



**PALAZZO COLLICOLA  
OPENING OF THE NEW EXHIBITION SEASON**

**Inauguration Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.  
Palazzo Collicola, Piazza Collicola 1, Spoleto**

***Vita minore. San Francesco e la santità dell'arte contemporanea***, group exhibition curated by  
**Gianni and Giuseppe Garrera**  
from February 21 to June 2, 2026

***Agraria***, solo exhibition by Franco Troiani curated by Saverio Verini  
from February 21 to May 24, 2026

***Sculpture speaks louder than words***, solo exhibition by Barry Flanagan curated by Jo Melvin  
from February 21 to May 24, 2026

***Lirico Sperimentale. Manifesti d'autore***, a selection of original sketches of posters for the Teatro  
Lirico Sperimentale di Spoleto "A.Belli" curated by **Raffaella Clerici and Saverio Verini**  
from February 21 to June 2, 2026

The new exhibitions at Palazzo Collicola in Spoleto open on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. This cycle, which will last until early June 2026, covering the spring period, includes four new exhibition projects: *Vita minore. San Francesco e la santità dell'arte contemporanea* (Minor Life. St. Francis and the sanctity of contemporary art), a group exhibition curated by Gianni and Giuseppe Garrera; *Agraria*, a solo exhibition by Franco Troiani curated by Saverio Verini; *Sculpture speaks louder than words*, a solo exhibition by Barry Flanagan curated by Jo Melvin; *Lirico Sperimentale. Manifesti d'autore*, an exhibition featuring a selection of original sketches of posters for the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale di Spoleto "A.Belli" curated by Raffaella Clerici and Saverio Verini. With this series of events, Palazzo Collicola offers the public a journey that intertwines historical memory and contemporary sensibility, strengthening the dialogue between art and territory.

The ground floor of the museum will host the group exhibition ***Vita minore. San Francesco e la santità dell'arte contemporanea*** (Minor Life. St. Francis and the sanctity of contemporary art), organised to mark the eighth centenary of the death of St Francis of Assisi. Curated by **Gianni and Giuseppe Garrera**, the project offers a contemporary reinterpretation of the figure of the Saint, who was deeply connected to the Umbrian and Spoleto areas: Francis chose Monteluco, the mountain that rises in front of Spoleto, as a place of prayer and contemplation and, according to tradition, uttered the famous phrase 'Nihil jucundius vidi valle mea spoletana' ('I have never seen anything more joyful than my Spoleto valley'), which still attests to his special relationship with the place.

The exhibition retraces the radical and impractical example of St. Francis – his adventure and parable – through luminous fragments found in contemporary works of art. Given the impossibility of having direct contact with St Francis, only fragments of him can be found, like a broken vase to be put back together, set in special and authentic moments of contemporary research. The exhibition, conceived as an exchange of signs between historical memory and contemporary sensibility, is based on loans from the curators' private collections, the result of careful gathering and selection over the last twenty years, enriched by national and international loans and site-specific works created for the palace's historic spaces.

Starting from the concept of “minority”, understood as a challenge to society and a rejection of all its principles in order to “become minor” and serve others, the exhibition attempts to evoke and reinterpret the fundamental values of St Francis – absolute poverty, becoming minor, corporeality and nudity, abdication of the human in the face of animals, love for creatures – not through traditional images, but through the “example” of contemporary artistic practices divided into sections dedicated to different themes: the exclusive presence of the Gospel; the radical condemnation of every aspect of wealth; language as an instrument of control and power to be demolished; submission to nature and creation up to the glory of brotherhood with death. The exhibition also focuses with particular dedication on active holiness, founded on miracles, and on female privilege, with references to Saint Clare and cloistered life as a choice of introspection and resistance. Historicized artists such as **Alberto Burri, Gino De Dominicis, Jimmie Durham, Leoncillo, Yoko Ono, Giulio Paolini, Salvo, Anna Torelli**, together with others from subsequent generations such as **Luca Bertolo, Matteo Fato, Flavio Favelli, Cesare Pietroiusti, Tomas Saraceno, and Luca Vitone**, to name but a few, offer visitors new and evocative interpretations of Franciscan thought, transforming Palazzo Collicola into a space where history dialogues with the contemporary. Each room thus becomes a place of spiritual exercise, meditation, contemplation and wonder, where the aesthetic legacy of St Francis intertwines with contemporary artistic sensibility, offering an experience that renews the perception of the sacred and of living in the world against the world itself.

The Piano Nobile will host ***Agraria***, a solo exhibition by **Franco Troiani** curated by Saverio Verini, a project that coincides with the artist's 80th birthday and the 40th anniversary of **STUDIO A'87**, which he founded and which has played a fundamental role in the art scene of Spoleto and Umbria. The exhibition creates a dialogue between the essential materiality of the works – mainly made of wood and found objects – and the splendour of the historic furnishings, establishing a dialectical relationship between the works and the rooms of the Piano Nobile. The title, *Agraria*, refers to a vision that runs deep through Troiani's practice, evoking a industriousness linked to the land, its cycles and an idea of “making art” based on simplicity, method and continuity. The reference to the agricultural dimension does not take on an iconographic value, but rather constitutes an operating principle and ethical horizon: an attitude close to contemporary ruralism, far removed from consumerism and spectacle, based on sharing processes and constructive critical thinking. The Umbrian land emerges as the structural matrix of the work, traceable in the processes of creation and in the works' materials.

Although conceived as an anthological project, the exhibition does not follow a chronological order nor does it aim to systematise the artist's vast output. Rather, the aim is to present a targeted selection of works – a sort of “best of” – spanning from the late 1970s to the present day, including a new work created especially for the occasion.

The second floor of Palazzo Collicola will host the exhibition ***Sculpture speaks louder than words*** by **Barry Flanagan**, curated by **Jo Melvin**, the artist's first solo exhibition in Italy since his death in 2009. The project, realised thanks to the support and collaboration of **The Estate of Barry Flanagan and Plubronze**, presents a selection of works that illustrate the British artist's research, from his early experiments with heterogeneous materials – sand, rope, fabric, plaster, clay and metals, characterised by an innovative use of form, sound and light – to his figurative bronze sculptures. Trained at St. Martins School of Art in London in the 1960s, Flanagan explored the interactions between sculpture, sound and silence, conceiving artistic material as a multisensory experience. His

practice, close to Minimalism and Italian Arte Povera, combines technical rigour, experimentation with materials and poetic sensibility, incorporating natural elements, references to myth and symbolic forms.

The exhibition highlights how, for Flanagan, sculpture was a tool for connecting art and society, with works that dialogue – or “speak”, as the title suggests – with the space and the visitor through lightness, movement and sensory suggestions.

The room adjacent to the library will host the exhibition ***Lirico Sperimentale. Manifesti d'autore*** (Lirico Sperimentale. Artist Posters), curated by **Raffaella Clerici** and **Saverio Verini**. The project celebrates eighty years of activity by the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale “A. Belli”, one of the city's oldest and most prestigious cultural institutions, founded in 1947 and always central to the training and launch of young performers on the international opera scene. The exhibition presents a selection of original sketches and preparatory drawings, alongside their transposition into posters, retracing the visual history of the Sperimentale and the evolution of graphic language from the 1970s to the present day. On display are works by Emanuele Luzzati, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Toti Scialoja, Pietro Consagra, Ester Grossi and Gilberto Cappelli, all part of the institution's heritage, which have contributed to defining the visual identity of some of the theatre's most significant seasons. Through the poster as a meeting place between visual arts, music and theatre, the exhibition highlights the deep connection between the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale and the city of Spoleto, enhancing its historical and cultural role in the national and international opera scene.

## Biographies

***Vita minore. San Francesco e la santità dell'arte contemporanea*** includes works, documents and texts by: Vincenzo Accame, Mirella Bentivoglio, Luca Bertolo, Alain Bornain, Paolo Bufalini, Alberto Burri, John Cage, Cristina Campo, Ugo Carrega, Gea Casolaro, Ugo Celada da Virgilio, Laura Cingolani, Claudio Costa, Gino De Dominicis, Antonio Del Donno, Jimmie Durham, Matteo Fato, Flavio Favelli, Albino Galvano, Alessandro Gamba, Augusto Garau, Fabio Giorgi Alberti, Marco Giovenale, Francesco Gioacchini, Elisabetta Gut, Jannis Kounellis, Giovanni Korompay, Fabio Lapiana, Leoncillo, Jochen Lempert, Carla Lonzi, Claude Maillard, Miltos Manetas, Cristina Maulini, Olivier Messiaen, Elisa Montessori, Elsa Morante, Magdalo Mussio, Maurizio Nannucci, Gualtiero Nativi, Richard Nonas, Giancarlo Norese, Martino Oberto, Yoko Ono, Anna Maria Ortese, Giulio Paolini, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Luca Maria Patella, Cesare Pietroiusti, Lamberto Pignotti, Juha-Matti Pitkanen, Fabrizio Prevedello, Giustina Prestento, Giuseppe Pulvirenti, Domenico Purificato, Sergio Quinzio, Antonietta Raphaël Mafai, Mauro Reggiani, Max Renkel, Salvo, Tomas Saraceno, Alba Savoi, Greta Schödl, Augusto Strindberg, Alfonso Talotta, Michele Tocca, Anna Torelli, Mario Tozzi, Luca Trevisani, Luca Vitone, Alberto Ziveri.

**Franco Troiani** (Spoleto, 1946) is an artist born and resident in Spoleto, where in the 1970s he began experimenting with painting techniques ranging from figurative to geometric abstraction, gradually developing a personal post-futurist style. His first solo exhibitions, between 1972 and 1975, were held in Spoleto, Terni, Perugia and Rome, consolidating his presence on the Umbrian and national art scene.

In 1986, he founded STUDIO A'87, a research and experimentation space that became a point of reference for artists from the region and beyond. During his career, he participated in important international residencies and events, including the *Internationalen Pleinairs* (1988) in Potsdam. Over the years, Troiani has created murals, artist's books and site-specific installations, developing an autonomous and recognisable language, often characterised by the use of poor materials. Troiani's works are included in the permanent collection of Palazzo Collicola, where they have been displayed on several occasions, including the exhibition *Azioni e Rivelazioni* (2010). His work continues to be influential in Spoleto and Umbria, confirming his vitality in the contemporary art scene. Recent exhibitions include the solo show *Soprawivenza* (2022), curated by Jo Melvin at Spazio Viaindustriae in Foligno; the group exhibitions *Machismo* (2019), curated by Vittoria Bonifati, and *Archeologi* (2018), curated by Vittoria Bonifati and Jo Melvin, both at Villa Lontana in Rome.

**Barry Flanagan** (Prestatyn, Great Britain, 1941 – Santa Eulalia del Río, Spain, 2009) was an internationally renowned British-Irish artist. Born in Prestatyn, North Wales, he initially studied architecture before devoting himself to sculpture at Saint Martin's School of Art in London. His early works, from the 1960s onwards, often used unconventional materials such as sand, rope and fabric. These ephemeral constructions placed him within the conceptual movements of the time and marked his role as a key figure in the evolution of British sculpture. In the late 1970s, Flanagan began working with stone and bronze, while at the same time reconsidering the function of public sculpture. This shift led to the creation of his most iconic body of work, consisting of figurative representations of hares and other animals, predominantly in bronze. Often anthropomorphic, these sculptures convey a distinctive liveliness and irony typical of Flanagan's sense of humour. Flanagan's work continues to be widely exhibited internationally. He represented Great Britain at the 1982 Venice Biennale and has been the subject of major retrospectives at institutions such as Tate Britain and the Ikon Gallery. His sculptures are held in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.,

the Tate in London, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and the Stedelijk Museum in Ghent. His monumental bronzes continue to animate outdoor spaces throughout Europe and the United States.

The **Teatro Lirico Sperimentale di Spoleto 'A. Belli'** is an institution dedicated to the training and professional debut of young opera singers. Founded in 1947 by lawyer and musicologist Adriano Belli, the 'Sperimentale' operates through an international competition and a two-year course that integrates vocal training, stage preparation and theatre practice, culminating in the Spoleto Opera Season. Throughout its history, it has launched the careers of numerous internationally renowned performers, including Franco Corelli, Anna Moffo, Ettore Bastianini, Ruggero Raimondi and Mariella Devia, and has collaborated with directors such as Luca Ronconi, Ugo Gregoretti and Giorgio Pressburger. Also active in the promotion of new music and orchestral training, the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale is a European benchmark institution for opera teaching and dissemination.

The exhibition ***Vita minore. San Francesco e la santità dell'arte contemporanea*** is organised with:

The patronage of the Legislative Assembly of the Umbria Region



**Regione Umbria**

Assemblea legislativa

The contribution of Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Spoleto



And the contribution of Consorzio BIM



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The exhibition ***Sculpture speaks louder than words*** has been organised with the support and collaboration of:



THE  
ESTATE  
OF  
BARRY  
FLANAGAN

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The exhibition ***Lirico Sperimentale. Manifesti d'autore*** has been organised with the support and collaboration of:

