



City in Scarlet

A new exhibit at Palazzo Barberini brings new life to the color red. **Tiffany Parks** has the details.

Venice: today it's famous for its sinuous canals, its exquisite blown glass, and its dramatic Venetian gothic architecture. But in the art world of the Renaissance, Venice was known for one thing: color. As the Renaissance took wing in Florence, and quickly swept across the Italian peninsula, painters in and around the city by the lagoon emerged as masters of the chromatic arts.

The National Gallery of Ancient Art at Palazzo Barberini has recently inaugurated their latest exhibit, *Venetian Scarlet: Lotto, Savoldo, Cariani*. Six masterpieces—on display from such powerhouse museums as New York's Metropolitan, the Louvre in Paris, and Madrid's Prado—come together to illustrate, each in its own unique way, the mystique and allure of the color red. The Venetian painters used this passionate color to weave a dense visual and symbolic story, in which civic values, religious fervor, worldly suffering,

private devotions, and professional pride were all intertwined. In Renaissance Venice, red was the most prestigious color in art, and the science behind its creation was a jealously guarded secret handed down by painters, dyers, alchemists, and inventors.

The magnificent studies in red on display in the exhibit—masterpieces by Lorenzo Lotto, Giovanni Gerolamo Savoldo, and Giovanni Cariani—investigate what made the art coming out of Venice and its nearby islands during the first half of the 1500s so exceptional, aspects such as its iridescent brushstrokes, fluctuating undertones, and sensual tonalities. The works depict various traditional scenes, including portraits, biblical histories, and devotional paintings, that nevertheless present a reinterpretation of the classic motifs of other great Venetian masters, reworked in a completely free and independent style.

An Actor's Life

Also on at Palazzo Barberini is an exhibit dedicated to the life and work of Italian actor, playwright, director, and painter, Dario Fo, and his wife and artistic partner, Franca Rame. The exhibition tells the story of these two influential artists through 150 works, including drawings, paintings, tapestries, scripts, photos, puppets, mask, costumes, and props.



LORENZO LOTTO (VENEZIA, 1480-LORETO, 1556/1557) CRISTO PORTACROCE, 1526. OLIO SU TELA, CM 66X60. PARIGI - MUSÉE DU LOUVRE
LORENZO LOTTO (VENEZIA, 1480 - LORETO, 1556/1557) MATRIMONIO MISTICO DI SANTA CATERINA DI ALESSANDRIA, 1523. OLIO SU TELA, CM 189,3 X 134,3 - BERGAMO, ACCADEMIA CARRARA
DARIO FO ERI COSÌ QUANDO TI HO CONOSCIUTA, 1992. OPERA DEDICATA A FRANCA RAME. TECNICA MISTA SU CARTA © COMPAGNIA TEATRALE FO-RAME