With the exhibitions and conferences dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei begins "The Triptych of Italian Genius", a series of initiatives through which the Lincei intend to celebrate, in a single itinerary, the centenaries of Leonardo (2019), Raphael (2020) and Dante (2021).

From 1513 to 1516, Leonardo da Vinci stayed in Rome as the guest of Giuliano de’ Medici, occupying an apartment in the Vatican Belvedere where, among other activities, he worked as a painter, completing some compositions he had been working on for some years and that his assistants copied.

The exhibition illustrates the influence that the artist and his workshop exerted on the Roman milieu, but also the latter's impressions on Leonardo, who found himself immersed in a period of maximum exuberance of Roman culture and painting. The statues, paintings and drawings exhibited in the various sections make clear the premises and consequences of the meeting, which left tangible signs in Villa Farnesina, an iconic building of that period.

In this context, Raphael’s La Fornarina (displayed in a little-known 16th-17th century copy from the Fondazione Torlonia) is juxtaposed for the first time not only with the copy of the Gioconda painted in Leonardo’s workshop (Gallerie Nazionali d’Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini), but also with the so-called Nude Gioconda in the Fondazione Primoli collection, taken from a preparatory sketch by the Master, probably created in Rome. Also on view is a magnificent Salvator Mundi (owned by the Interior Ministry’s Fondo Edifici di Culto) from the Basilica of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples, probably created in Rome. Finally, the restorations of the Nude Gioconda of Fondazione Primoli, the Gioconda of Palazzo Barberini, the Saint John the Baptist of the Galleria Borghese, the Salvator Mundi and the fresco on the eastern wall of Alexander and Roxane’s Wedding Hall by Sodoma in Villa Farnesina are exhibited.
Leonardo and Raphael's relationship with the antique

Celebrated by contemporaries as the highest expression of Raphael's research into antiquity, the scene of Galatea sailing on a shell pulled by dolphins is unimaginable without the precedent of Leonardo's Leda, whilst the Fornarina lies within Raphael's research on ancient models revival according to the trend followed by great contemporary artists like Leonardo. The Nude Gioconda from the Fondazione Primoli, to be seen in close relationship with La Fornarina, is exhibited alongside the copy of the Gioconda from Palazzo Barberini, created in Leonardo's workshop, perhaps with the direct collaboration of the Master. These paintings refer one to another, displaying the influence of Leonardo's work in Rome and his exchanges with Raphael and contemporary artists.

LOGGIA OF CUPID AND PSYCHE

Leonardo and the antique

The Loggia of Cupid and Psyche, an intervening space between the naturalness of the garden and the artifice of architecture, is a typical example of an ancient model revival into an early Renaissance Villa. The loggias will be the closest precedents of the "Gallerie" for exhibiting ancient sculptures. Aphrodite of the Troad (and century A.D.; Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano) and Leda with the Swan (and century A.D.; Rome, Musei Capitolini) evoke, in particular, the close bond between Leonardo's and Raphael's portraiture with classic statuary, as exemplified by the comparison between the posing of Raphaels Fornarina and the twisting of the standing Leda, also reiterated in the Galatea frescoed by Raphael itself in Villa Farnesina, as well as in the drawings and engravings displayed in the Frieze Hall.

FRIEZE HALL

Drawing and manuscripts: Leda with Swan, Saint John the Baptist and the theory of painting

In the Frieze Hall, two autograph drawings by Leonardo are exhibited: the Study of drapery, a youthful folio owned by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, preserved at the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, and the Angel in the Flesh from the Rossana and Carlo Pedretti Foundation, perhaps executed in Rome between 1513 and 1515. The latter is connected to the later research by da Vinci upon the figure of Saint John the Baptist, exemplified by the lost drawing of the Museo Baroffio in Varese. For Leda with the Swan, an engraving by Giovanni Vendramini is displayed (fundamental evidence of an autograph drawing, now disfigured), showing the connection with the later version of the standing Leda, for which the drawing of the Museo del Sannio in Benevento and the nineteenth-century engraving by Jean Marie Leroux can be examined. The section is completed with two precious manuscripts of the Book of painting, an unfinished treatise by Leonardo, on which he also worked during his stay in Rome.

PROSPECTIVES HALL

Between Saint John the Baptist and the Salvator Mundi

Among the subjects that engaged Leonardo throughout his life, Saint John the Baptist was certainly one of the most significant. Some important works attributed to Leonardo's workshop and to his influence are exhibited in the hall: Saint John the Baptist (with the bowl) from the Galleria Borghese, two copies of Raphael's Saint John the Baptist (Galleria Spada and Galleria Borghese). Diligent work was also conducted on the Salvator Mundi theme, of which a magnificent example is exhibited (owned by the Interior Ministry's Fondo Edifici di Culto) from the Basilica of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples, also from Leonardo's workshop.

ALEXANDER E ROXANE'S WEDDING HALL

Sodoma and Leonardo

The decoration of Alexandra and Roxane's Wedding Hall, once the bedroom of Agostino Chigi and his bride Francesca Ordeaschi, was painted by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known as "il Sodoma", in the second decade of the sixteenth century, probably in the same years Leonardo, to whom Sodoma reveals his debt here, also stayed in Rome. In fact, compared to his previous works, a clear stylistic change can be observed in this fresco, with a general softening of the figures and the first use of the sfumato technique.

HALL OF LEONARDO'S PUPILS

The dissemination of models

Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio and Marco d'Oggiono are the only Leonardo's pupils recorded by Vasari, whilst Leonardo mentions them in his writings, along with others. The Portrait of a lady with an otter by Boltraffio (Galleria Borghese) can be referred to Leonardo's female portraiture style, according to three-quarter length framing. Martino Piazza's Madonna with Child, on the other hand, documents the success of da Vinci's compositions with the famous Madonna of the Yarnwinder, while the embrace of the Infant Jesus and Saint John the Baptist in the small panel from Capodimonte is once again a reworking, also echoed in the Flemish area. The pose of the figures in the large canvas with the Three Fates from the Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica, formerly attributed to Sodoma but, more recently, to his Sienese follower Marco Bigio, seems to have been inspired by the Leda.

LOGGIA OF GALATEA

Leonardo and Raphael's relationship with the antique

In close connection with the exhibition, other events are underway in the same period, coordinated into a unitary system.

In the Auditorium Palace (Villa Farnesina district): Leonardo, an impossible exhibition by Renato Parascandolo brings back to Rome the artist's opera omnia in a futurist and immersive digital reconstruction of Leonardo's entire pictorial production, which should be visited in correlation with the Leonardo in Rome exhibition hosted in Villa Farnesina.

On Palazzo Corsini's first floor (front of Villa Farnesina, via della Lungara, 10) in the rooms of the Corsinian Library, the exhibition Leonardo and his books investigates one of the lesser-known aspects of Leonardo's culture, that is the last phase of the Master's intellectual and artistic activity, reflected in the books he owned and studied.

ACCOMPANYING THE EXHIBITIONS


Seven conferences: Leonardo da Vinci: 7 keywords, in collaboration with the Foundation “I Lincei per la scuola”. With the contribution and participation of the Lincei's speakers and scientists, as well as prestigious national and international experts, all aspects of Leonardo's life and production will be considered; his relationship with nature, human body, writing, figurative art, material, experience and machines.