

MUSEO NAZIONALE DI PALAZZO REALE

Direzione regionale musei della Toscana



The Collection Highlights

THE BUILDING

The museum is housed in the former Grand Ducal and later Royal Palace in Pisa. Francesco I de' Medici was the first Grand Duke of Tuscany commissioning a winter residence in the city in order to escape the cold which characterised Florence in winter. Between 1583 and 1587, the architect Bernardo Buontalenti incorporated into the new palace the already existing medieval buildings, such as the tower houses of Dodi's, Gaetani's and Gusmani's families, and the so-called Torre della Verga d'Oro, and added a covered and elevated passage connecting the palace to St. Nicholas church. With the change in dynasty in 1737, the Habsburg-Lorena became Grand Dukes of Tuscany and the palace was enriched with a scenographic staircase and a new elevated passage leading to the neighbouring Palazzo delle Vedove. During that period, rooms were decorated in a refined way as attested by the Sala Ottagonale on the ground floor and the Sala del Gioco del Ponte on the main floor. After the Unification of Italy in 1861, the palace became the residence of the Savoy royal family in Pisa. During the Second World War the building was heavily damaged by aerial bombardments. After a long and accurate restoration, in 1989 the National Museum of Palazzo Reale opened to the public blending together the arts and the history of Pisa inside the aristocratic residence on the Arno river.



THE COLLECTION

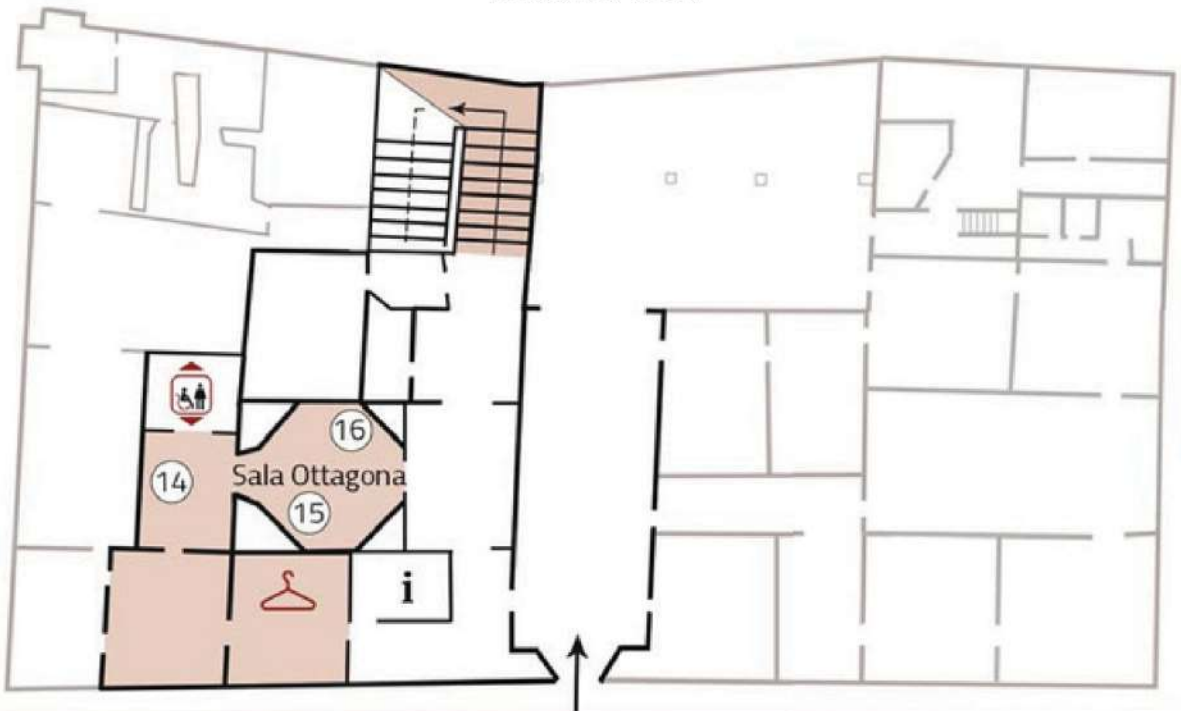
A large part of museum artworks were already exhibited in the municipal Museum (Museo civico), opened in the former convent of Saint Francis in 1893. After the Second World War, that collection was divided between the two national museums of the city: Museo Nazionale di San Matteo and Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Reale. Nowadays, the museum collection in Palazzo Reale consists of different artworks by origin and type. Firstly, the dynasties who lived inside the Palace, namely the Medici, Habsburg-Lorena and Savoia families, left copious evidences of their patronage and collecting from 1500s to 1900s, such as tapestries and garments, wooden furniture, court portraits, paintings and sculptures. The majority of the Gioco del Ponte historical collection belongs instead to the municipality, while the series of sketches for the so-called "quadroni" (big paintings) in the Duomo came from the disbanded Accademia civica di Belle Arti. From private collections - namely those of Del Testa, Upezzinghi, Passerini, Ceci and Schiff-Giorgini -, an array of outstanding paintings, sculptures, bronze statuettes, ivories, miniature portraits, drawings, medals and richly decorated ceramics came to the museum in different times and ways. Last but not least, the collection of plaster casts and paintings by Italo Griselli, born in Montescudaio (Pisa) and active in Italy and Russia during the first half of 1900s, is property of the local Accademia dell'Ussero.



First floor



Ground floor



Lungarno Antonio Pacinotti

Fiume Arno

The Medici and court arts



1. Mastro Agostino, *Dress*, around 1560

This Renaissance dress, exceptional for refinement and state of preservation, was made by the court tailor Agostino very likely for Eleonora di Toledo, duchess of Florence and Cosimo de' Medici's wife. Evidence of that are the Spanish fashion inspiration, the expensive crimson red, the highest quality velvet, the precious trimmings, the close similarity to the dress worn by Eleonora di Toledo in her portrait by Bronzino (see n. 2) and to the one with which she was buried (Florence, Museo della Moda e del Costume).



2. Bronzino, *Portrait of Eleonora di Toledo*, around 1549

Eleonora di Toledo, duchess of Florence and Cosimo de' Medici's wife, is portrayed together with their firstborn Francesco to represent the dynastic succession. In this oil on panel, the court painter Agnolo Bronzino draws attention to sitters' rank and status through an exceptional realism in the pictorial rendering of their clothes (see n. 1), a tribute to the excellence of Tuscan textile manufacturing, highly appreciated in European courts of the time.



3. Medici Manufactory, *Medici coat of arms*, mid-16th century

The duke Cosimo de' Medici settled in Florence a tapestry manufactory, to run which he had called two Flemish artists in 1546. Highly expensive for the materials they were made and the complex technique used, tapestries were sought to shelter rooms from the cold and, once rolled up, could be easily moved from one residence to another. The museum preserves tapestries of different size and subject, three of which are those of the hunting series (called *Cacce*) that once decorated the Medici villa of Poggio a Caiano.



4. Tuscan artist, *Dancing satyr*, first half of 17th century

Together with its pendant, this wooden sculpture painted in silver and gold is a torch stand that represents a dancing satyr, originally holding a torch in each of his hands. Half man and half goat, the satyr is a character of the Greco-Roman mythology belonging to the procession of the god Dionysus/Bacchus. The sculptor likely came from one of the Medici residences, witnessing the taste and love for classical art and the richness of furnishings.

Pisa and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, from Medici to Lorena



5. Pisan workshop, *Targone for Gioco del Ponte*, 1600s

From 1509, Pisa was definitely under the control of Florence, of which it follows the political events. The duke Cosimo de' Medici, first Grand duke of Tuscany from 1569, promoted in the city the *Gioco del Ponte*, in which two teams, called *Mezzogiorno* and *Tramontana*, face each other on Ponte Vecchio, nowadays Ponte di Mezzo. The museum exhibits a wooden model of the bridge to plan strategies, armours, helmets and the characteristic *targoni*, wooden boards with the colours and emblems of the teams.



6. Matteo Rosselli and Jacques Callot, *Ferdinando I visiting the aqueduct restoration in Pisa plain*, 1616-1620

This burin engraving is part of the series *Ferdinando I de' Medici's life* or *Fasti Medicei*, commissioned by Tuscany Grand Duke Cosimo II to the drawer Rosselli and to the engraver Callot, a French man working in Florence, in order to celebrate the deceased father.

The 16 engravings represent significant events such as the wedding with Cristina di Lorena, Leghorn's fortification, the naval victories of Saint Stephen's knights.



7. Benedetto Luti, *Saint Ranieri's clothing*, around 1703

After the fire that in 1595 seriously damages Pisa Cathedral, long restoration and modernisation interventions are realised. For this reason, some Pisan gentlemen commission the "quadroni" with *Pisan blessed and saints stories* to many non-florentine artists, to underline the city autonomy.

As usual, authors submit a reduced scale model before the final painting, such as this Luti's oil on canvas about Pisa's patron.



8. Giovanni Antonio Cybei, *Pietro Leopoldo Habsburg-Lorena's portrait*, 1771

In 1737, Tuscany Gran Duchy passes from Medici to Francesco Stefano of Lorena and then to the young Pietro Leopoldo. Illuminist Grand Duke's court stays for a long time in Pisa, revitalising the city artistic scenery in which Cybei established himself.

This marble bust of the 24-years-old Grand Duke has a great success, such that it has at least a copy (now in London, Victoria and Albert Museum).

Private collections in Pisa between 1800s and 1900s

9. Raffaello (?) and assistant, *Hanged men's miracle*, 1500



The small panel comes from the collection of Robert Schiff, Chemistry teacher in Pisa University, and his wife Matilde Giorgini. Probably, it is part of the altar-step of *Saint Nicholas from Tolentino altarpiece* in Città di Castello, now missing, which was realised by Raffaello at the age of 17 with the old Evangelista from Pian di Meleto.

In the panel, which represents the Saint that saves from the gallows two innocent men, the central part would be therefore a rare proof of Raffaello's juvenile style.

10. From Pieter Brueghel The Old, *Saint George's kermesse*, second half of 16th century



When Antonio Ceci, surgeon and teacher in Pisa University, dies in 1920 he leaves his composite collection to Ascoli Piceno, his city of birth, and Pisa municipalities. These rooms show potteries (see n. 12), miniatures, medals, small bronze statues and, in the Quadreria, drawings and paintings.

This oil on canvas proves Ceci's love for Flemish art: historic copy of Brueghel's lost work, it represents a town festival with food, wine and dances.

11. Guido Reni (?), *Sacred Love and Profane Love*, 1623



The gentleman Benedetto Upezzinghi, from an ancient Pisan family, donates this oil on canvas to the city in 1899. It portrays a tied Cupid/Eros, that is Profane Love, while Sacred Love is burning his arrows: this is, therefore, a call to moderate earthly passions.

The painting is a variation from the original picture by Reni (now in Genova, Palazzo Spinola National Gallery), of which drawings, followers' reproductions and copies exist.

12. Japanese manufacture, *Plate*, around 1895



Ceci's collection (see n. 10) gathers Oriental works, too, among which there is this plate from traditional Japanese ceramic "satsuma" decorated with a typical scene: three women with colourful kimonos and traditional headdresses surrounded by nature between lakes, mountains and cherry blossoms. Japanese art achieves with the prints in the mid-1800s in Europe, where it immediately obtains great success between collectors and artists, above all French ones, leading to the phenomenon of "Japanism".

In Savoia's united Italy: art in the first half of 1900s



13. Italo Griselli, *Tersicore*, 1929-1936

The copious sculptures, above all plasters, coming from Griselli's atelier, allow to follow his artwork's development, as we can see from the two versions of *Tersicore*, greek Muse of poetry and dance.

The red one, in terracotta, originally was a complete and lying down *Lying youngster*; later the sculptor modifies it by setting it up, removing part of the legs and calling it *Tersicore*. Subsequently, he realises this reproduction in white fire clay.



14. Amedeo Bocchi, *Women from Terracina*, 1914

Bocchi's painting belongs to Savoia Collection, Kings of Italy from 1861 to 1946, partially exhibited in these rooms. In 1911 Bocchi moves for the first time to Terracina from Rome, where he lives, and he discovers the dramatic reality of Pontine swamps, about which he paints popular aspects and everyday life.

In this painting he combines the decorativism of bright colours and traditional dresses' washes, with the realism of women's faces, hardened and burned by the sun.



15. Felice Casorati, *Cornflowers*, 1913

The still life painted by Casorati belongs to Savoia Collection, too: it is a thick cornflowers bundle inside a rounded glass vase.

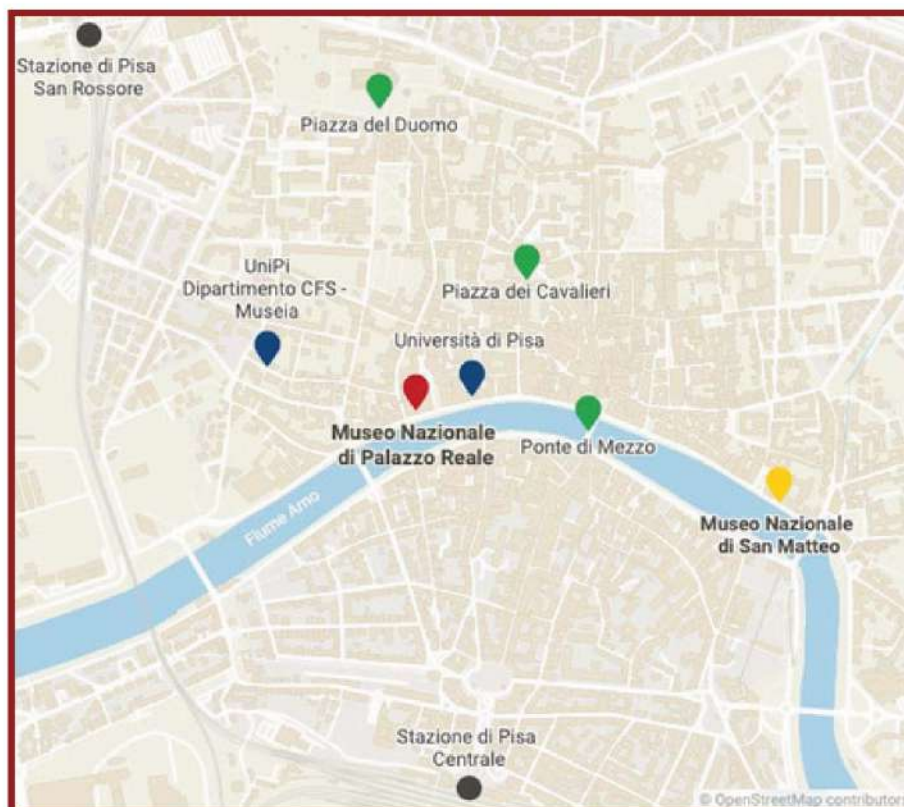
Their bright blue contrasts with the darkness in which they are surrounded, giving the impression of a mysterious and hanging time and space. Thanks to the window reflection on the vase, with a person silhouette in backlight, it is possible to insert the painting in a real space and normal everyday life context.



16. Adolfo Wildt, *Augusto Solari*, 1918

One of the few sculptures belonging to Savoia Collection is this white marble head by Wildt, portrait of a child from an important family from Milan. The very high level of marble polishing donates to the work a nearly absolute lustre and clarity, capable of enhance the delicacy and melancholy of the face, realised in almost stylised shapes and permeated by a slight apprehension, emphasised by the hollow eyes typical of the artist.

MUSEI NAZIONALI DI PISA



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