Beat: Arts

THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LUCCA COMICS & GAMES AND UFFIZI MUSEUM GROWS

A. Carracci and W. Eisner side by side

Bologna, 01.11.2022, 10:18 Time

USPA NEWS - Lucca, October 29, 2022: A self-portrait of one of the founding fathers of world comics (also considered the inventor of the graphic novel), Will Eisner, has entered the Uffizi collection. For the first time, in exchange, a precious piece of the Uffizi collection dating back to the 17th Century, by Agostino Carracci, comes to Lucca Comics & Games.

This partnership between the famous Italian museum and the great international event dedicated to the Ninth Art started last year. In 2021, 52 self-portraits of the artists participating in the project of the Ministry of Culture's 'Comics in the Museums', were donated to the Uffizi. This year Lucca Comics & Games acquired from Denis Kitchen a Will Eisner self-portrait, in which he pictures himself together with one of his most famous creations, The Spirit.

In Doge's Palace, Lucca, visitors can see a caricature attributed to Agostino Carracci, a seventeenth century Bolognese painter who is heralded as one of the first masters of caricature, a graphic style that was a precursor to the comics of today. The self-portrait of Will Eisner will enter the Uffizi collection after Lucca Comics & Games 2022 closes.

This special exhibition was announced in Lucca in the presence of the Uffizi Galleries Director, Eike Schmidt, the Mayor of Lucca, Mario Pardini, the President of Lucca Crea, Francesca Fazzi and the Director of Lucca Comics & Games, Emanuele Vietina.

Uffizi Galleries Director Eike Schmidt: "In the seventeenth century, Cardinal Leopoldo de 'Medici, a great and unscrupulous collector, collected ancient works but above all contemporary art, self- portraits, drawings and sketches, without stopping in front of gender hierarchies. These works are now revered and studied in the museum. In its spirit, the Uffizi is open to the most illustrious examples of comics, a graphic form in all respects among the most representative of modern culture".

The Mayor of Lucca, Mario Pardini: "This renewal of the partnership between Uffizi and Lucca Comics is only the latest, definitive certification of comics as an art form. A path that leads to the definition of comics as "Ninth Art", a term which originates from the pop art of Lichtenstein and Warhol and crosses over to the comic contamination of Banksy's works. A link - between art and comics - which is nourished by a strong iconic value. The style of the most famous authors of the "Ninth Art" is often inspired by the painting of the past to create characters and situations that have now entered the collective imagination of today".

Francesca Fazzi, President of Lucca Crea: "The protocol signed between Uffizi and Lucca Crea will, once again this year, with significant and concrete acts, nurture the promotion of comics through an active synergy between our Festival and the prestigious Gallery. It speaks to the world of a Tuscany made of art and creativity open to confrontation and dialogue between the themes and languages of history and contemporaneity".

Emanuele Vietina, Director of Lucca Comics & Games: "It is an honor to continue this collaboration with the Uffizi Galleries. From 2020, in the darkest hour, the seeds were planted to think of new ways to enhance the Ninth Art, intermingling the comic works with the most classic artistic expressions. Thanks to the vision of our friend Eike Schmidt, we have worked to give space to comics in a

symbolic place of world culture, bringing self-portraits of some of the most important contemporary Italian cartoonists to the Uffizi rooms. And now Will Eisner, the Master who codified a language, that of the graphic novel, giving new shape to a revolution in storytelling through images. Knowing that his precious self-portrait will be exhibited thanks to the contribution of Lucca Comics & Games in one of the most famous museums in the world is a historic moment for the history of the Festival, for our community".

ABOUT WILL EISNER

Will Eisner was born on March 6, 1917 in Brooklyn, New York, as William Erwin Eisner. Upon his death, on January 3, 2005 from complications after an open heart operation, Eisner was now internationally recognized as one of the giants of sequential art, a term that he himself had coined. In a career that lasted seventy years and spanned eight decades - from the dawn of comic books to the advent of digital comics - Eisner was truly "the Orson Welles of comics", the father of the graphic novel. He broke new ground in the development of visual fiction and comic language and was the creator of characters such as The Spirit, John Law, Lady Luck, Mr. Mystic, Uncle Sam, Blackhawk, Sheena, and countless others. One of the most prestigious awards in the comic industry, the Eisner Awards, are named after him. Recognized as the "Oscars" of American comics, the Eisner Awards are presented annually in front of a lively audience during Comic-Con International in San Diego, the largest American comics convention. The self-portrait shown here, in which The Spirit draws its creator, is the most iconic image of Eisner, still used in the communication of the award named after him.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21810/the-partnership-between-lucca-comics-und-games-and-uffizi-museum-grows.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Filippo Ripa

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619