



MUSEI DEL BARGELLO

The Islamic Collection at the Bargello

Along with its Renaissance masterpieces, the Museo Nazionale del Bargello boasts a rich collection of Islamic art, where donations from illustrious collectors have enriched a core group of artworks coming from the Medici collections. Exquisitely carved ivory pieces such as the famous Fatimid plaques, precious works in gold, silver and bronze; carved wood, majolica, glassware, weapons, carpets, a collection of fabrics unique of its kind, with silks and velvets of rare beauty; marvelous objects created with superb skill and sophisticated techniques, to be admired for their intrinsic worth and appreciated for their importance to the art and culture of the Western world, linked since remote times to the Islamic world, from Spain to Egypt, from Persia to India, in a dense network of fertile exchange.



Islamic Art and Florence from the Medici to the 20th Century

The exhibition

The exhibition *Islam e Firenze. Arte e collezionismo dai Medici al Novecento* (Islamic Art and Florence from the Medici to the 20th Century) is being held in two venues: the Gallerie degli Uffizi and the Museo del Bargello. At the Uffizi the exhibition illustrates the historic contacts between the Orient and the Occident, reflected in works by artists such as Gentile da Fabriano, displaying precious metals, collected already by Lorenzo the Magnificent, majolica, fabrics and carpets, glasswork and manuscripts. At the Bargello, which possesses a priceless core of Islamic art objects, the exhibition presents the best of its rich collections, mainly due to the donations of Louis Carrand and Giulio Franchetti, between 19th and 20th centuries. Beside these appear works belonging to the collections of other connoisseurs of Islamic art, such as Frederick Stibbert, and art dealers such as Stefano Bardini, whose legacy to Florence is displayed in the museums that bear their names. Part of the Bardini Legacy is housed in the Villa Medicea at Cerreto Guidi. Contemporaneously, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze offers, in the exhibition *Immagini d'Oriente* (Images from the Orient), a fascinating display of publications on Islamic Art from the 18th to the early 20th century, in an ideal replica of the library used by collectors, scholars, and connoisseurs of Middle Eastern Art.

LE GALLERIE DEGLI UFFIZI

Tuesday – Sunday 8:15 am – 6:50 pm – Tickets: www.uffizi.it/en
Phone +39 055 294883 – @UffiziGalleries

MUSEI DEL BARGELLO

via del Proconsolo, 4 – 50122 Firenze – Phone +39 055 2388606
Daily 8:15 am – 5 pm, closed 2nd and 4th Sunday, 1st, 3rd and 5th
Monday monthly
www.bargellomusei.beniculturali.it – mn-bar@beniculturali.it

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE CENTRALE

piazza dei Cavalleggeri, 1 – 50122 Firenze – Phone +39 055 24919 280
Monday-Friday 8:15 am – 7 pm, Saturday 8:15 am – 1:30 pm
www.bncf.firenze.sbn.it – bnc-fi.info@beniculturali.it

MUSEO STIBBERT

via F. Stibbert 26 – 50134 Firenze – Phone +39 055 475520
Monday-Wednesday 10 am – 2 pm, Friday-Sunday 10 am – 6 pm
www.museostibbert.it – biglietteria@museostibbert.it

MUSEO STEFANO BARDINI

via dei Renai, 37 – 50125 Firenze – Phone +39 055 2342427
Friday-Monday 11 am – 5 pm, closed Tuesday-Thursday
museicivicifirentini.comune.fi.it/bardini

VILLA MEDICEA DI CERRETO GUIDI

via dei Ponti Medicei 7 – 50050 Cerreto Guidi, Florence
Mon-Sat 10 am – 6 pm (Oct-Mar), 9 am – 6 pm (Apr-Sep),
Sun 10 am – 7 pm throughout the year – Phone +39 0571 55707
www.polomusealetoscana.beniculturali.it



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Itineraries

LE GALLERIE DEGLI UFFIZI

MUSEO NAZIONALE DEL BARGELLO

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LE GALLERIE DEGLI UFFIZI



Islamic Art at the Gallerie degli Uffizi

The beauty of Islamic art was highly esteemed by the Medici, who collected splendid objects at the Uffizi, most notably magnificent arms studded with gems and semi-precious stones. Remaining today from these Medici

collections are some fascinating objects in Palazzo Pitti, today part of the Gallerie degli Uffizi, found mainly in the collection of the Tesoro dei Granduchi (Grand Ducal Treasure), such as the Sasanian ewer that belonged to Piero de' Medici and his son Lorenzo the Magnificent; an ancient Fatimid bottle in rock crystal, probably also from their collection. Other precious vessels of Islamic make in jade, agate, mother-of-pearl and tortoise-shell, coming from Central Asia, India and Indonesia, are also found in the Tesoro dei Granduchi. In addition to semi-precious stones, carpets are the most splendid pieces of the Medicean Oriental collections, among them the rare 'Pitti Mamluk'.



BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE CENTRALE



MUSEO STIBBERT



MUSEO STEFANO BARDINI



VILLA MEDICEA DI CERRETO GUIDI



Islamic works at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale

The Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence possesses a substantial group of documents on Islamic themes, some now available in the digitized version, originating from the Grand Ducal collections of the Medici and Lorraine dynasties and further enriched over the years. One of its priceless treasures is the manuscript of the *Shāhnamā* (Book of Kings) by the poet Ferdowsi, dated 1217, the earliest known example of the Persian national epic poem. Displayed along with 16th and 17th-century publications from the Tipografia Medicea Orientale are works devoted to Islamic art and architecture, with guides and reports on voyages to the Orient, in the exhibition *Immagini d'Oriente* (*Images from the Orient*), now being held at the Library.



The Islamic World at the Museo Stibbert

Islamic genius strongly appealed to the sensitivity of such a passionate collector as Frederick Stibbert. This is clearly evident in the Museum that enriched Florence, his adopted city, where he not only displayed the thousands of objects he had acquired, but also tried to recreate the atmospheres of the places encountered in his voyages from Africa to the Far East. In the museum's Islamic Room, as the background for superbly fashioned armour and weapons, the decorations of the fascinating Alhambra in Granada are replicated. In his collections, abounding in furnishings, costumes and artworks, Stibbert intended to record the customs, usages and traditions of distant peoples, demonstrating an ethnographic interest that went far beyond the pure pleasure of collecting.



Islamic art at the Museo Bardini

In the late 19th and early 20th century Stefano Bardini, the 'prince of antiquarians' procured for collectors and great museums unrivalled masterpieces not only of the Italian Renaissance but also of Middle Eastern art, chosen with rare competence and discernment. In the permanent collection of the Museum that bears his name, precious Turkish, Persian and Mamluk carpets dating from the 16th and 17th centuries are displayed on the Monumental Staircase and in the Room of the Terrace. Especially precious are two ceramic tiles from Damascus and from Iznik, in Turkey, a basin and a Persian candelabra from the 14th century and a Turkish saddle-cloth from the 16th century.



The Orient in the Villa Medicea of Cerreto Guidi

A world heritage site, the historic 16th-century villa, built for Cosimo I de' Medici and attributed to Bernardo Buontalenti, is now partially used to house a selection of the antiquarian Stefano Bardini's private collections, acquired by the Italian State in 1996. One room in the villa is entirely devoted to the Orient. It displays metal artifacts, weapons, majolicas and other rare testimonials that, along with the objects presented in the two venues of the exhibition and at the Museo Bardini, demonstrate the famous antiquarian's special interest in Islamic art.