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Factum Foundation and Palazzo Fava: celebrating the *Polittico Griffoni*'s return to Bologna

Two exhibitions will explore how new technologies can change our
perception of art

12th March – 28th June 2020

The city of Bologna will celebrate the return of the *Polittico Griffoni*, the greatest altarpiece of the Bolognese renaissance, in two exhibitions at Palazzo Fava from 12th March to 28th June 2020.

The Polittico Griffoni is reborn in Bologna, curated by Mauro Natale in collaboration with Cecilia Cavalca, will focus on the importance and meaning of the altarpiece by displaying, together with the individual panels, a facsimile reuniting the *Polittico*.

The Materiality of Aura: new technologies for preservation, curated by Adam Lowe with Guendalina Damone and Carlos Bayod Lucini will take a unique and original look at how digital technology is changing our perception of art.

This unprecedented homecoming and celebration of technology were commissioned by **Genus Bononiae. Musei nella città** and supported by **Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna**.



Lucida 3D scanner recording the *Crucifixion* by Francesco del Cossa in the National Gallery of Art, Washington © Factum Foundation



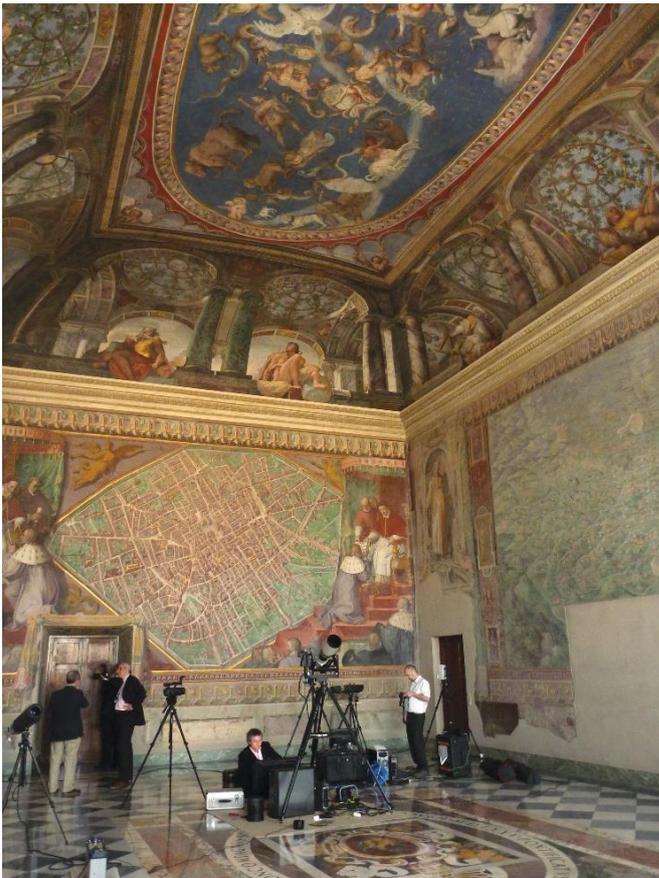
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THE *POLITTICO GRIFFONI*: A REVEALED MASTERPIECE

The *Polittico Griffoni* was one of the most important altarpieces of the Bolognese renaissance. All that remains is a group of sixteen tempera paintings on poplar panels painted between 1471 and 1472 by Francesco del Cossa and Ercole de' Roberti. The work was commissioned by the original patrons of the chapel, the Griffoni family, but was removed from the Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna when the chapel came to the Aldovrandi family in 1725.

The original gothic frame was destroyed and the sixteen surviving panels became individual paintings, currently held in nine museums and collections across Europe and North America: The National Gallery in London, the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, the Louvre in Paris, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Cagnola Collection in Gazzada (VA), the Vatican Museums, the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Ferrara, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen of Rotterdam, and the Vittorio Cini Collection in Venice.

Thanks to the generosity of the nine international museums, all sixteen panels will be reunited and displayed together with a facsimile presenting the reconstructed *Polittico*, 550 years after its creation by Francesco del Cossa and Ercole de' Roberti, and almost 300 years after its dismemberment.



The facsimile is the result of a collaboration originated in 2012 between the Basilica of San Petronio, Studio Cavina-Terra Architetti and Factum Foundation to record the façade of San Petronio. During the restoration of the Griffoni chapel that was taking place at the same time, attention was focused on the missing *Polittico Griffoni* and the high-resolution recording of the sixteen panels became one of Factum Foundation's long-running projects. After the digitisation, the Foundation obtained permission from all nine museums to create facsimiles of each painting in order to bring the (almost) complete *Polittico* to life once again.

The recording of the Sala Bologna in the Vatican Museums, one of the first projects regarding Bologna carried out by Factum Foundation in 2010 © Factum Foundation



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THE MATERIALITY OF AURA: NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR PRESERVATION. A FACTUM FOUNDATION EXHIBITION

On the second floor of Palazzo Fava, visitors will be able to muse upon and engage with different applications of technology. Since it was founded in 2009, Factum Foundation has been using cutting-edge technologies to preserve, display and share cultural heritage, with projects all over the world. The exhibition, curated by Adam Lowe, Guendalina Damone and Carlos Bayod Lucini, will explore the role of digital technology as a medium between an object's materiality and its "aura".

The show aims to demonstrate how technologies such as high-resolution 3D scanning and printing, projection mapping, digital restoration and re-creation, display systems and exquisite facsimiles raise questions about originality and authenticity and reveal current developments in curation and exhibition design. The aim is to create public interest, leading to deeper understanding and more effective preservation.

Each of the six rooms will allow the visitor to engage with works of art in new ways, showcasing projects carried out by Factum Foundation. The first room will focus on the surface of paintings and on remaking paintings that have been destroyed by fire and war. The surface of each of the *Polittico Griffoni* panels will be shown with extreme raking light together with collaborations with The National Gallery, London, and MOMA, New York that have brought back to life paintings such as Vincent Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, 1888, which was destroyed in Japan during the bombing of Osaka in World War II, and Claude Monet's *Water Lilies*, 1916, burnt in a fire at MoMA in 1958.

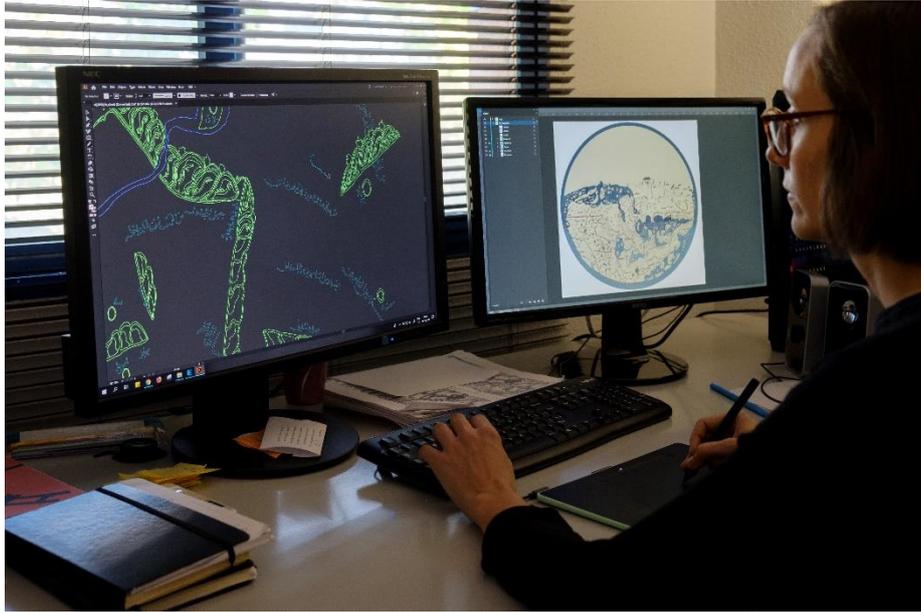


Render of the surface of the re-creation of Vincent Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, 1888.
The original was destroyed during World War II © Factum Foundation

Historical technologies such as cartography and geometry are celebrated through the re-creation of al-Idrisi's World Map (a collaboration with the Bodleian Library, Oxford) and a focus on Wenzel Jamnitzer, who established the principles of 3D modelling in 1569. Manuscript production is also explored in a film, together with magnified images of manuscript pages on vellum, and several facsimiles. A fusion of technology and craftsmanship characterises Factum's work.



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Teresa Casado working on the reconstruction of the lost silver map of al-Idrisi
© Oak Taylor Smith for Factum Foundation

The city of Bologna, where Factum Foundation has been involved in projects since 2010, is the unifying factor tying together many of the rooms: works relating to the *Polittico Griffoni*, the façade of San Petronio, the landscape map of the Bolognese province from the Sala Bologna in the Vatican Museums will all be presented – together with a new visualisation of another of the city’s most famous works of art.

Visitors will be able to further explore the role of Factum Foundation’s approach in in a book accompanying the exhibition: ‘The Aura in the Age of Digital Materiality. Rethinking preservation in the shadow of an uncertain future’ (Silvana Editoriale, 2020) is a collection of essays looking at a variety of themes revealed by the application of new technologies in cultural heritage: from emerging machine-learning and artificial intelligence to the production of facsimiles, the training of local actors to carry out digitisations, and the archiving and sharing of cultural heritage.

"The aura of a work of art, that intangible thing that has been used to define its originality, is actually... its material presence. Through high-resolution recordings, digital mediation, and new technologies of display and re-materialisation, we can have a deeper understanding of the material aspects that make the object what it is. This forensic evidence not only reveals how this object was made but how it has been cared for, valued, transformed and moved from one city to another or from one institution to another"

Adam Lowe, director of Factum Arte and founder of Factum Foundation

"This exhibition is an extraordinary event from an historical, artistic and cultural point of view; a unique offering to Bologna and its citizens, who will be able to welcome back 'home' a work of art created for the Church of San Petronio more than 500 years ago. It is a great chance for everyone to rediscover one of the most important masterpieces of the Bolognese Renaissance. The efforts of over five years has been repaid with the joy of seeing this work recomposed.

A gamble won, with pride, together with the curators."

Fabio Roversi Monaco, President of Genus Bononiae. Musei nella città



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“It is a project returning to Bologna, after three hundred years, not only a great masterpiece, but also to its rightful central position in the Italian renaissance history.”

Carlo Monti, President of Fondazione Carisbo

About Factum Foundation

Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation

factumfoundation.org

Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation is a not-for profit organisation founded in 2009 in Madrid by Adam Lowe. It works alongside its sister company, Factum Arte, a multidisciplinary workshop in Madrid dedicated to digital mediation and physical transformation in contemporary art and the production of facsimiles. The Foundation was established to demonstrate the importance of documenting, monitoring, studying, recreating and disseminating the world's cultural heritage through the rigorous development of high-resolution recording and rematerialisation techniques. The Foundation's activities include: building digital archives for preservation and further study, creating and organising touring exhibitions, setting up training centres for locals to learn the different technologies developed by the Foundation to record their own cultural heritage, and producing exact facsimiles as part of a new approach to conservation and restoration.

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