



## **PAFF! INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF COMIC ART**

### **International museum dedicated to the “ninth art” opens in Pordenone**

At the historic Villa Galvani in Pordenone, the wait is over: **PAFF! International Museum of Comic Art** has finally opened its doors, with patronage of the Italian Ministry of Culture, and support from the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Authority and Pordenone Municipal Council.

The inauguration marks the definitive opening of the permanent collection at PAFF!, a cultural institution conceived and founded by Giulio De Vita. This pioneering museum documents and celebrates the history and creative power of comics and their narrative power through images, recognised worldwide as an artistic communication medium and appreciated by audiences of all ages, everywhere.

One of a kind, the PAFF! International Museum of Comic Art offers visitors an engaging, interactive and immersive experience. “The concept of the exhibition and museum presented by Giulio De Vita and PAFF! is unique and innovative and will enable comics to be experienced as a complete medium yet one that also interacts with the other arts. There are many original works, as demonstrated by the prestigious list of authors, and they are of the highest standard. But visitors will only be able to admire them after first viewing their reproductions,” explains the curator of the permanent collection, Luca Raffaelli.

Under the artistic direction of **Giulio De Vita**, **PAFF! International Museum of Comic Art is one of a kind in Italy, with organisations similar in concept and size found only in European capitals such as Paris and Brussels.** The permanent collection features a multimedia and interactive layout, designed by Corde Architetti Associati, who also managed development works. Visitors can admire roughly **200 original pages by the most famous comic artists of all time, as well as over 500 sketches, scripts, historic and rare publications, costumes used in films based on comics, set designs and video content from all around the world** collected through purchases, loans and donations. “Opening the museum adds another star to the constellation of exhibitions, and educational and training initiatives organised by PAFF!, which in just four years has established itself as a European leader in the cultural landscape and an internationally relevant museum,” states the Artistic Director of PAFF! International Museum of Comic Art.

Within the 2200 square metres of exhibition space at PAFF!, the permanent collection is distributed across one floor of the museum. It is divided into 20 different sections and includes original pages by numerous masters and outstanding artists such as **Andrea Pazienza, Art Spiegelman, Benito Jacovitti, Carl Barks, Charles M. Schulz, Chester Gould, Floyd Gottfredson, George McManus, Giorgio Cavazzano, Hugo Pratt, Magnus, Milo Manara, Milton Caniff, Alex Raymond and Will Eisner.**

**Luca Raffaelli** has provided an **original approach to the structure of the museum visit**, rooted in the different formats in which comic art, over more than 100 years of history, has been read, experienced and loved all around the globe, based on the cultures, economic conditions and social habits of readers. PAFF! is therefore **the only museum in the world dedicated to comics with a primary focus on comparing original pages with reproductions, newspapers, albums and books in which comics live.**

There are many truly unique works to see, including an original page by **Vittorio Giardino** (rarely available to be admired on display) and a work from **Maus** (**Art Spiegelman's** multi-award-winning comic) that was not included in the final publication, along with historic and highly valuable pages and strips. For the first time, all these originals are displayed alongside, and "discovered" by the visitor through, the various reproductions created over the years. An example: for an extract from **Felix the Cat** by **Otto Messmer** (dated 1933) there is the page from the colour US daily newspaper and the page reprinted in the *Corriere dei Piccoli* in 1937 (with amended speech balloons, typical in the past). For **The Eternaut** (the science-fiction comic by Argentine *desaparecido* **Héctor G. Oesterheld** from the 1950s) there is the horizontal format, following the vertical adaptation by **Ruggero Giovannini** for **Lanciostory** in the 1970s. Then there is a page by **Carl Barks**, the creator of **Uncle Scrooge** that was published in different formats as needed.

PAFF! International Museum of Comic Art presents three main displays with the works of three great artists: a very intense page from "La Gabbia" [the cage], on loan from **Silvia Ziche**, an original by underground artist **Bambi Kramer** and an original work from Persepolis, **Marjane Satrapi's** celebrated graphic novel.

In terms of protection and special exhibition features, the museum is a pioneer in the world of comics: pages are contained in units that preserve the materials, protecting them against damage caused by light. The effect is that of a **wunderkammer** (a cabinet of wonders, treasure chest of precious object or collection of curiosities), but also that of an archive accessible to the public, inviting interaction and discovery.

As far as the **multimedia component** is concerned, in close connection with the works present in the museum exhibition, it is interesting to underline the presence of "historical" contributions from Cineteca di Bologna, Istituto Luce, Teche Rai, RSI (Radio Televisione Svizzera Italiana) and RTS (Radio Televisione Svizzera), archive material and recently released film fragments such as "**Hugo in Argentina**" by director **Stefano Knuchel** (presented at the Locarno Festival in 2022), underground works such as "**Tuono**" by **Dario Marani** (an amusing and sincere portrait of comic artist Andrea Paggiaro aka **Tuono Pettinato** who left us prematurely in 2021), "**brief focuses**" on the different sections presented by the curator of the permanent collection Luca Raffaelli, interviews on the "**Future of Comics**" (60 seconds to reflect on the fate of the ninth art) with opinions from Alberto Abruzzese, Licia Troisi, Andrea Bernardelli, Alpraz, Andrea Fontana, Davide Di Giorgio, Fabiano Ambu and Vorticerosa/Rosa Puglisi, and interviews on the "**Comic-strip workflow**" detailing the various steps involved in a comic's creation (Giovanni Barbieri, Vittorio Giardino, Laura Scarpa, Francesco Artibani, Valerio Bindi, Maurizio Clausi, Enrico Pierpaoli and Giuseppe Palumbo).

Key sources of works on loan include **Giancarlo Soldi** (director and scriptwriter), who provided a selection of his documentaries dedicated to the world of comics (*Nuvole parlanti*, *Graphic Reporter*, *Letteratura disegnata*, *Come Tex Nessuno mai* and *Nessuno Siamo Perfetti*) and the irresistible bite-size content of "Little Nemo", made for the magazine *Fumettologica*.

There are three interdisciplinary exhibits created in collaboration with **Michela Zalunardo**, offering an original exploration of the relationship with other arts.

Beyond comics: the permanent collection also includes a statue of the **Joker** by **Adrian Tranquilli**, a number of **objects** that testify to the success of comics and their characters, a **Diabolik** re-assembled to transform the small album into a big Christmas gift, and a presentation of **proto-comics** created by **Davide Toffolo** (illustrated stories such as those decorating Trajan's Column or drawings in nineteenth-century publications, which came before the birth and success of the comics industry).

To guide visitors and optimise enjoyment of this innovative museum, PAFF! has introduced the figure of the **museum mediator**: a dozen or so members of staff who work in contact with the public, assisting them and suggesting the best way to enjoy every aspect of this surprising museum visit.

By the end of 2023, the International Museum of Comic Art will also boast an archive with climate-controlled storage for original pages, drawings and publications in the museum's collection. The archive will be equipped with a precision high-energy-efficiency system to keep the environment at a constant temperature of 18°C, with relative humidity no greater than 45%.