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HOTEL LUNGARNO

Art Itineraries

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The itinerary combines five great artists of the 20th century, all of whom are related by art, friendship, and the city of Florence.

We start with **Pablo Picasso**. There are endless books dedicated to his works, so we will focus on Pablo himself, then proceed on to the life of Jean Cocteau, Picasso's friend and 'colleague' for nearly sixty years.

We use this quote to define Picasso:



“ ... if all the stages of life could be represented as points on a map and traced with a line, the result would be a figure of a Minotaur ... ”

And like the animal of the Theseus myth, he annihilated everyone that entered his Labyrinth.

Picasso was born in Malaga, of Italian blood on the side of his maternal great-grandfather born in Sori, a village in the province of Genova.

As a child, his eclectic temperament manifested in the unique talent and passion for the

forbidden; at the age of seven he was drawing bullfighting scenes live in the arena and spying on the hidden world of the gypsies.

After moving to Barcelona, he attended the Academy and devoured the Spanish avant-garde. The Minotaur arrived to Paris in 1900 with the goal to become the greatest artist of the century.

It was said that his ambition was dictated by his peniaphobia (the fear of becoming poor).

Pablo returned several times to Paris before settling in an old Montmartre piano factory in 1904. The famous “Bande à Picasso“ of Bateau-Lavoir was a lively group of friends and artists who collectively defined art history. Picasso sought notoriety in Paris. He shared a room with poet and painter Max Jacob; there was only one bed, so the two slept in turns, one during the day, the other at night. Jacob would write letters in French to the hotel owners with whom Picasso was in debt. When Guillaume Apollinaire wanted to eat bouillabaisse, he would sell ten or twelve Picasso drawings to a junk shop for 40 cents.

His fame grew as he experimented with friends. Picasso’s studio became a



pilgrimage for models searching for free art, and an exchange of opinions, transgressions, parties. Picasso here passed his blue and pink period, as well as the birth of cubism.

In 1915, **Jean Cocteau**, the young “parlor poet,” reformed by the war, began attending the Montparnasse artistic avant-garde along with Picasso and the inseparable Jacob and Apollinaire. It was said that the penniless three did not welcome the arrival of Cocteau, but the eagerness to “discover new worlds” and Cocteau’s cultivated relationships in affluent Paris solidified their friendship, although ulterior motives were apparent.

Cocteau’s desire to create and experiment was fueled by his relationship with Picasso, as well as his extremity in art and life. Vice and art united them; alcohol, drug use, and sexual obsession were constantly fused with art. They loved the beauty, humor, diversity, rapid decision-making, and execution of this association.

Cocteau recounts:

“... this is his kingdom. Picasso is a king ... he can do whatever he wants as long as there are no mistakes within his registry. To approach the world and sacred monsters he invents, one must know its syntax and its language. Otherwise, you are a snob or blind ...”

Cocteau involved Picasso in the development of his show *Parade*, for which Pablo designed costumes. They worked for two months for the Rome ballet in 1917, where Picasso fell in love with dancer Olga Koklova. He casually followed her to Florence, together visiting churches, museums, and palaces.



Florence called Picasso again in 1949, this time without Cocteau. During his second visit, tired of the classic tourist sites, Pablo observed the city. The portrait artists of the Uffizi, and the street artists who loved living freely fascinated him.

We can say that Florence and Cocteau were complicit in Pablo's first marriage to Olga, one of the eight most important women in his life.

This list included many lovers; all were attractive, and some were artists, his muses, models, lovers and victims of the Minotaur. Some were very young and unaware of his incredible personality, yet desired his

company. Some were crazy, some suicidal. His vehemence was huge in art, as well in life.

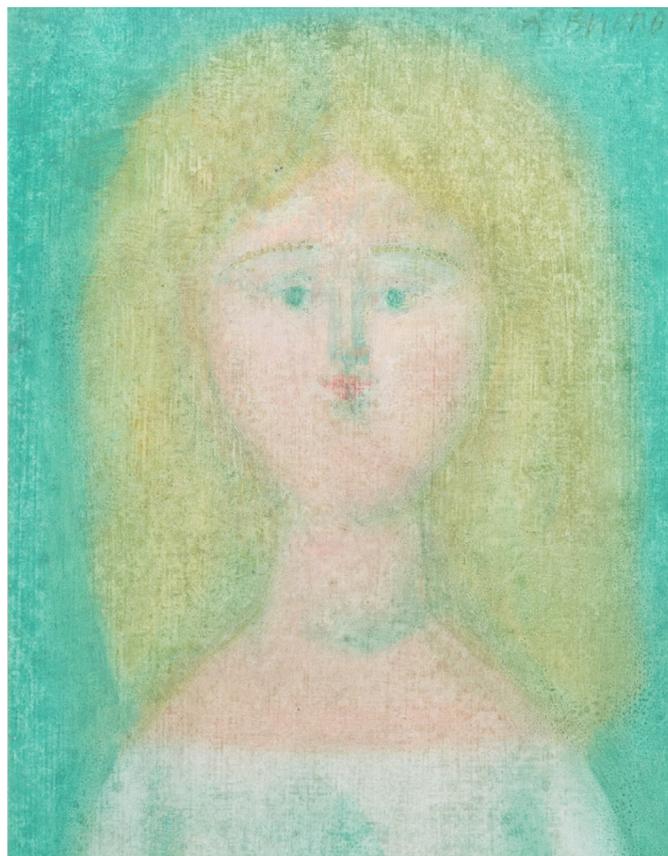
The Lungarno Collection combined Picasso and Cocteau through the tetralogy, dedicated to the Minotaur, a figure that they both loved and represented several times in their work and stay in the French Riviera.

Jean Cocteau, an eclectic artist and investigator, was the opposite of Picasso. He was the representative of the Parisian bourgeoisie, a fine man who loved to wander from poetry to writing, from acting to drawing. His homosexuality accompanied his inspiration, he supported and promoted his lovers, unlike Picasso, who humiliated and crushed his companions.

Cocteau loved Italy as a boy, from the first time he vacationed in Venice with his mother. Jean understood Italian painting and created homage in many of his works to the great Bramante, Giotto, Michelangelo, and Paolo Uccello. Picasso is tied to another important character of the Lungarno Collection, **Mario Sironi**.



ANTONIO BUENO



We are fortunate to have a firsthand depiction from Isabella Bueno, daughter of this great painter, who was kind enough to share the curiosities of his life.

Antonio Bueno was born in 1918 to a Spanish father and Jewish mother in Berlin, Germany. He was the youngest of three children raised in cosmopolitan environments such as Germany, Spain and Switzerland.

In Geneva he began his artistic training following in the footsteps of his big brother, Xavier, who was also destined for a successful career. They were united by their passions for painting, politics and music.

After a period of stability in the 30's, the separation of Buenos parents forced Antonio, his two

brothers and his mother to move and leave their father to his new life; his father was in love with another woman, with whom he had a daughter and second family in Switzerland.

Bueno wandered around Europe, mostly in England and France, before arriving to Florence in 1940. After a life full of journey and experience, this was where he chose to remain.

Isabella Bueno, his daughter, tells us how Florence was initially considered only a pit stop, but Bueno considered all that Florence had to offer, and made it his city.

His priorities were classified as such: first was the war, then his love for Florence and finally the love of his life Evelina, the

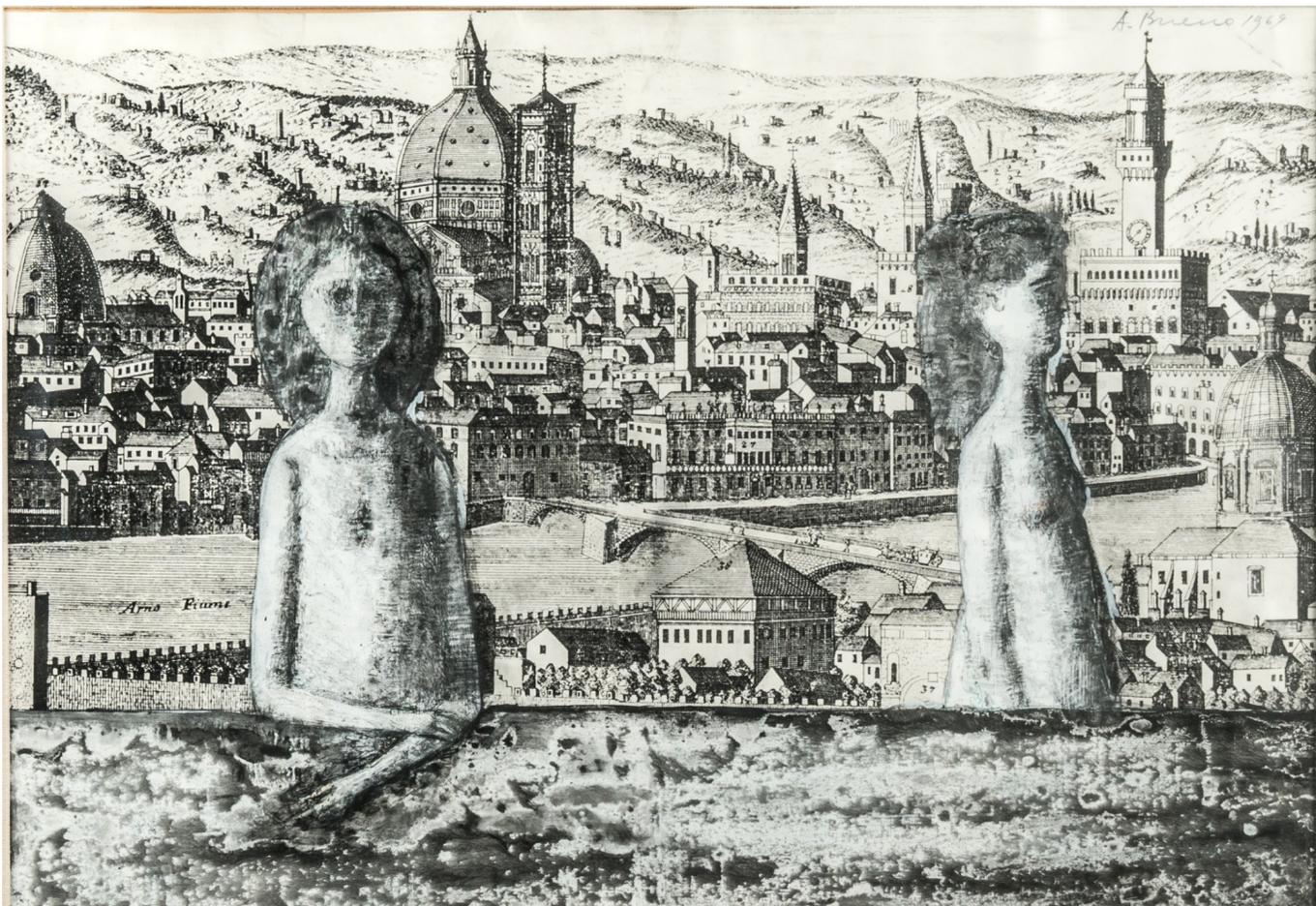
mother of his three children. The painter had finally put down roots and found the emotional stability to support his art. Bueno loved Florence, he behaved as a tourist and lived as a Florentine, observing life from his house in Fiesole, a quiet place in harmony with the hills. His talent enriched works of art which were noted all over the world. Isabella Bueno, his daughter, tells us how Florence was initially considered only a pit stop, but Bueno considered all that Florence had to offer, and made it his city.

Isabella Bueno recounts:

“... he could not live without painting for more than two days, he was bored if he could not paint, even when we went on vacation, he brought canvas and brushes ...”

“... yes, he was first of all an artist then a man. Painting was his life, but he also had other passions, he loved to play the piano (his father imposed nine years of violin at the conservatory), he listened to classical and hated contemporary music; loved reading classic books, historical novels, mysteries ... at home he gardened a bit, it relaxed him, he lost himself in flower cultivation and when his art dealer came from San Domenico looking for his work, he ran into the studio and began sketching, to prove that he was being productive!”

From a young age he worked against the grain, branched out and experimented with different styles, from abstraction to the metaphysical and pop... then on to the “period of plastered pipe”



from 1952 to 1959, which decreed his first big hit with a sold out major exhibition in New York. After this event, Bueno decided to evolve and transform his beloved pipes into figures. He magnified profiles that retraced the suppleness and the white color of the clay pipes.

The works in the Lungarno Collection date back to this new production. He began showing his figures characterized by small and concentrated physical features on the central part of bright face, full and oval, in the first half of the 1960's.



The nine works displayed are representative of the period of transition that led him to establish himself as “Antonio Bueno” or as some say “the inspiration of Fernando Botero.” He was an eclectic artist, always ready to research, and a

protagonist in the experimentation of the avant-garde. This led him to be once again to swim against the tide in a period in which everything was “vanguard”. He returned to himself, to neo-romanticism.

“*... in his way to be counter-emerged in work, a serious and inflexible man, he creates ironic self portraits, identifying with people contrary to him, like Napoleon, rather than a bullfighter or a sailor ...*”

Confident with his technique, he used his fingers to create leaden shades and

“... with the lips, he was the tip of the fine brushes ...”

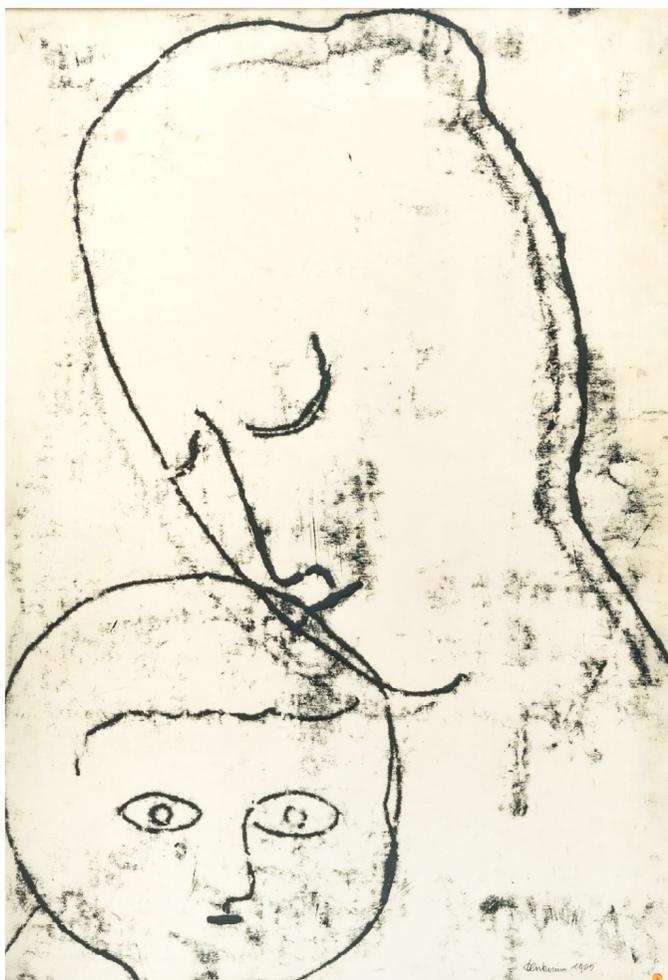
We arrive at the end of his precious path, the hotel's collection dedicated to this artist is a window to his house in Fiesole, where the instruments of his work and his various experiments still reside. Antonio Bueno died in 1984 after a long illness, which never kept him away from his art.

VENTURINO VENTURINI

Born in 1918 in Loro Ciuffenna, a small village north of Arezzo, **Venturino Venturi** passed hours watching his father, and began working with stone to satisfy his insatiable need to create.

Their family was forced to emigrate because of his anti-fascist father, taking him first to France, then to Luxembourg. Here, Venturino and his sisters learned Italian by reading the Divine Comedy and the Adventures of Pinocchio.

Venturi's artistic training began abroad, than continued in Florence, Italy. He studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti, fascinated by the legendary names that have made this city.



Florence in that period was the hotspot of intense intellectual activity. Venturino frequented the Giubbe Rosse Caffè, where he met different well known characters of that period, such as Ottone Rosai (in the Top 5 itinerary), Giuseppe Ungaretti, Eugenio Montale, and others.

For Venturi, friendships and art have always had a profound importance, convinced that works of art had their own spirituality. For example, portraiture was used in order to get close enough to a soul, to gently touch it, without violating it.

He rarely separated from his work. He created a permanent link between himself and the subjects in his work, referring to them as if they were real presences in the studio:

“ *That's Pratolini
... that's Rosai,
see how he was
agitated ...* ”

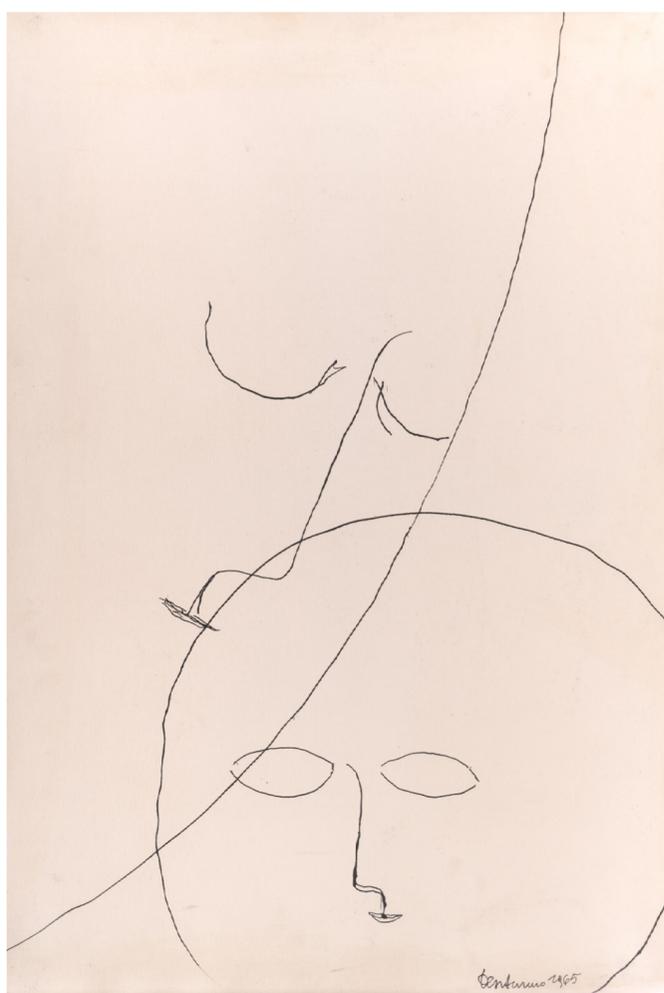
In 1940 he was called to arms on the Greek-Albanian front, where his artistic skills qualified him to design maps of enemy

lines. This marked the beginning of his problems. Venturini slept with three other comrades inside a cabin, and one snowy winter night, the location was obliterated by a tank. Rescuers thought that no one had survived, and Venturini spent a night on the mountain, with his right leg almost gone, alone, amongst the remains of his scattered companions with whom just hours before he was sharing cigarettes. Venturini was hospitalized for four years in Careggi hospital, undergoing twenty-four operations to reconstruct his leg.

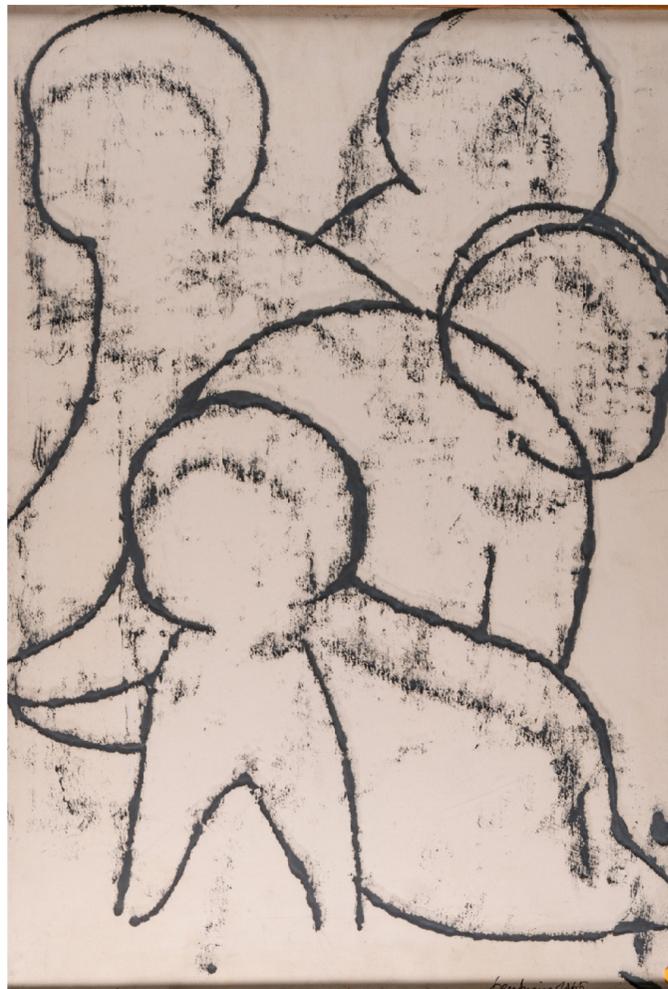
War, along with the hospitalization scarred him forever, instigating reflections on death and rebirth. The end of the war, in 1945, he finally embraces a positive and successful period. He produced his first solo exhibition in Florence and series of shows to follow. The serenity lasts only a short while and his life is turned upside down again in 1952, with a strong psychological disturbance. In Collodi, he enters the international competition to create a monument to Pinocchio, but unfortunately his victory is to be shared- he ties with Emilio Greco.

The task is huge, and he works relentlessly for 2 years on the park, creating a 900 m2 mosaic while Greco had the task of sculpting Pinocchio. This task was never completed, and anger,

disappointment and fatigue of this situation threw him into a deep depression, which required another two years of hospitalization, this time in the asylum of San Salvi, from 1957-1959.



Venturini makes the most of his time in the hospital by drawing, painting and sculpting. Pinocchio was his favorite subject: he would draw on large sheets and paint on the tiles. To this day, you can still find the tile markings on the back of the lead drawings. Forty of these large designs were found, years later. Contours and violent colors were made with coal, oil and pastel. The color he would use with greatest intensity was bright red, which represented rebirth and anger.



Venturini did not like to talk about the disease:

“Yes, it was a bad three years ... but at that time I produced a lot ... I made several Pinocchio’s, as well as worked on other subjects ... man, for me, is constantly reborn, life is a continuous resurrection ... you can call all my work a resurrection”

In the year 1960, in splendid artistic form, he exhibited at the Florence Strozina.

He spent years following this exhibition developing major works and exhibitions in private and public galleries. From devastating experiences broke out a conscious artist who never again relapsed in the agony of depression. He participated successfully in

national and international exhibitions and established in 1993, in the house of his native village Loro Ciuffenna, the Venturino Venturini Museum and Documentation Center for 20th century Italian sculpture.

Here he died in January 2002, after designing the last pen drawings including one dedicated to the tragedy of the “Twin Towers” in New York.

POP ART

To think about an imageless world seems impossible today. Graphic design is a vital tool for mass communication and plays a central role in the economy and culture of our society.

We begin this journey talking about the father of the modern poster, **Jules Cheret**, who was among the first to realize the importance of the image at the expense of text.

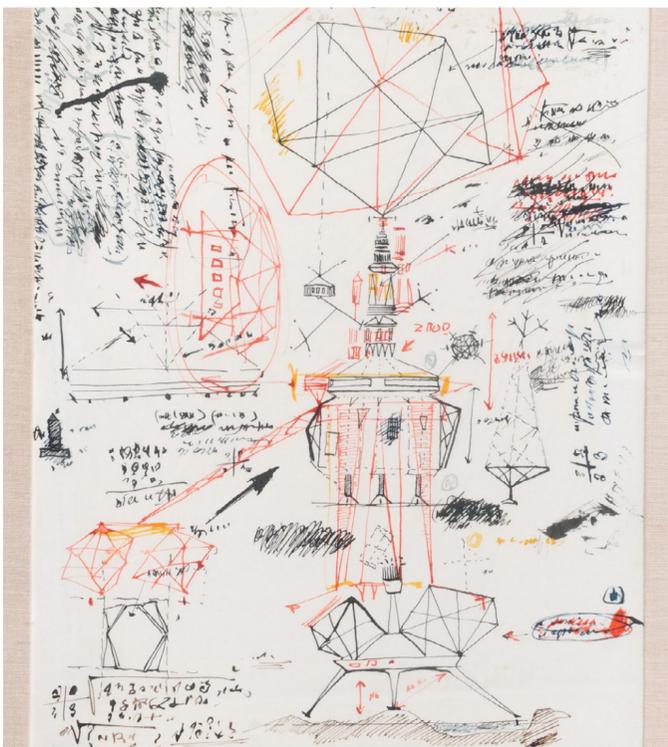
His is a tale of the modern self-made man born in a very poor Parisian family. His dream was to be an artist was thanks to Eugene Rimmel, the founder of one of the largest cosmetics companies in the world. Rimmel recognized an artist who could celebrate his products through illustration to the general public.

Through this collaboration, Cheret was an innovator of the Belle Époque - an example

of how commissioned art is important and does not merely represent, but can also enhance and communicate.

Free to explore his fantasies, he designed copious manifests, including various posters for the Moulin Rouge. His favorite subjects were joyful and lively women, he became known as the “Father of Liberation”.

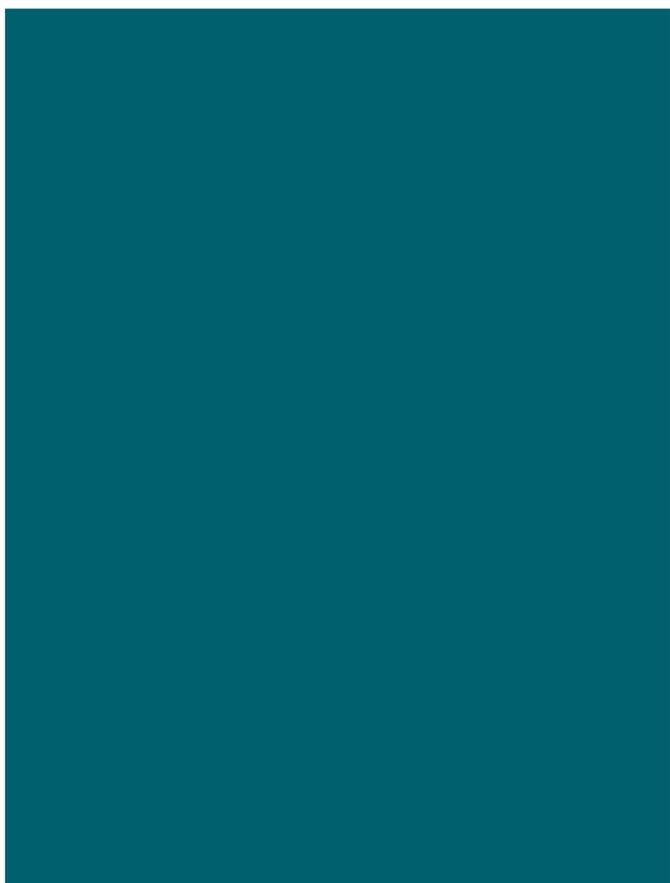
His innovative art was admired by Degas and Monet, and it was included in their private art collections.



In Italy, the evolution of the graphic design is found in the work of Lucio Venna, and Italian painter and member of the Futurist movement. Of Austrian origin, he moved to Florence at 15 years old. In a period of great turmoil, he became part of the

artists circuit together with Ottone Rosai, and many others who are present in Hotel Lungarno “Top 5” itinerary.

Venna draws and paints, immediately taken by the ideology of the Futurist movement, with which, however, remained disappointed. He harbored dissatisfaction mixed with intense activity, and he decided to devote himself to creating posters while maintaining the link to the creative quality of Futurism. He produced in his advertising studio Venna Creations posters, billboards, and important branding. In that time, Salvatore Ferragamo opened his own atelier and commissioned Venna his first advertising campaign and label with the fashion house, still revered today as the symbol of an era.



The post war economic boom and the spread of consumerism brought artists to interpret and experience new tastes. This moment in history influenced **Raoul Shultz**, a young innovator, painter, graphic artist and stage designer. This eclectic artist had a short but intense creative adventure. He was an irreverent character. As an explorer of Italian and International artistic movements – he was the only to propose the “Painting Meter” (a roll of approximately 6 meters in length by 60 centimeters in width) or testify the sacrilegious intention to counteract any market logic.

Venna released his creative spirit through literature, illustration, and cinema. He was part of an important partnership with Hugo Pratt and director Tinto Brass, who remembers him thus: *“Raoul ... was unquestionably the most radical in his choices, but instinctual ... a true artist, but not an intellectual in art ...”*

Shultz’s life was dynamic and fast-paced, interrupted by his untimely death at the age forty.

The United States of America in the early 60’s was penetrated with new products and a new pattern of life. Elements of communication soon become the object of attention and the subject of pop art. Adolfo Natalini, was one of the young artists to give life to

the local variant of the movement founded in the USA.

Today, Natalini is defined as an architect, yet during the short yet important experience as an artist, he fused architecture with painting, which was fundamental in his development.



He recounts:

"In 1964, my graduation speaker ... asked to see my paintings and said that he refused to destroy a good painter by turning him into a bad architect"

But this did not happen. Natalini became a great architect, moving from art to radical architecture with Superstudio, working on projects which were widely published and displayed all over the world, leaving the visible traces of their thoughts.

They were exhibited in galleries



including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Deutsches Architekturmuseum Frankfurt am Main, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Since 1991 Adolfo Natalini has been fully dedicated to architecture, working on prestigious projects for the city of Florence, such as the redevelopment of the Uffizi Gallery, the expansion of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo as well as many others.

Picasso recounts:

“*... you have a great artist, perhaps the greatest of the moment and do not realize it.*”

Italy was underrated in the past, but today it is recognized as one of the great masters of the 1900s. Sironi was one of the most tormented painters of the collection, or as his nephew recalls a “relentless visionary”.

In 1950, Pablo Picasso, perhaps with his friend Jean Cocteau, sent a letter from Antibes with a drawing of a goat on the back requesting advice on upcoming works.

The letter was addressed to Marino Marini, whom he had met years before in Paris. Marino, a famous Tuscan artist, was the emotional opposite of Pablo. He was always traveling and curious, but considerably modest in private life. His one great love, his wife Marina, accompanied him through his journey in art.

We conclude our trip through Florence, with one of the collections highly represented artists of that period, **Ottone Rosai**. The collection shows

many of his works which portray the highlights and humility of the city, and as a man; we recognize his sexual affinity for Cocteau and his dedication to Picasso.

The Lungarno Hotel lobby is rich in precious works, and the stories of other great artists are interwoven on the various floors of the hotel, in the name of culture and the 20th century European art.



LEGENDS

BRUNO CASSINARI & PABLO PICASSO

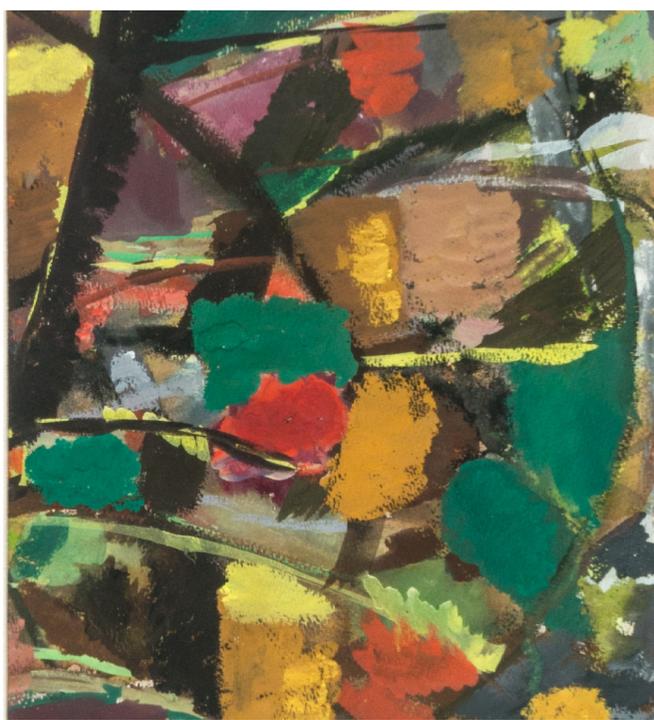
Displayed on the 8th floor is the works of Bruno Cassinari, a member of the Italian post-war painters. He met Cocteau and Picasso during his time in the French Riviera.

He recalled:

“... And so, began my adventure on the French Riviera, I met many characters and I spent time with them: Gide, Éluard, Cocteau, Chagall, Matisse, Verdet, Braque, Prévert and many others. But, of course, the man who overwhelmed me with his simplicity, was Picasso. It felt as if we were old friends immediately, and he would always find time to see me. He went so far as to organize a show of my works in his museum.”

“I will try to describe what is my most beautiful memory of Picasso: one afternoon in August, surrounded by silence behind the old walls of a country house, sat Picasso. Every so often a sign of life, a hammer or other noise came through the walls. He sat inside, a God who creates a world: the horse, the bull, the goat, the woman, the man, the lamb, the rooster, the pregnant woman, children and paintings, etchings, lithographs, drawings,

sculptures, the sea, the swimmers, the mountains. On this small hill, warmed by a never-ending sun, sat a ruler who creates everything with absolute freedom and security.”



SILVIO LOFFREDO & ANTONIO BUENO

Bueno had one truly great friend amongst the Florentine artists, **Silvio Loffredo**. His works are on display in the hotel on the 3rd floor. Loffredo was an extremely witty type, he and Bueno were accomplices in numerous antics. Their bond was strong, perhaps because they conversed in Spanish.

Silvio, a man connected to several personalities in his time, was born in Montparnasse to an Italian family. Like Bueno, he chose Florence as his adopted



hometown, and his friend Ottone Rosai was the glue between the French and Italian artists.

Loffredo was known for his joyous temperament. In addition to being a painter, he was a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. When he entered the classroom in the morning, he would imitate animals ... sometimes a rooster, sometime a bird. Loffredo was always ready to joke.



BRUNO INNOCENTI

Innocenti was an Italian sculptor. The Monumental Redeemer Statue in Maratea, one of his most important works was completed in 1957. The sculpture towered 21 meters high, which at that time, was the world's second-tallest statue, following the one in Rio de Janeiro. His works are exhibited on the 8th floor.



QUINTO MARTINI

Martini settled into the intellectual Florentine state of mind from a young age. After an initial period of hardship, he established himself as a renowned sculptor in Italy. Martini was reserved and slightly eccentric; he loved to talk about art only with experts, convinced that only they could understand him. He was extremely rigid while working with bronzes - he did not allow them to get dusty, and he would polish them with tea. His works are displayed on the 7th floor.

PERICLE FAZZINI

We find his works on the 7th floor. **Fazzini** was a noted sculptor and painter from the Marche region in Italy. Fazzini survived four years of selection (1970-1975) to be commissioned to produce the last great work in the Vatican. His “Resurrection” is in the Nervi room of the Vatican. It is a monumental bronze twenty meters wide which serves as the background for direct worldwide broadcasts featuring Paul VI.



VIRGILIO GUIDI

The Hotel Lungarno collection hides fascinating stories like the one of the stolen painting. A thief violated the underside of **Virgilio Guidi** ‘s “S.Marco” watercolor, which hung in room 655 and allowed him to replace the original with a fake. The mystery is that we do not know where the original is, or when it was stolen. Even today, the fake painting is still in the hotel, presenting us with a unique anecdote for the history of the collection.

MINO MACCARI & THE LEGACY

Maccari was a writer, painter, engraver, and Italian journalist. During his life, he was an anti-market artist, and would give away his works. Today you can find his work on the 8th floor in the Hotel Lungarno. The story we are about to tell you is the most expensive one in our collection. His death in 1989, his works became the subject of conflict between his loved ones.

After a successful career and great friendships, especially with another artist featured in the hotel, Ottone Rosai, Maccari died on a Friday. On Saturday, his granddaughter Leandra asked to seal off his Villa at Cinquale and Villa Romana, which contained silver and furniture from the 1800s. A few days before their reopening, Maccari’s niece received an economic proposal from the lawyers of her uncles. It was an offer on the inheritance, a “prize” if she would close the matter before the reopening. Leandra did not accept and opened the doors where she discovered the disappearance of countless works of her grandfather’s collection, from both houses, worth several million.

The ensuing arguments between heirs would have outraged Mino Maccari, who believed that “... *wealth brought the stupidity out in people ...*”