

## Reunited and It Feels So Good

A marvelous set of tapestries are reunited for the first time in over a century.

**Tiffany Parks** has the details.

Of all the dozens of mediums used by artists throughout the centuries, the tapestry perhaps gets the least attention. And yet, tapestry making may just be the most complex, painstaking, and ultimately spectacular art form of all.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, 20 tapestries depicting the life of Old Testament patriarch Joseph were commissioned by Cosimo I de' Medici to hang in the majestic Sala de' Dugento in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio. Between 1545 and 1553, three great Mannerist artists, Agnolo Bronzino, Jacopo Pontormo, and Francesco Salviati, created the designs, which were then transformed into more than 400 square meters of woven fabric under Flemish master weavers Jan Rost and Nicolas Karcher, a process that continued for over two centuries.

Joseph is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating figures of the Old Testament, from being sold into slavery by his jealous brothers to his rise to power as an interpreter of the Pharaoh's dreams. The extraordinary refinement of the tapestries and the intricate composition of the subjects bring these stories vibrantly to life. Tragically, in 1882 the collection was divided at the behest of Italy's new royal family, when half were brought to the Quirinal Palace in Rome.

On occasion of the 2015 Expo in Milan, the cities of Rome, Florence, and Milan have teamed up to reunite the spectacular tapestries for the first time in over 130 years. Funded by the Bracco Foundation, the project will see the entire collection on display from 17 February in the Hall of the Corazzieri in Rome's Quirinal Palace, before being transferred to Milan and then on to Florence later in the year (p53).

