



INTESA  SANPAOLO

PRESS RELEASE

INTESA SANPAOLO'S "LE GALLERIE D'ITALIA" PRESENTS THE REFURBISHED ROOMS AT PALAZZO ZEVALLOS STIGLIANO, NAPLES

- The event will be attended by the President of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano.
- Free entry to the public on Saturday 21st June.

Naples, 20th June 2014 – Intesa Sanpaolo has **today reopened** the Galleries at **Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano, Naples, in the presence of the President of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano. The Galleries have been specially restored to optimise a collection of more than 120 artworks**, enabling visitors to retrace key moments in the history of the figurative arts in Naples over a period stretching from the early 17th-century to the turn of the 20th century.

Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano has been the historic headquarters of the bank in Naples since 1898. An area of the building's main floor was first used as a museum in 2007, following extensive restoration of its 19th-century fresco cycles.

Opening up the Galleries at Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano to the public is part of Intesa Sanpaolo's strategy of optimising and sharing a selection of pieces from its art collections – first and foremost Caravaggio's *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* – with the local community.

The latest refurbishment work falls within the Bank's "Progetto Cultura", a long-standing programme covering its artistic and cultural activities. The Project's most ambitious achievement to date is the creation of Gallerie d'Italia, a network of Intesa Sanpaolo's museum and cultural hubs throughout Italy which, in addition to the Galleries in Naples, also includes the Galleries at Palazzo Leoni Montanari, Vicenza (opened in 1999 and restyled in 2014) and the Galleries in Milan's Piazza Scala (inaugurated in 2011).

The new design for Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano, based on a **project curated by Fernando Mazzocca**, adorns the Galleries with groups of works of great historical and artistic value originating from the South of Italy and Naples in particular. They have been selected from existing collections owned by various banks, primarily Banco di Napoli and Banca Commerciale Italiana, which subsequently became part of Intesa Sanpaolo. **Most of the artworks have undergone significant restoration work** prior to going on display in the Galleries.

The previous museum layout has been expanded from three to seven rooms, and it now offers a broad overview charting the most significant moments in Neapolitan painting between the 17th and 18th centuries: from the naturalistic turning point triggered by Caravaggio's arrival in 1606, to the splendour of the Bourbon civilisation. A standout piece **among those on display is the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula***, the superb masterpiece which **Caravaggio** painted in 1610 just a few months before his death. Also on display are *Judith with the head of Holofernes*, attributed to the Flemish artist Louis Finson after a lost original also by Caravaggio; *The Holy Family with Saint Francis of Assisi* by the Caravaggio-esque Roman painter Angelo Caroselli; *Samson and Delilah*, from the Neapolitan workshop of Artemisia Gentileschi; three Biblical scenes by Bernardo Cavallino and Francesco Guarini's *Saint George*. Other artworks include *The Adoration of the Magi* by "Maestro degli Annunci ai pastori" and *Tobias returning a visit to his father* by "Enrico Fiammingo", alias Hendrick De Somer. *The Abduction of Helen* by Luca Giordano and *Hagar in the desert* by Francesco Solimena lead us into the high Baroque period.

Among the 18th-century works, the idealised poise of Francesco De Mura's four *Allegories of Pity* is offset by the realism of two famous paintings by Gaspare Traversi, *The secret letter* and *The concert*; here, touches of real humanity far exceed the iconographic conventions of the comical-popular painting genre to which the canvases belong.

There are also very fine examples of the important still life phase in Naples dating from the mid-17th to the early 18th century, ranging from Paolo Porpora to Baldassarre De Caro by way of Giovan Battista Ruoppolo and Giuseppe Recco.

The collection of landscapes and *vedute* or topographical paintings, previously considered a minor genre and one which became exceptionally popular in Naples throughout the 1800s, begins with an introduction from the 18th century: four works by the Dutch painter Gaspar van Wittel, considered one of the forerunners of the modern *veduta*. In the first section featuring *vedute* and the School of Posillipo, a series of small canvases by Anton Smink Pitloo (as well as paintings by Giacinto Gigante, Gabriele Smargiassi, Salvatore Fergola, Nicola Palizzi, Domenico Morelli, Federico Rossano, Edoardo Dalbono, Edoardo Franceschini, Gioacchino Toma, Francesco Mancini and Vincenzo Migliaro) illustrate the unique history of a genre which later went through various experimental phases and took the Neapolitan School to the vanguard of Europe.

From the School of Posillipo, where the great landscape heritage of the Grand Tour reaches its maturity, we move on to the naturalism (linked to painting *en plein air*) of the School of Resina and the more individual interpretations which came at the end of the century.

The next section focuses our attention on depictions of the city of Naples, with interiors of its monumental buildings, streets and scenes from modern life captured in communal places such as the racetrack, the Villa Comunale and the market. These urban environments are paired with "*tipi*" or "characters", highly evocative portraits of people from the streets in an ongoing commentary on the human comedy.

Finally, works by Vincenzo Gemito make up a group of the finest quality – one of the most important corpuses by the great artist. The terracottas, bronzes and drawings dating from the 1870s to the 1920s chart his extraordinary artistic development, a history interwoven with the personal drama of a life marred by serious mental imbalances, leading to lengthy breaks in his artistic output. From the more direct naturalism of his youthful terracotta heads, we move on to a more sophisticated series of bronze portraits of famous people. His stunning drawings include touching self-portraits which reflect the painful changes to the artist's appearance over time, as well as figures of women – including the *Gypsy*, one of Gemito's most beautiful and distinctive watercolours – showing how his emphatic, radiant realism gradually gave way to an exploration of style based on 17th-century models, making him the last great imitator of the distinguished tradition of Neapolitan naturalism.

The Palazzo aims to take back a role which it held for many years in the past: a treasure chest for a prominent, precious art collection. As the eminent figure Carlo Celano wrote of the gallery in 1692, in words which still seem relevant today, it is “a gallery with paintings of the beauties of Naples, and the paintings really are quite stunning; there are so many of them, by famous maestros both ancient and modern.”

To mark this occasion, **Gallerie d'Italia** - Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano will be offering **free entry** to the public on **Saturday 21st June 2014**.

For information:

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