as main sponsor Bulgari has contributed to the restoration of the works already exhibited in the Capitoline Exhibition, whose original splendour has been restored following careful studies at the Torlonia Laboratories. Restoration is an enlightening process in which new light is shed on the history of the works. In fact, some interesting discoveries were made during the work, such as the traces of colour present on the 3rd century AD Relief of Porto. Gallerie d'Italia was keen to support this important conservation project by contributing to the restoration of the Consular Sarcophagus and the sculpture of Leda which will open and close the exhibition.

The catalogue of the restored works is published by Electa while the Sonnoli studio was involved in developing the graphic identity of the exhibition. The corporate image is the result of research and studies on the typefaces used in the historic catalogue of the Torlonia Museum. The T of Torlonia has become the main logo for all communications, constituting an integral part of the graphics and support materials for the gallery of sculptures selected for the exhibition.

At the Milan site, the design of the new layout was commissioned to architect Lucia Anna Iovieno, who will offer a new, personal interpretation of the exhibition, coordinating all phases of the design process with the curators.

SCIENTIFIC PROJECT

Section I: Evocation of the Torlonia Museum

The exhibition begins with a spectacular evocation of the Torlonia Museum - opened by Prince Alessandro in 1875 - located in Via della Lungara, where the 620 sculptures were displayed in 77 rooms. These included the vast gallery of 122 portrait busts: "an immense treasure trove of erudition and art" (P.E. Visconti). On the Milan leg, the first selection will be enriched by the imposing Consular Sarcophagus of Via Ardeatina MT 395, with a group of Roman togate statues, which will welcome visitors, and two new busts (Domitian MT 539 and Antinous MT 398) to complete a gallery of faces already present at the Roman exhibition.

Section II: Torlonia Excavations (19th century)

Prince Giovanni and his son Alessandro recovered many sculptures from excavations around Rome, in archaeological areas such as the Caffarella and the Villas of the Quintili, Sette Bassi and Maxentius. Other finds came from excavations along the Appian Way and the Via Latina or from estates in Sabina and Tuscia, or from the area of *Portus Augusti*. This section, at the Milan site, will host the colossal Dace MT 412 which, because of its weight, could not be located in Villa Caffarelli. In the large rooms of Gallerie d'Italia visitors will be able to admire it in all its glory.

Section III: Villa Albani and the Cavaceppi Workshop (18th century)

Many of the marbles in the Torlonia Museum come from two major 18th century sources: Villa Albani, built to house the sculpture collection of Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692-1779), purchased by Prince Alessandro Torlonia in 1866 and still owned by the Family, and the marbles of

the workshop of sculptor Bartolomeo Cavaceppi (1716-1799), which testify to his restoration activities and trading of ancient sculptures. When he died, Giovanni Torlonia bought all of Cavaceppi's marbles at auction, ensuring they were kept together.

Section IV: The Antiquities Collection of Vincenzo Giustiniani (XVII century)

In 1636-37 Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564-1637) promoted a sumptuous printed work, the *Galleria Giustiniana*, with 330 engravings reproducing many of his ancient sculptures. The majority of the antiquities, purchased by Prince Giovanni Torlonia in 1816, passed to his son Alessandro in 1856-59, who donated them to the Museum.

Section V: The XV-XVI Century Antiquities Collections

A selection of sculptures documented in 15th and 16th century collections that came into the possession of the Torlonia Family as part of larger acquisitions (Albani, Giustiniani, Cavaceppi) or by direct purchase.

Epilogue - Restoration History

In the final room, on the table with porphyry shelf, there is a copy of the sumptuous *Museo Torlonia* book (1884) with the phototype reproduction of all 620 sculptures in the Museum. This last room of the Milan exhibition will host an interesting discussion and in-depth analysis on the theme of contemporary restoration. The Hercules MT 25 composed of 112 pieces will be placed alongside the Leda MT 60, exhibited with different stages of the cleaning process visible in order to more accurately illustrate the various phases of the restoration process, particularly those performed in the Torlonia Museum in the late 19th century, and highlight the problems and challenges faced by contemporary restorers.

PRESS INFORMATION

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