



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Intesa Sanpaolo opens *CANTIERE DEL '900* in piazza della Scala in Milan Works from the Intesa Sanpaolo collections**

- The historical headquarters of Banca Commerciale Italiana have been transformed into an exhibition and cultural venue to complement the Gallerie di Piazza Scala.
- 189 works from the Intesa Sanpaolo twentieth century collections go on display in an exhibition curated by Francesco Tedeschi.
- Two single-subject studies: the first is dedicated to Colour as a plastic form in art between Futurism and the 1990s, and the second to the installation entitled *Italian Time* by Emilio Isgrò.
- The solutions designed by architect Michele De Lucchi include the basement as an “open art vault”.
- A varied selection of multimedia information and new coffee shop and bookshop services are open in piazza della Scala.
- Extended free admission.

*Milan, 25 October 2012 - **Cantiere del '900** opens in piazza della Scala in Milan.*

Just one year after the opening of the Gallerie di Piazza Scala, Intesa Sanpaolo completes its ambitious cultural project with the unveiling of a new exhibition venue in the palazzo that was once the historical headquarters of Banca Commerciale Italiana.

The building that lines piazza della Scala, an integral part of an urban, architectural structure linked to Teatro alla Scala on one side, and Palazzo Marino on the other, has today become the venue for an open project, aimed at presenting the Intesa Sanpaolo twentieth century collections and acting both as an exhibition area and cultural centre for the city.



**Cantiere del '900** is the new exhibition project in the Gallerie di Piazza Scala, dedicated to the presentation of the twentieth century works in the Intesa Sanpaolo collections.

The opening of **Cantiere del '900** represents an essential step in the active and concrete commitment of the Intesa Sanpaolo Group to art and culture. In fact, a bank's role is to contribute not only to the economic but also the cultural and social growth of its local area and therefore, overall, of the country. Inspired by the principle of subsidiarity, the work of Intesa Sanpaolo for art and culture is cultivated with consistent methods and content, taking shape in Progetto Cultura. This ambitious and varied multi-year programme, renewed every three years, in which a set of wide ranging cultural initiatives are put into effect according to specific guidelines, seeks to be transformed into a instrument for development, involvement and social dialogue.

The values underlying Progetto Cultura include the protection, enhancement, sharing and public enjoyment of cultural treasures, as well as their diffusion and promotion. Another central goal of the project is the enhancement of the vast historical, artistic and architectural heritage belonging to Intesa Sanpaolo – a goal that has recently led to the creation of the Gallerie di Piazza Scala in Milan, which today culminates in the launch of **Cantiere del '900**.

Intesa Sanpaolo is therefore proud to make another contribution to the city's cultural life, opening up its buildings and making its nineteenth and twentieth century collections available to the public. The current new museum complex will be entirely dedicated to the enrichment and strengthening of the cultural range, as well as to the spread of awareness of these hidden treasures among the people of the city.

Curated by Francesco Tedeschi, this opening exhibition offers a selection of the most important works by leading artists and movements in Italian art of the second half of the last century. 189 artworks – including paintings, sculpture, photographs and other art techniques explored in the last century – present a multifaceted vision of the varied lines of experimentation through which the Italian art of this important period achieved outstanding levels on an international scale.

“The choice of the term ‘worksite’ seeks to give a concrete idea of a space open to a range of uses and interpretations: a place emblematic of an on-going project, as well as an opportunity for in-depth study and research – states the curator. This new section of the museum is dedicated to the art of a period that is still relatively recent, in which the present day is rooted and whose history is outlined in the consciousness of its leading artists and general forms, but which can be subject to reinterpretations by virtue of its bearing witness to a particularly varied and complex era, represented in an exemplary fashion by the over 3,000 twentieth century works in the Intesa Sanpaolo collections”.

In the bright halls of the ground floor of the early twentieth century palazzo – masterfully redesigned by architect Michele De Lucchi – the layout takes visitors on a journey through twelve sections and two



overtures with works executed according to the different artistic techniques and poetics of the post World War II period, suggesting a dialogue between sculpture and painting – or between plastic and representational forms – and between artistic experimentation centres in Italy, primarily in the relationship between the Milanese and Roman scene.

The leitmotif of *Cantiere del '900* traces a pathway through Italian art of the 1950s to the 1990s, highlighting the movements of abstract art, Art Informel, formal and technological experimentation, of the different configurations of new expressive potential and representations of man and the society of the time.

The situation of the immediate post World War II period and the 1950s, reconstructed by starting with a particular interpretation of the developments of an art that tends to resolve the opposition between realism and abstraction through the works by Afro, Alberto Burri, Emilio Vedova, Giuseppe Santomaso, moves onto the role of Lucio Fontana, represented in the exhibition by an important nucleus of nine artworks, considered in terms of the avant-garde currents of Spatialism and Nuclear Art, active in Milan and other art centres in Italy in the 1950s; to then deal with the experimental forms created under the aegis of the “concrete” abstraction of MAC Concrete Art Movement and the rich panorama of Art Informel.

The transition from the 1950s to the 1960s is investigated through the new focus on a concept of painting that becomes the track of actions physically aimed at altering its nature, like those performed by Piero Manzoni, Enrico Castellani or Toti Scialoja, not to mention the potential offered by new technology to give life to a “programmed” or “kinetic” art.

The atmosphere of the 1960s is interpreted in view of the attention to the new narrative and image enhancement possibilities offered by the influence of the mass media, which stand as reference points for the works by artists who move between new forms of realism and Pop tendencies, such as Achille Perilli, Gastone Novelli, Mario Schifano, Valerio Adami and Gianni Bertini. The new avant-gardes of the second half of the 1960s are examined in the sections dedicated to the artists who took part in the expressions of Arte Povera and in the verbal-visual manifestations of conceptual art. Sculpture, constantly present throughout the entire exhibition, acts as an introduction to the various rooms, in the works by Mauro Staccioli, Alik Cavaliere, Ettore Colla, Nicola Carrino, Mario Ceroli, Pino Pascali and Giuseppe Maraniello, is also point of reflection on the relationships with space in the room dedicated to “constructivist ideas” (which brings together artworks by Gianfranco Pardi, Giuseppe Uncini, as well as by Rodolfo Aricò).

The exhibition ends with the artworks that emerged between the 1980s and 1990s, standing as the basis of more recent modern times, part of a vision that is open and evolving, like a “worksite”.

The decision to offer many viewpoints of a relatively recent art that continues to pose questions today has led to a “project within a project” – the idea of dedicating some rooms to single-subject studies of works, artists or themes.



The opening exhibition of ***Cantiere del '900***, presents two single-subject itineraries. The first, entitled *Colour as a plastic form*. A journey through a form of abstraction is an original critical examination of a subject of major interest springing from the colour experimentation of Giacomo Balla and Futurism. An abstraction of colour that transformed painting into a physical presence in space, in keeping with an essentially formal line, and which pivoted on the work of Piero Dorazio and Gruppo Forma 1, of Giulio Turcato and other artists of the post World War II period.

The second subject regards one of the most important art installations of recent decades, *Italian Time* by Emilio Isgrò, which recalls one of the most tragic events in recent Italian history, the Bologna massacre of 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1980. In the twenty tondi of which the installation is composed, fragments of daily life captured on the streets of Bologna in that period emerge, partially erased by the colour white, which alters their ability to be read. Accompanied by the rising ticking of a clock and changes in lighting conditions, the overall effect is “theatrical”, provoking emotion and tension.

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of multimedia installations curated by Francesca Pola, which offer the chance to examine subjects, works and architecture in depth.

The art vault stands as yet another important novelty in the new section of the Gallerie. A modern, practical idea of the depot, architect De Lucchi has redesigned the vaults of the former bank, traditionally secret and alluring places, making them visible to the public. The art vault, once off limits, has now become a space that arouses curiosity, opens up new perspectives and anticipates possible future exhibitions.

The presence of the art vault in the historical basements of the Gallerie, redesigned with a new function and fitted according to the latest developments in conservation and cataloguing, is an integral part of the very idea of a “worksite”. The works, by rotation, become the subject of new study, restoration and exhibition projects.

The opening of the new section also marks an important moment for the urban setting in which the palazzo is located, with the life of Milan’s old city centre as a pivot for the museum – formerly open on via Manzoni – now moving towards piazza della Scala and offering new services and opportunities to locals and tourists.

In fact, forming an integral part of the project is the opening of a large services area in piazza della Scala, on the corner with Via Manzoni. A bookshop and coffee shop are open not just to visitors to the exhibition centre, but act as a meeting place for the general public. The small, romantic café looking out on the garden of what used to be the residence of Alessandro Manzoni has been preserved along the nineteenth century exhibition itinerary.



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In conjunction with Civita, a range of free itineraries and educational workshops is offered to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools – which can avail of a fully equipped classroom, and guided tours and themed itineraries through the collections and the buildings.

Services offered to the public include free audio guides in nine languages, also in an iPod version.

**Cantiere del '900** is the latest addition to the Gallerie di Piazza Scala, which has been home since 2011 to an exhibition curated by Fernando Mazzocca, divided into 13 themed sections, with over 140,000 visitors in the first year. Approximately 200 works from the Fondazione Cariplo and Intesa Sanpaolo nineteenth century collections offer an exciting journey through one whole century of Italian art, with a particular emphasis on the art of Lombardy. The exhibition begins with thirteen marvellous bas-reliefs by Canova and ends with four pre-Futuristic masterpieces by Boccioni, acting as the ideal link with the twentieth century exhibition.

With the newly opened venues, the exhibition centre of the Gallerie di Piazza Scala opens up a total area of 8,300 m<sup>2</sup> to the public with free admission, inside four historical buildings located between piazza della Scala, via Manzoni and via Morone, a fascinating glimpse of the history of Milan's architecture and urban development between the late eighteenth century and the early decades of the last century.

The Gallerie di Piazza Scala, part of the Gallerie d'Italia network together with the exhibition venues of Palazzo Leoni Montanari in Vicenza and Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano in Naples, mark Intesa Sanpaolo's major commitment to Progetto Cultura, a varied programme of initiatives promoted by the bank in its deep awareness that the role of a leading national bank is to contribute not only to the economic growth, but also, and perforce, to the cultural and civic growth of the country.

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