

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Palazzo Reale - Milan

February 3 - June 14, 2026



THE MACCHIAIOLI

I Macchiaioli exhibition is among the most **significant and comprehensive retrospectives** devoted to this movement in recent decades. Curated by the three leading Italian scholars on the movement: Francesca Dini, Elisabetta Matteucci and Fernando Mazzocca, the exhibition brings together over one hundred works.

Supported by the Matteucci Institute of Viareggio, the exhibition includes **prestigious loans from major Italian museums**, such as the Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori, the Accademia di Belle Arti, the Pinacoteca di Brera, the Uffizi Galleries, Palazzo Pitti, as well as private collections.

I Macchiaioli offers a **compelling journey into a highly original chapter of Italian art**, inviting audiences to rediscover the cultural vitality and historical significance of the period through the works of its protagonists.



Vincenzo Cabianca
Ai bagni di Viareggio (Sul mare), 1866
Olio su tela, 103,2 × 168,3 cm, Courtesy Robilant + Voena

THE MACCHIAIOLI

The «poetics of truth» through a unique movement

The Macchiaioli represent the Italian expression of the broader “poetics of truth” that emerged during the 19th century. Italian art underwent a profound transformation, both in form and subject matter, driven by the desire to depict reality with sincerity and immediacy.

Rejecting academic conventions as well as Neoclassical idealization and Romantic subjectivity, **artists sought to engage directly with contemporary life.** This shift marked the rise of *Verismo*, a movement grounded in the truthful representation of the present. Within this evolving cultural landscape, **the Macchiaioli developed a distinctive artistic language that embodied these principles with particular clarity and conviction.**



Giovanni Fattori *Garibaldi a Palermo*, 1860-1861 Olio su tela,
cm 88 × 132 cm
Private collection

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Verismo and European Realism

The development of the Macchiaioli must be understood within a **century shaped by major political and social transformations**. Their work reflects a broader **European Realism**, responding to the profound changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of the working class, and the rise of the bourgeoisie.

In Italy, these conditions fostered a renewed attention to lived experience and contemporary society. The Macchiaioli stood at the forefront of this evolution, offering **the most coherent and innovative interpretation of Verismo**. Their art translates historical necessity into visual language, capturing the complexity of modern life and affirming the central role of truth in artistic practice.



Gerolamo Induno, *L'arrivo del bollettino di Villafranca*, 1861-1862
Olio su tela, 89,7 × 115 cm, Collezione Fondazione Cariplo Gallerie d'Italia, Milano

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Masters, techniques and works

The Macchiaioli embraced the ideals of Giuseppe Mazzini alongside the influence of French Positivism, viewing art as an instrument of social and moral renewal during the years of Italian unification. The **exhibition features masterpieces by key figures** such as Silvestro Lega, Giovanni Fattori, Vincenzo Cabianca, Odoardo Borrani, Telemaco Signorini, Giuseppe Abbati, and Raffaello Sernesi.

Active in Tuscany from the 1850s, and often associated with the Caffè Michelangelo in Florence, **these artists developed a revolutionary approach based on direct observation and the innovative use of the “macchia”**, redefining the relationship between art and reality.



Giovanni Fattori Soldati francesi del '59, 1859 circa
Olio su tavola, 15,5 × 32 cm
Collezione privata

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Masters, techniques and works

The “macchia” was not merely a pictorial method but a new way of seeing. It emphasized contrasts of light and shadow, color and tone, preceding the definition of form through line. **This approach aligned the Macchiaioli with contemporary European research**, particularly the **Barbizon School** in France, whose artists painted landscapes en plein air with attention to atmosphere and light.

However, the Macchiaioli achieved **a greater formal synthesis, anticipating key developments of modern art**. Their work affirmed the ethical and expressive value of truth, positioning their research as a crucial step toward artistic modernity and justifying the importance of a major exhibition project dedicated to their legacy.



Telemaco Signorini Pascoli a Castiglioncello, 1861
Olio su tela, 31 × 76 cm
Collezione privata

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Exhibition path

The exhibition unfolds across nine sections, tracing the intense yet brief experience of the Macchiaioli between 1848 and 1872. It begins with the pivotal year 1848, highlighting their **formation in Florence**, where admiration for Dante and Lorenzo the Magnificent coexisted with a deep engagement with medieval and Renaissance heritage.

The narrative then moves **to the present of their time**, focusing on their involvement in the Second War of Independence, both as participants and as witnesses through their art. Their contribution to the first National Exhibition in Florence in 1861 is also explored, marking a decisive moment in presenting their **innovative language to the public**.



Francesco Saverio Altamura, *La prima bandiera italiana portata in Firenze nel 1859*, 1859
Olio su tela, 51 × 75 cm, Torino, Museo Nazionale del Risorgimento Italiano

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Exhibition path

The final sections examine the **diversity of subjects explored by the Macchiaioli**, from landscapes painted in their favored locations to intimate portraits and scenes of everyday life that convey the dignity of ordinary people.

The exhibition culminates with **powerful masterpieces** such as *In vedetta* by Giovanni Fattori and *Studio di testa per gli ultimi momenti di Giuseppe Mazzini* by Silvestro Lega, expressing a **critical reflection on the unfulfilled ideals of the Risorgimento**.

The concluding section is dedicated to Milan, where the movement was rediscovered and appreciated by collectors, and where its legacy inspired Luchino Visconti's film *Senso*, reaffirming the enduring relevance of the Macchiaioli.



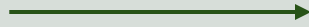
Giovanni Fattori, *La signora Martelli a Castiglioncello*, 1875 circa
Olio su tavola, 20 × 35 cm, Livorno, Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Exhibition path



1848. Great Ideals and
The Defence of Rome



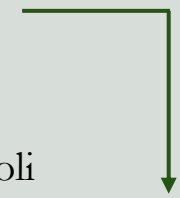
Florence and the
Identity Of the Nation
From the Age of Dante
to the Renaissance



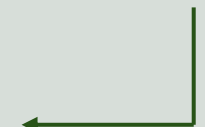
Italian Unification and
the Contemporary
Epic



1861. The Macchiaioli
and the National
Exhibition



The Pathways of the
“Macchia”



The Portrait. reflection
of a new humanity



Elegy of the everyday



Death of Mazzini and
the Risorgimento
betrayed



Milan and the Rediscovery of
the Macchiaioli between
collecting and cinema.
Toscanini and Visconti

THE MACCHIAIOLI

Exhibition views



I MACCHIAIOLI

Exhibition views



I MACCHIAIOLI

Exhibition views



I MACCHIAIOLI

Bookshop



I MACCHIAIOLI

Bookshop



Exhibition Fact Sheet

Artworks & Multimedia	The exhibition features a selection of around 100 works including paintings and sculptures. The images in this proposal are indicative. The precise checklist will be confirmed once exhibition dates and scale of venue are confirmed.
Size	500-1000 m²
Availability	2028
Rental period	12-16 weeks
Producer	24 ORE Cultura
Curators	Francesca Dini, Elisabetta Matteucci and Fernando Mazzocca



24 ORE Cultura – Gruppo il Sole 24 ORE

Viale Sarca 223, 20126 Milan, Italy

www.24orecultura.com

Head of Exhibitions and International Relations

Paola Cappitelli

paola.cappitelli@24orecultura.com

Exhibitions and International Relations

Francesca Cavola

Francesca.cavola@24orecultura.com

Exhibitions and International Relations

Myrtille Montaud

ext.myrtille.montaud@24orecultura.com