

The Pogliaghi Museum opens and it is a party

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Visiting the rooms of the Pogliaghi Museum is like stepping into the past and tracing a personality on one hand so attentive to classicism, on the other equally intrigued by the forms of art of every period and style. The gate that opens onto the garden can be seen along the Via Sacra, while the house, hidden by vegetation, is only possible to admire in all its beauty and grandeur when one crosses the entrance.

The visit is a voyage ranging from differing epochs and styles thanks to objects that Lodovico Pogliaghi loved collecting, until you get to the heart of his home, the large workshop where he worked, where stands majestically the great gate of the Duomo of Milan, the great masterpiece of the artist who worked on it between 1894 and 1908.

"The opening of a new museum, whoever the owner, is always a moment of 'celebration' for the local community and for visiting Italians and tourists. At the stage of knowledge and conservation follows the logical conclusion of the enjoyment and enhancement of a public good," writes **Catherine Bon Valbassina**, Director General for Cultural and Landscape Heritage of Lombardy, in occasion of the reopening of the Pogliaghi Museum. The celebration for the Varese people is doubled because it gives back to the community a rich heritage of an original and eclectic artist and because the Sacro Monte is enriched even more, after the opening to the public of the Baroffio Museum more than ten years ago.

The rooms, that the artist chose for living and working, today contain a great heritage of works made by Pogliaghi and a vast number of objects that he loved collecting. From Egyptian sarcophagi to Greek vases, a neoclassic statue to porcelain china tea set. His house, majestic and imposing, is the mirror of curiosity that accompanied the research of this artist, who at his death donated to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana

"Talking about the link between Lodovico Pogliaghi and the Biblioteca Ambrosiana

means first of all remember his relations," says **Monsignor Zappa President of the Congregation of the Keepers of the Venerable Biblioteca Ambrosiana**, "with Achille Ratti, the future Pope Pius XIX. They met in 1904 and thanks to that meeting came the decision to leave to the Ambrosiana his house-museum of the Sacred Mountain."

The rooms have been restored with the support of Lombardy Region as pointed out by the Councillor for Culture Cristina Cappellini, "A little less than a year ago, thanks to an inspection, we realised the importance of this heritage and from there the decision to help the recovery of this Museum. I am very proud of the work that quickly led to the reopening. We have made a great gift to the Varese and Lombardy communities in general. This is real policy, the concreteness that characterises the council of the Lombardy Region."

At the inauguration there was present also the niece of the artist Vera Pogliaghi, daughter of a brother, that followed the ceremony with emotion.

The Director of the Museum will be Mons. Alberto Rocca, delegate of the Fondazione Ambrosiana for the Pogliaghi House Museum.

The Collection

During the restoration of the chapels of Sacro Monte di Varese, Pogliaghi remained bewitched – like many before him – by the tranquility and the beauty of these lands. Here he decided to buy a piece of land in 1885 on which he began to build his house on which he worked hard daily until his death in 1950. He conceived the house a workshop-museum dedicated to the retreat, study, and exhibition of the fruit of his passion for collecting.

The building, designed by the same Pogliaghi reflects the eclectic taste of the time and the interest of the owner to all forms of art, with rooms inspired by different architectural styles and an Italian garden full of antiques and curios. Over sixty years, Pogliaghi formed a prestigious and impressive collection of art works including precious Egyptian, Etruscan and Greek-Roman period archaeological pieces (ceramics, sarcophagi, statues, glyptics, glass), paintings and sculptures dating from the Renaissance and the Baroque era (including wooden statues of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a sculpture by Giambologna and paintings by Procaccini, Magnasco, and Moray), a rich collection of antique textiles from Europe and Asia (exceptional collection of rugs), fine furnishings, curiosities and bizarre objects from around the world. In addition to his collection – set up with personal taste tending to horror vacui – the villa contains sketches, plaster casts, designs and work materials of Pogliaghi, including the beautiful original casts of the main door of the Duomo di Milan. In total the villa houses more than 1,500 works, including paintings, sculptures and applied arts and about 580 archaeological objects.

The villa, which was donated by Pogliaghi to the Holy See in 1937 and now owned by the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, was opened as a museum in 1974 and up to the 1990s. The exhibition, designed for this new opening, aims to get as close as possible to the artist's choices, according to a production of 1955, retaining the original and

very personal arrangement of objects and works, as prescribed by the same Pogliaghi.

The artist

Lodovico Pogliaghi (Milan, 1857 – Varese, 1950) was one of the most important Lombard artists who lived at the turn of the century, yet still so little known in his hometown, where he worked and taught at the Academy of Brera, as in Varese, where he stayed mostly from 1885 and died at the age of 93 years.

A multifaceted artist, painter and sculptor as well as a goldsmith, designer and decorator, he was always faithful to the classic tradition and the study of the great masters of the past. He gained fame by winning the competition for the construction of the main door of the Duomo of Milan, on which he worked between 1894 and 1908 from his home in Sacro Monte of Varese, where still today there are the original casts.

A tireless worker, he combined an easy inspiration with exceptional technical and cultural preparation, a tenacious will to a formidable resistance, an acute scrupulous execution to an extremely rapid creation. His artistic career was permeated with an uncompromising loyalty to tradition and a strict academic discipline. Amongst the last of late Romanticism and some timid opening to sensuality Liberty, Pogliaghi remained largely excluded from the revolutionary movements and that the avant-garde in the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century that completely changed the face of European art. He was an artist in the Renaissance sense of the term, as it was dedicated to the constant refinement of his virtuosic technical skill and expressive.

Next to the figure of the artist Pogliaghi stands that of the rich bourgeois Pogliaghi a cultured and refined collector. A passion for antiques and bizarrerie of all epochs and lands which soon made his home in the Sacro Monte of Varese an eclectic treasure trove, an invaluable Cabinet of curiosities of the late nineteenth century.

Pogliaghi House Museum

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Santa Maria del Monte in Varese

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Open to the public from Saturday 10th May 2014

Tickets:

Full price €4

Reduced price school groups and adults (more than 15 people): €3

Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children): €10

Combined Ticket Pogliaghi House Museum + Baroffio Museum: €5

Residents of Santa Maria del Monte: free

Opening hours:

from 15 March to 15 November:

– weekend opening (Saturday, Sunday and holidays): 9 – 18

- extraordinary evening openings in the months from June to August (specific calendar of the open evenings will be published)
- for groups with reservation opening on any day of the week

Additional services:

- sightseeing included in the entrance ticket during the times 10am, 11am, 12pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm and 5pm (Saturday, Sunday and holidays)
- bookshop
- tour guides for groups of adults or students (House Museum only): €60 (groups of maximum 25 people)
- tour guides for groups of adults or students (House Museum and Viale delle Cappelle – half day): €80 (maximum 25 people)
- tour guides for groups of adults or students (House Museum, Viale delle Cappelle, borgo e Baroffio Museum) €160 (maximum 25 people)
- Sunday morning: tour guides for individuals and/or families departing from the prima cappella at 9.30: €10/pp. (including tour guide and ticket for the House Museum)

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