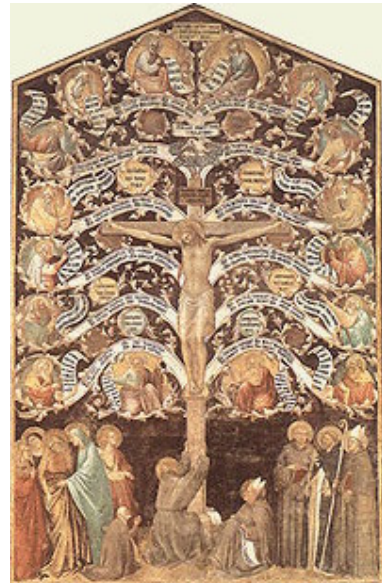


## Last Supper in Santa Croce



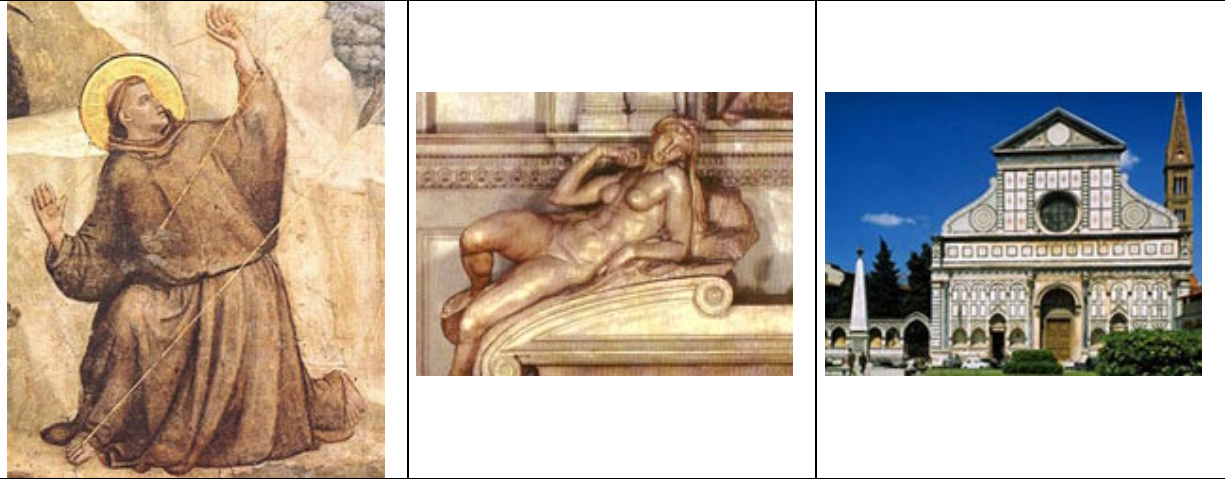
In about 1335 ca. Taddeo Gaddi (1300 c.a.-1366) in the ancient refectory of the convent of Santa Croce, created the Last Supper there. The fresco occupies a vast wall, depicting the Last Supper in the moment of the institution of the Eucharist and in the upper part there is the Tree of Life. The colors, dark and strong, are often interrupted by the degradation of the fresco which has requested restoration work. Around the poor table are seated Jesus and the Apostles, while Jude, who gives his back, seems to be stretching out a hand to the Redeemer that teaches, admonishes and consoles the Apostles, whose faces appear dark, sad, and preoccupied.

Taddeo was the godson of Giotto, lived with him twenty-four years, and became the most eminent of his numerous scholars. Vasari says that he "surpassed his master in colour", and, in some of his works, "even in expression". The best of his extant frescoes are those in the Giugni Chapel, formerly belonging to the Baroncelli family, in the church of Santa Croce, but his most extensive works, in the churches of San Spirito and the Serviti, have all disappeared. Perhaps he is best known for the fact that he was a distinguished architect, and designed the present Ponte Vecchio in Florence, and also lower down the river a still finer bridge (Ponte SantaTrinita), which was destroyed in the sixteenth century.



*Taddeo Gaddi  
Allegory of the Cross*

## The Genius of Michelangelo



Lorenzo the Magnificent fostered the artistic genius of Michelangelo Buonarroti. He took the 15 year-old artist into the Medici family palace so that he could supervise at close hand the young Michelangelo's artistic and social education. Michelangelo's boyhood home - in sight of the Basilica of Santa Croce that now houses his tomb - provides the starting point for this tour [exterior only]. Some of the master's earliest drawings reproduce figures from the frescos painted by the great Giotto at Santa Croce. After a visit to the Opera del Duomo where the sculptor's haunting, unfinished "Pieta" is displayed, the tour continues on to the Medici Palace and then to the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo. Here Michelangelo carved the famous Medici tombs with their enigmatic, reclining figures of "Dawn, Dusk, Night and Day". Our tour ends in the vestibule of the Laurentian Library for which Michelangelo created a magnificent stone staircase with all the plastic qualities of a gigantic lava flow [mornings only].



*Giotto - Bardi Chapel - Death of Saint Francis*

## Salvatore Ferragamo Museum

*Salvatore Ferragamo*

Situated in Florence, on the second floor of Palazzo Spini Feroni, Via Tornabuoni no. 2, the museum was opened to the public in 1995 by the Ferragamo family, in an effort to illustrate Ferragamo's artistic qualities and the important role he played in the history of shoe design and international fashion. Besides photographs, patents, sketches, books, magazines and wooden lasts of various famous feet, the museum boasts a collection of Down 10,000 models designed by Ferragamo from the end of the 1920's until 1960, the year of his death.

The shoes, displayed on a biennial rotation, are chosen each time according to specific themes that deal with new issues and allow for new fields of inquiry. The shoes, all works of refined craftsmanship, their design and materials, unveil the mind of an artist who was always in touch with the cultural mood of the time. Salvatore often searched for and found ideas, inspiration and collaboration from the leading artists of his day.

Similarly, the museum arranges exhibitions of its own historical collection with the participation of contemporary artists, and promotes and hosts exhibitions and events linked to art and culture.

The Primo Premio Guggenheim Impresa & Cultura (The Guggenheim First Prize for Industry and Culture) for 1999 was awarded to Salvatore Ferragamo for its decision to invest in culture and subsequently employ it as a communication strategy for the company.



*Shoes worn by the pop star Madonna, in the film Evita. The design was based on the original, created by Salvatore Ferragamo for Evita Peron.*



## Museum of Semi-Precious Stone Inlays



"Art and nature" could be the motto of this extraordinary museum dedicated to semi-precious stone inlays, where artistic talent competes only with the splendour of the materials employed.

It was the passion of the Medici for this precious form of art that led Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici to establish in 1588 a court laboratory specialised in semi-precious mosaics and inlays. This grand ducal institution, which remained active for over three centuries, was the core of the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, established at the end of the 19th century, which still has its seat in the original location chosen in 1798 for the laboratories formerly housed in the Uffizi.

The Florentine production was lavish and very prestigious and is today represented by the fine examples preserved both in Florentine and foreign museums. Yet, this small museum is the only institution that focuses only on this theme and offers therefore the opportunity of fully understanding this suggestive chapter of Florentine history. The collection is arranged by themes in chronological order. The first section is dedicated to the first Grand dukes and semi-precious stone. This section displays porphyry sculptures dating back to the age of Cosimo I de' Medici, who had a special predilection for this ancient and precious material, enriched by sophisticated furniture pieces in semi-precious stones made for his sons Francesco I and Ferdinando I. The so-called "Florentine brand" dates back to this period, that is to the late 16th century. The brand, that would continue to be for centuries the pride of the laboratory, consists in a very imaginative mosaic technique that used natural colours and precious stones, cut in sections and skilfully matched to form a larger image. "Stone pointing" was the term chosen by its initiators to define Florentine mosaics, because this technique enables to represent a varying range of subjects, fully represented in the museum, ranging from portraits to abstract subjects, from landscapes to stories with figures, from architectural views to natural themes.

Stone flowers is the section dedicated to the very trendy theme of flowers, that flourished between the 17th and 18th centuries. Flowers were often matched with fruit and birds and were used in particular to decorate table tops or chests. From the early years of the 17th century, the laboratory also contributed to the monumental project of the Chapel of the Prince. The mausoleum of the Medici family erected in 1604 by Ferdinando I, who had planned to entirely decorate it with semi-precious stones.

The incredible commitment of the laboratory is documented in the Museum with several works and projects, connected with different phases of an activity that covered several centuries. Cameos, small inlays, small picture frames, chests and other furniture pieces, both religious and laic, where semi-precious stones are often sumptuously matched with, ebony and gilded bronze typically indicate the Baroque taste of the last members of the Medici family.

The last member of the family died in 1737 and the dynasty was replaced



by the Austrian Hapsburg-Lorraine family. The Lorraine period, which runs up to 1859, continued to foster the success of the laboratory, which produced several pictures in semi-precious stones to the design and models drawn by the painter Giuseppe Zocchi and destined to the Court of Vienna. Its production also included neo-classic compositions of vases and shells designed to integrate the tableware of the Pitti Palace. During the mid-19th century, the laboratory artisans seemed to prefer lighter and more delicate shades that were fashionable from the Rococo period to the Empire period, and again returned to the velvet fascination of black marble and to the famous compositions of flowers.

The Opificio delle Pietre Dure after the unification of Italy experienced a financial decline, although its artistic level continued to be very high. Its products were sold to bourgeois customers and comprised table tops, small refined objects, small sculptures in semi-precious stones, all characterised by an impeccable style and an extraordinary taste in the matching of colours.

Looking at these works of art and admiring their complex yet natural beauty, visitors often wonder how these works are created. These questions find an answer in the section dedicated to The Laboratory of Semi-Precious Stones, which guides visitors through the complex procedure that leads to the creation of Florentine mosaics and inlays. The incredible marble table displayed by these artisans comprises hundreds of samples of precious stones. The table also represents models of drawings and graphs that have been specifically created to be reproduced with semi-precious stones. This section also offers a view of the 18th century working tables, rather ingenious yet functional, and of the tools used to carry out the different production stages.

The itinerary of the Museum ends with a section dedicated to Similar forms of art: painting on stone and scagliola, a kind of artistic production that was very fashionable between the 17th and 18th centuries.

# Boboli Garden



Amphitheatre (Detail)

The Garden that extends from the hill behind the Pitti Palace as far as Porta Romana, reached its current extension and appearance, becoming one of the largest and most elegant Italian style gardens, through several stages of enlargement and restructuring work carried out at different times.

The first works initially affected the area that was closer to the palace, after the building had been purchased by Cosimo I de' Medici and by his wife Eleonora di Toledo, who had chosen this place for new grand ducal palace. The initial plan was drawn by Niccolò Tribolo, although the works were completed, after his death in 1550 by other architects including also Giorgio Vasari (from 1554 to 1561) along with Bartolomeo Ammannati and Bernardo Buontalenti under the reign of Francis I, who succeeded to his father Cosimo.

The Medici and the Lorraine families continued to enrich and enlarge the garden also in 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Besides adding lovely meadows, avenues, small groves and beautiful panoramic views, they made the garden more precious by including extraordinary decorative complexes, thus forming an outdoor museum that exhibited both Roman and 16th and 17th century statues.

The first phase led to the creation of an "Amphitheatre" adjoined to the hill behind the palace. The early amphitheatre, initially formed by "edges and evergreen meadows", was later replaced by a stone one decorated with statues based on Roman myths such as the Fountain of the Ocean sculptured by Giambologna, then transferred to another location within the same



Neptune's Fountain



garden, the small "Grotto of Madama", and the "Large Grotto", which has begun by Vasari and ended by Ammannati and Buontalenti between 1583 and 1593. Despite the fact that it is currently undergoing complex restoration work (1998) due to the damages suffered over centuries these statues continue to be remarkable examples of Mannerism architecture and culture. Decorated internally and externally with stalatites and originally equipped with water plays and a luxuriant vegetation, the fountain is divided into three main section

The first one was frescoed to create the illusion of a natural grotto, that is a natural refuge to allow shepherds to protect themselves from wild animals, and originally housed the Prisoners of Michelangelo, which were moved to this location after they had become part of the Medici collection (the original statues have now been replaced by copies). The rooms that follow exhibit valuable sculptures like the "Bathing Venus" of Giambologna and the group of "Paris and Hellen" of Vincenzo de Rossi.



The Dwarf Morgant

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