



DIVINE
CREATURE
DIVINE CREATURES

Mandragora

Introduction

When, on 9th March of last year, I participated in the inauguration of the “Divine Creatures” exhibition at the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo in Florence, I felt I absolutely had to take the exhibition to the Pope’s Museums.

And that is what has happened, thanks to the endeavours and helpfulness of many people who, like me, wanted to share and spread the message inherent in an initiative of this kind.

An announcement of beauty, of art, of hope, of humanity and of love.

The meeting with Adamo Antonacci and Silvia Garutti, with Timothy Verdon, Antonio Natali and Leonardo Baldini, but also with all the youngsters who are the protagonists of the exhibition, together with their families, immediately captivated me and made me sensitive to the value of the initiative.

With “Divine Creatures” a refined artistic product has been created, of high-quality photography, inspired and mediated by great artistic masterpieces, which cannot fail to touch the hearts of all of us.

But “Divine Creatures” is also something else: it is the serious and meticulous technical and professional commitment of many months of work and the result of a profound respect for disability.

Antonello da Messina, Rosso Fiorentino, Titian, Caravaggio, Gherardo delle Notti and Cigoli are just some of the sources of inspiration for this initiative, yet it has gone beyond that.

One of the ten works selected for the exhibition is conserved in the Vatican Museums: *The Kiss of Judas* by Giuseppe Montanari, from 1918.

We have decided to display it alongside the photograph: original alongside original.

Yes, because the photographic image created is not only an artistic reproduction mediated with other techniques, but also the original and delicate fruit of many people’s love and artistic creativity. We find that same fond creative genius in the entire “Divine Creatures” initiative.

Pope Francis reminds us that «Jesus is the physician who heals with the medicine of love, for he takes upon himself our suffering and redeems it» (Extraordinary Jubilee of the Mercy, homily of 12th June 2016).

The answer is love: not the false kind, overly sentimental and pietistic, but the true kind, concrete and respectful. To the extent in which we are welcomed and loved, included in the community ... the true path of life is developed and we experience lasting happiness. This, we know, is valid to all ... Faith is a great life companion when it permits us to touch with our hand the presence of a Father who never leaves His creatures alone, in no condition of their life (Clementine Hall, audience of 21st October 2017).

Thanks therefore to those who have planned the initiative, to those who have supported it and to those who have succeeded in making it happen here in the Vatican Museums: Micol Forti, the Curator responsible for contemporary art; Roberto Pulitani, Architect at the Technical Services Department, who has prepared a highly effective display layout that immediately creates a dialogue for visitors with the works; Mons. Paolo Nicolini, Roberto Romano and Andrea Carignani, who always handle the organisational aspects that are behind initiatives of this kind.

And finally, Giulio Fossi, for his sensitive and passionate soul.

Barbara Jatta
Director of the Vatican Museums