



Press Information

Casa Zuccari. An Artist's house in Florence, online exhibition

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An exhibition developed by the photo library at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

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The exhibition contains a unique series of high-quality digital photographs documenting the structure of, and the impressive frescos in the so-called Casa Zuccari, which was built as an artist's residence and studio. Used today by the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, the residence stands at the corners of the Via Capponi and the Via Giusti in the immediate vicinity of the Piazza SS. Annunziata, the Accademia delle Belle Arti and the University of Florence. In the 16th century, the area was occupied by numerous artists such as Perugino, Pontorno and Giambologna, and the Accademia del Disegno, with its place of residence in the oratory in the SS. Annunziata, constituted another important presence within this "artist's quarter".

The Casa Zuccari's exterior façades ensure that it stands out within its contemporary urban environment. The imposing corner pillars, crowned by the Zuccari and Medici coats of arms, are complemented by the windows, with their sandstone edging, and serve to underscore the structure's Late Renaissance style. The building owes its name to one Federico Zuccari (1540/1-1609), a painter and art theoretician, who purchased the property from the heirs of Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531), the "pittore senza errori", or "faultless painter" (in the words of Giorgio Vasari) and the property's former owner and original architect, in 1577. At the time, Federico Zuccari was both a successful and famous artist, who was appointed to succeed Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) to complete the frescos in the cathedral dome in Florence. Zuccari extended the property, attached a studio and ennobled the architecture with the addition of a garden loggia and by refining the exterior façade. The artist created frescos with a mythological and allegorical theme in the "sala terrena" (literally "ground-floor room"), thus transforming his own house into an instrument of self-glorification. Here, Federico presents himself as a successful, socially accepted artist and teacher.

Zuccari left Florence in 1579. His commissions led him back to Rome, and some years later, to the Escorial in Spain. He eventually returned to Rome, where he became the founder and first *principe* of the Accademia di San Luca in 1593. Zuccari sold the house in Florence to Giovan Battista Paggi, who presumably commissioned the frescos in the upper storey, in 1602. The building was sold several times, and used as a "casa d'artista". Its final residents in this capacity were Carlo Dolce (1616-1686) and Baldassare Franceschini, gen. Il Volterrano (1611–1689).

The Casa Zuccari was purchased from the Conti de'Acquarone by the Deutsche Bank AG in 1987, and entrusted to the Friends of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz in 1988. The restoration works were completed in 2004. The Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz has been using the Casa Zuccari as an exhibition venue since 2006. 'Contrappunti' is a new event series during which specific contemporary artists are invited to focus their attentions on this unique art historical site, the Casa Zuccari. The first exhibiting artist was Erwin Wortelkamp (born in 1938), who presented a selection of his works in a display entitled "Nel giardino delle Esperidi - Arance per Hans von Marées". The Casa Zuccari also holds receptions and smaller-scale conferences. Institute staff employed in the administrative and public relations departments and the photographic library use the rooms which are not open to the public as offices.

"Casa Zuccari. An artist's house in Florence" is the second online exhibition which has been organised by the photo library at the Kunsthistorisches Institut. The photographs on display are the result of several photographic campaigns in the Casa Zuccari using the Institute's own digital equipment. In 2006, the photo library presented an online exhibition consisting of sections of the digitalised archives of documentary photographs to mark the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the floods which ravaged Florence in the 1960s. Additional online exhibitions by the photographic library in 2007 will include a display of the photographic works of Hilde Lotz-Bauer (1907-1999) on what would have been her centenary, and a documentary exhibition on the damage caused in the town of Assisi by the devastating earthquakes in 1997 and the amazing restoration work which followed.

Images and further information:

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