

## SFORZA CASTLE MUSEUMS' HIGHLIGHTS

### PIETÀ RONDANINI | MICHELANGELO MUSEUM

At the former Spanish Hospital; Courtyard of Arms - Ground floor

1. Michelangelo Buonarroti, **Pietà Rondanini**, 1553-1564

### MUSEUM OF ANCIENT ART, Ducale Courtyard - Ground floor, Room II

2. Bonino da Campione e collaboratori, **Arca di Bernabò Visconti**, 1360 approximately- 1385/1386 approximately

### MUSEUM OF ANCIENT ART, Ducale Courtyard - Ground floor - Room VII o Sala delle Asse

3. Leonardo Da Vinci – **Sala delle Asse**

### MUSEUM OF ANCIENT ART, Ducale Courtyard - Ground floor - Room XV o Sala degli Scarlioni

4. Agostino Busti detto il Bambaia, **Statua giacente di Gaston de Foix**, data 1515/1522

### MUSEUM OF FURNITURE AND WOODEN SCULPTURES, Ducale Courtyard - First floor - Room XVII

5. Bottega milanese, **Stipo Passalacqua**, wood, ivory, gilded bronze, silver, rock crystal, semi-precious stones, oil painting on copper, 1613

### MUSEUM OF FURNITURE AND WOODEN SCULPTURES, Ducale Courtyard - First floor - Room XVI

6. Giuseppe Maggiolini, **Cassettone con decorazione a cineseria**, wood, gilded bronze, marble top, 1773 approximately

### PICTURE GALLERY, Ducale Courtyard - First floor - Room XXIII

7. Andrea Mantegna, **Madonna in gloria e i santi Giovanni Battista, Gregorio Magno, Benedetto e Gerolamo**, 1497,

### ART GALLERY, Ducale Courtyard - First floor - Room XXVI

8. Giovanni Antonio Canal called Il Canaletto, **Il Molo verso la Riva degli Schiavoni con la colonna di San Marco e Il Molo verso la Zecca con la colonna di San Teodoro**, 1735 approximatel

### MUSEUM Of DECORATIVE ARTS, Rocchetta Courtyard - Second floor, Room XXIX

9. Marcantonio Mazzoleni (?-1632), **Compasso geometrico militare di Galileo Galilei**, before 1606

### MUSEUM Of DECORATIVE ARTS, Rocchetta Courtyard - Second floor Room XXXI

10. **Vetrina Giò Ponti**, Giò Ponti Collection, 20th century

### MUSEUM Of DECORATIVE ARTS, Rocchetta Courtyard - Second floor, Room XXXII

11. Bottega romana, **Valva di ditico con le Marie al sepolcro**, beginning of the fifth century.

**MUSEUM OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, Rocchetta Courtyard – First floor Room XXXVI**

12. **Studio di Fonologia Musicale**, Milano, 1955-1983, deposito 2008, Rai – Radio Televisione Italiana.

**MUSEUM OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, Rocchetta Courtyard - First floor Room XXXVII o Sala della Balla**

13. Ioannes Ruckers, **Virginale doppio**, Anversa, 1600 approximately,

**MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS, Rocchetta Courtyard - Second floor, Room XXXVII o Sala della Balla**

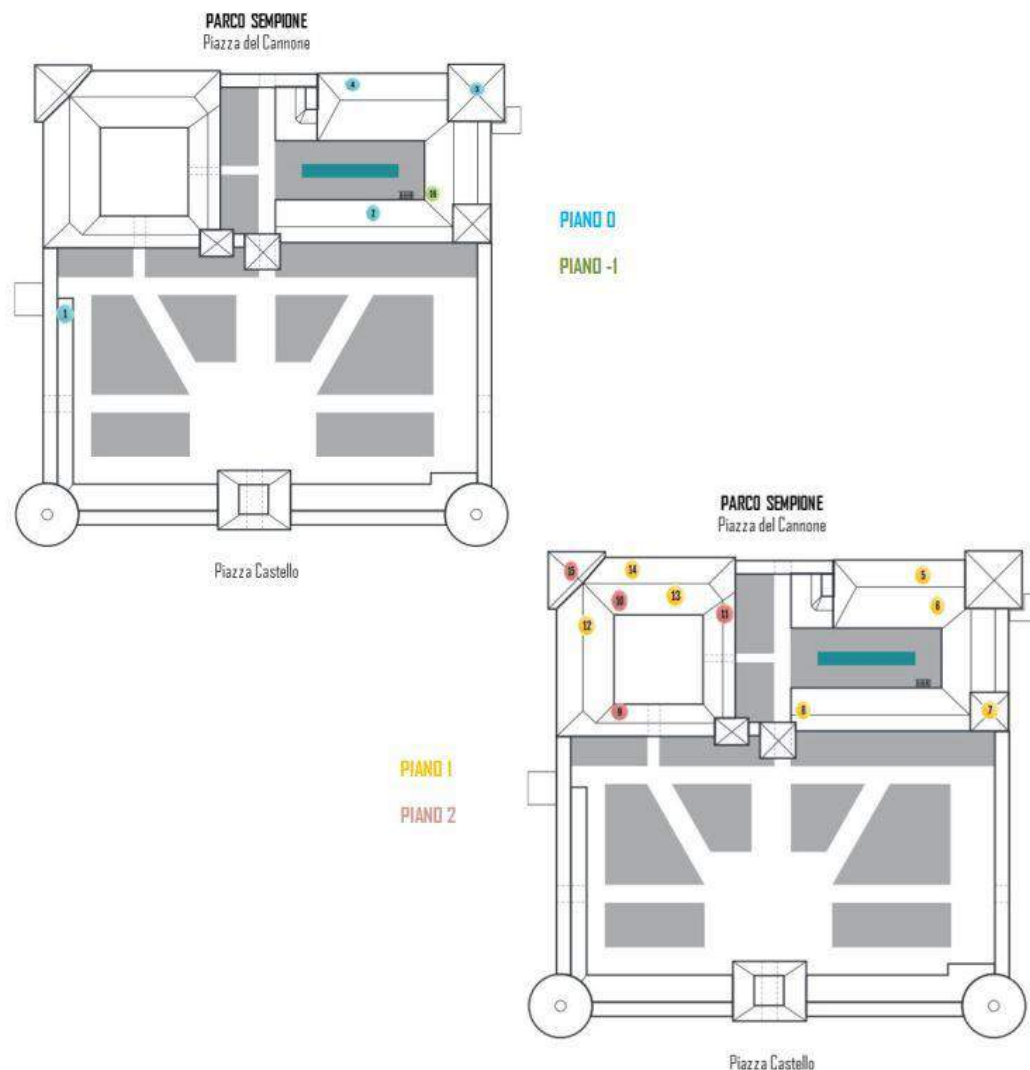
14. Benedetto da Milano on a design by Bartolomeo Suardi known called Bramantino, **Arazzi Trivulzio** (cycle of 12 tapestries), 1504 -1509

**MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS, Rocchetta Courtyard - Second floor**

15. **Collezione Bellini-Pezzoli Vetri contemporanei - Sala Castellana**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, Underground , Ducale Courtyard Prehistory and Protohistory Section**

16. **Prima Tomba di Guerriero**, Sesto Calende (VA), late 7th century BC



**PIETÀ RONDANINI | MICHELANGELO MUSEUM (Courtyard of Arms) - Ground floor**

1. **Michelangelo Buonarroti (Caprese, Arezzo, 1475 - Rome, 1564), Rondanini Pietà, 1553-1564, marble, 196 x 70 x 73 cm, provenance: acquisition, 1952**

Last unfinished work by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), the Pietà Rondanini is a testament and meditation of the old artist on the death and salvation of the soul. In this work the sculptor renounces the perfection of the body and its heroic beauty, transforming the dead Christ into an emblem of suffering. The position of the bodies of Mary and Jesus at different heights seems to suggest the interweaving of several moments of the story of Christ: deposition from the Cross, burial, even Resurrection, in the dissolution of the body of the Son in the maternal embrace. Left unfinished for the death of Michelangelo, the Pietà is testimony of the last years of the genius.

From 2 May 2015 you can see the Pietà in the new museum, set up in the ancient Spanish Hospital in the Cortile delle Armi of the Castello Sforzesco.

**MUSEUM OF ANCIENT ART (Ducal Court) - Ground floor****Room II**

2. **Bonino da Campione and assistants, *Equestrian monument of Bernabò Visconti*, marble with gold and polychrome traces, circa 1360-1385/1386**

The harmonious composure of the monument, the quality of the sculptural details and the profusion of the decorative elements, where the gold leaf almost entirely covers the marble, make this work a masterpiece of Lombard sculpture. Bernabò Visconti (1323-1385), seated upon a powerful steed holding a cudgel is accompanied by the allegorical figures of Justice and Strength. The group, carved from a single block of Candoglia marble, was commissioned by Bernabò himself before 1363. Upon his death, his nephew, Gian Galeazzo ordered the completion of the work and the inclusion of a sarcophagus sculpted by craftsmen from Campione and had the various parts assembled in the Palatine church of San Giovanni in Conca. The work has been most credibly attributed to Bonino da Campione in his late period, and the

artist was responsible for the design and execution of the figurative elements of the sarcophagus of Cansignorio della Scala (Verona, Scaligere tombs), brother of Beatrice della Scala - consort of Bernabò, whose tomb is thought to be the monument on exhibit in room II of the museum (inv. n. 858), also from San Giovanni in Conca.





## Room VIII

### 3. Sala delle Asse

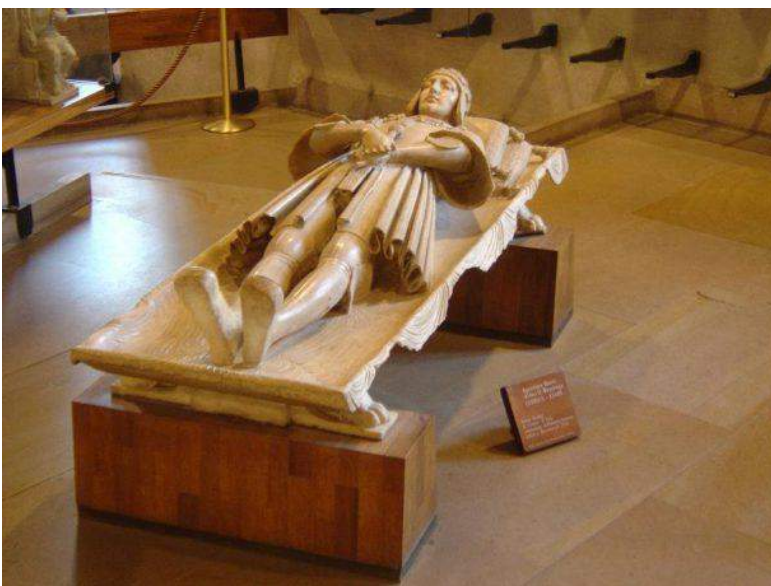
Exceptional testimony of the presence of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) at the Sforza court, the Sala delle Asse is the most illustrious of the Castle. Located on the ground floor of the north-east corner tower, the Falconiera, the room owes its name to the wooden cladding that was used in the Sforza age to make some rooms less cold and more comfortable.

Decorated with frescoes with heraldic motifs for Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the hall received the famous Leonardesque decoration under Ludovico il Moro in 1498. If some letters between the Moor and the great artist made it possible to know the existence of a decoration by Leonardo, the dark centuries lived by the Castle under foreign domination seemed to have hidden forever the painting cycle.

The discovery of significant traces of painting in the vault, followed by extensive restoration carried out by Ernesto Rusca in 1902, who reinterpreted the fifteenth-century decoration recreating a whole in extraordinarily vivid colors. The traces of monochrome discovered on the walls, on the other hand, mistakenly attributed to the Spanish era, were hidden by the preparation of those years.

In the fifties of the twentieth century the color of the vault was attenuated, without however canceling the interventions of the first century, while the monochrome fragments with roots and rocks on the north and north-east walls of the room were attributed to the hand of Leonardo and left visible in the set up of the BBPR studio.

Since 2013, the Sala delle Asse has been the subject of a new restoration, which has revealed new monochrome fragments on the walls.



## Room XV or Sala degli Scarlioni

### 4. Agostino Busti known as il Bambaia, *Statue of a reclined Gaston de Foix*, Carrara marble, 1517-1522

The reclined figure, the Gisant, is part of a sepulchre commissioned by Francesco I, King of France, in honour of Gaston de Foix, who died in the battle of Ravenna in 1512, while still in his early 20s. The monument was destined for the Milanese church of Santa Marta, a church favoured by the filo-French aristocracy, in what today is piazza Mentana. A document dating to 1517 refers to the

"superb sarcophagus", but just a few years later the work was interrupted due to end of French domination. In the 17th century and again during the 19th century many of the sepulchral elements were dispersed and subsequently acquired by private and public collectors (Milan, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana; Turin, Palazzo Madama; London, Victoria and Albert Museum). Following the acquisition of the marbles formerly belonging to the Arconati family, from 1990 the Sforza Castle has been in possession of the most notable nucleus of the monument, including the series of apostles, the allegorical figures and the narrative reliefs, which splendidly portray the military leader's acts of valour (room IX, XV). The reclined statue of Gaston de Foix is recognised as the master work of Agostino Busti, the most authoritative exponent of the Lombard renaissance. The virtuosity of the marble surface carvings is confined to the decorative areas, while the craftsmanship of the sculptor emerges from the serene and classic composure which finds its expression in the face of the French hero.

### MUSEUM OF FURNITURE AND WOODEN SCULPTURES (Ducal Court) - First floor



#### Room XVII

5. **Milanese workshop, *Passalacqua Cabinet*, wood, ivory, gilded bronze, silver, rock crystal, semi-precious stones, oil on copper, 1613**

The extraordinary work is a call by the customer Quintino Lucini Passalacqua, Canon of the Como Cathedral, to meditate on the moral reflection that "when reason is guided by the senses things do not end well." This is developed across the top of the cabinet, which when opened reveals: precious ivory statuettes of the five senses, sculpted by Guillaume Berthelot; the paintings of biblical scenes by Morazzone and, above all, the small bronze at the center showing reason dragged away five wild animals. An allusion to the danger posed by the prevalence of the senses.



#### Room XVI

6. **Giuseppe Maggiolini, *Chinoiserie Dresser*, wood, gilded bronze, marble top, circa 1773**

The dresser with its wavy and ornate forms typical of the Rococo is adorned with bronze ornaments representing theatrical masks and Chinese figurines and accentuating the drawers, front corners and legs. The bright, oriental style scenes of the central medallions are taken from the drawings of the young Andrea Appiani, author of works used by Maggiolini and his workshop to decorate their furniture. With a discerning use of local and

oriental woods, the cabinet-maker created a piece of furniture of rare lustre. The much admired piece was donated to the collections in 1895.



PICTURE GALLERY (Ducal Court) - First floor



Room XXIII

7. **Andrea Mantegna (Carturo Island, Padua, 1431- Mantua, 1506), *Madonna in glory and Saints John the Baptist, Gregorio Magno, Benedetto and Gerolamo, 1497, tempera on canvas, purchase 1935 for civic subscription by Luigi Alberico Trivulzio.***

A painting by Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506) is preserved in the Pinacoteca del Castello, a great protagonist of Renaissance figurative culture. Court painter of the Gonzagas from 1460, he left in Mantua the Camera degli Sposi, a cycle realized in 1474 that made a very strong effect on Galeazzo Maria Sforza, as documented by documents. The altarpiece, made for the high altar of the church of the Olivetani of Santa Maria in Organo in Verona, bears on the scroll held by the angel below the signature of the painter and the date 15 August 1497, which refers to the feast of the Assumption, protector of the church (A. MANTINIA PI / A [N] GRACIE / 1497 15 / AUGUSTJ; Andrea Mantegna painted in the year of grace 1497, 15 August).

Arrived in the Castello from the Trivulzio Collection in 1935, it is a work of great interest. Here the Paduan master creates a vast composition in which the Virgin sits in a luminous almond surrounded by cherubs. The absence of the throne alludes to Mary Assumed into heaven. The four figures of Saints, respectively John the Baptist, Gregory the Great, Benedict and Jerome are seen from below up, solemn and monumental. The angels below are depicted in front of an organ, which corresponds to the emblem of the Veronese church. The scene is framed by two lush fruit-laden trees.



Room XXVI

8. **Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, *The Pier towards Riva degli Schiavoni with the Column of Saint Mark, oil on canvas, before 1742***

The acquisition of the large canvas and its companion piece *The Pier Towards the Mint with the Column of Saint Theodore* in 1995 represented a leap forward in the quality of the works of the Venetian

School held by the Art Gallery. The two views offer an insurmountable narrative synthesis and fix, in harmonious equilibrium, the virtuoso like representation of the lagoon city's famous monuments and the affable portrayal of a population busily going about their daily lives. To attain this level of realism, the artist relied only in part on the mechanical assistance of the camera obscura, managing to mentally reconstruct the scenes. The elegantly carved and gilded wooden frames have accompanied the canvases from the time of their commissioning in 1742. The perfect state of conservation and the certainty of its author solidly place the two city landscapes among the masterpieces conserved in the Sforza Castle.

## MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS (Rocchetta) - Second floor



## Room XXIX

**9. Galileo Galilei's Geometric and military compass, gilded copper, Padua, 1606**

The geometric compass was designed by Galileo Galilei in Padua in 1597 and built by Marcantonio Mazzoleni.

It is composed of two arms, on which numerous "lines" are engraved, converging at the opening pivot, which is equipped with a hole for a plumb line, by a quadrant marked with a variety of scales and by a "forked" clamp and

a slider that allows for the leg in which it is threaded to be lengthened and for the compass to be positioned vertically.

This instrument of calculation allowed its users to quickly make more than forty different types of complex geometric and arithmetic calculations and exploits the theory of proportions to solve various civil and military problems. It could be used for instance, as a gunner's quadrant, to redraw a map to scale or to calculate exchange rates.

In 1606 Galileo published 60 copies of a treatise describing the uses of the instrument, *The Uses of the Geometric and Military Compass*, which were provided along with the compass itself.

Of the sixty original compasses only 5 examples are known to have survived. As well as the compass exhibited at the Sforza Castle's Museo di Arti Applicate (Museum of Applied Arts), the others can be seen at the Museum of the History of Science in Florence, the Istituto Geografico Militare - also in Florence, the University of Pisa and in Cambridge, England.



## Room XXXI

### 10. Giò Ponti showcase

Among the porcelain preserved in the Museum there are some decidedly representative works produced by the Richard Ginori Manufacture in the 1920s and 1930s. These are pieces made under the artistic direction of Gio Ponti, the brilliant protagonist of the renewal of Italian decorative arts. This architect and designer succeeded in an apparently irreconcilable operation, creating unique pieces and at the same time starting a series production. In this way works of identical form were born but differently decorated,

while the same decorations were made in different colors, or used on different forms.

Among these objects the cist with a blue background and gold decorations stands out, in which a triumph of love and a triumph of death is celebrated. Love and Death appear on carts drawn by winged horses. The cylindrical vase rests on golden feet surmounted by winged figures at rest. The garland-adorned cover has a grip in the form of a winged figure, depicted standing and leaning against a stone.

Designed by Gio Ponti and by the sculptor Libero Andreotti, who designed the winged figures in 1928, the cista bears an extremely elegant decoration with cupids and friezes on top, cornucopias and below. This and other objects of the same production were very successful.

The "blue cist" is a gift from the Richard Ginori Society to the Museum.



## Room XXXII

### 11. *Marys at the Sepulchre*, ivory, 5th Century AD

The bas-relief tablet is among the finest examples of late Roman ivories. It is a justly famous piece because it is one of the first ivory diptychs with religious content and one of the earliest known representations of the Holy Sepulchre, which appears below the images of two Evangelists: Luke, symbolised by a bull, and Mathew, by an angel. In the scene below, the women, united in mourning for the dead Saviour, encounter a character, who represents an angel or the risen Christ. The presence of only two evangelists suggests the existence of a second piece, now lost.

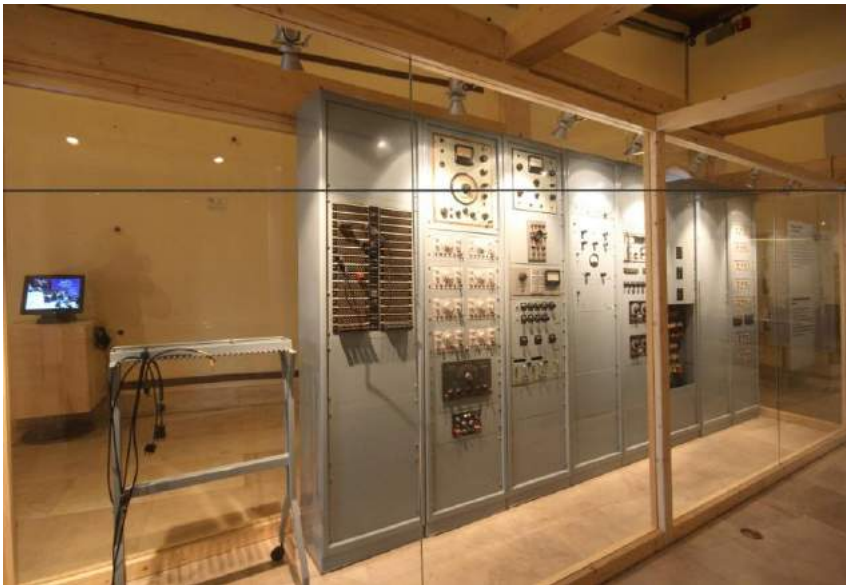
The doors of the building behind the women are decorated with three scenes from the Gospels, the Resurrection of Lazarus, Zacchaeus climbing the tree to see Jesus and Christ teaching the crowd. The attribution of such an early date,

the 5th century AD, stems from stylistic considerations. The refined workmanship, the late Roman culture of the sculptor, and the extraordinary softness of carving, places the origin of the piece in one of the capitals of the Western Empire, probably Rome.

Once belonging to the Trivulzio Collection, the piece was purchased in 1935 by the City of Milan.



**MUSEUM OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS (Rocchetta) - First floor**



**Room XXXVI**

**12. The RAI's Studio of Musical Phonology in Milan, in use from 1955 to 1983, setup and equipment dating to 1968, in holding for RAI Milan since 2008.**

RAI's Studio of Musical Phonology in Milan, designed by the physicist Alfredo Lietti, was officially inaugurated in 1955 in Corso Sempione with the assistance of the musicians Luciano Berio and Bruno Maderna, and remained in use until 28th February 1983.

The studio had two main functions: the production of experimental electronic music and packaging comment and soundtracks for radio and television. Transported to a room of the Museo degli Strumenti Musicali in 2008, the studio contains five main types of equipment. A section of "Oscillators" that had the purpose of producing electronic sounds includes sine wave generators, square wave generators, impulse generators and white noise generators. The second group contains instruments that allowed for the manipulation of the above mentioned sounds. The third group includes systems to mix the signals that had been generated and manipulated. The fourth contains the magnetic tape recording equipment, while the last is made up a system of loud speakers through which the music could be listened to. Some of the computer terminals allow for the tracks to be re-listened to and for the consultation of studio archive data.



**Room XXXVII or Sala della Balla**

**13. Double Virginal, Joannes Ruckers, Antwerp, circa 1600, poplar, fir, oak, beech, printed paper. Provenance: purchase - Natale Gallini Collection (1961)**

By Joannes Ruckers, a member of a famous family of Flemish harpsichord makers, the double virginal falls under the category of a "moeder met het kind" (mother and child), in which a larger instrument contains a smaller removable one whose strings are half the length of the "mother's" and thus plays at an octave higher. The two virginals could be played by two musicians contemporaneously or the smaller virginal could be placed above the "mother" so that its keys would move the jacks on both sets of strings.

The surfaces are decorated with printed paper, while the lid is painted with a scene depicting the leisure activities of Flemish high society, from deer hunting and boat trips to the idle pursuits of the arts and reading. Under a pergola a lady is playing a virginal on whose lid is in turn depicted a musical scene.



#### Room XXXVII or Sala della Balla

#### 14. Benedetto da Milano after a design by Bartolomeo Suardi known as il Bramantino, Tapestry Representing December, 1504-1509

Location: Rocchetta, 2nd floor, Museo degli Strumenti Musicali, Room XXXVII (Balla Room)

The Month of December represents one of the most interesting of a cycle of twelve tapestries commissioned by Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, executed by

Benedetto da Milano and designed by the painter Bramantino. Dominated by the sign of Capricorn, the scene is set in a large room; in the background is a winter landscape overlooked by a majestic castle. At the centre of the composition is a cauldron in which salami and sausages are being stirred by a woman whilst a man is attempting to embrace her. In the foreground, to the left, a man is inflating a pig's intestine, making a balloon in which a child seems very interested.

The scene in the background focuses instead on an old man who is holding a sickle and whose feet are bound by a woollen thread. The old man, representing the deity Saturn, is being worshipped by a group of farmers.

In his design, Bramantino skilfully exploits and reinterprets ancient literary and iconographic sources. December is the month in which pigs are slaughtered; however the tapestry refers to the practice while avoiding bloody images. The central theme of this series of masterpieces is the continuous and cyclical flow of the seasons, described by an activity specific to each month. The Tapestries, each of which leads into the next, focus on the close relationship between man and nature. The inscription on each tapestry also describes the characteristics of the month. When translated, December's reads: "December allows us to revel at home, for the birth of the lambs and trapping of fowl, it allows us to salt the pork and also gives idle children things to do."



#### Sala Castellana

#### 15. Bellini-Pezzoli Collection Contemporary glass

The Bellini-Pezzoli collection consists of forty-five glass works created starting from the 1950s.

The collection includes designers such as Mario Bellini, Gianfranco Frattini and Roberto Sambonet who have chosen glass as a medium to create true works of art, freeing them from the idea that it is a material used only as a decorative element.

The attention of the collector Sandro Pezzoli was able to address not only Italy and the artists who worked for the Murano workshops, but also to the

new schools, opening up to works created in the United States and Australia: the collection therefore stands out for the ability to show the new very recent orientations in the art of glassmaking and thanks to it the collection of the Castle exposes glasses of the XXI century from all over the world.

The Bellini-Pezzoli collection was granted to the Sforzesco Castle Applied Art Collections in 2016 in a five-year deposit by the owner Sandro Pezzoli.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (Ducal Court) – underground Ducale Courtyard****Prehistoric and Protohistoric Collections****16. First Tomb of a Warrior, Sesto Calende (Varese), late 7th century BC**

The so-called First Tomb of the Warrior was discovered accidentally in March 1867 by a farmer ploughing his field. Almost two meters long, the tomb was covered by an approximately one and a half meter thick tumulus of cobbles. Due to the considerable value of the grave goods, it is assumed that the tomb belonged to a high ranking individual. These artifacts include parts of a chariot, such as the iron rims that were fixed to the wooden wheels, a pair of bits and a horse's harness. The chariot, of Greek origin, is often found in the princely tombs of Piceno and Etruria and demonstrates how the ruling classes of Golasecca appropriated the symbols of power typical of other cultures. Indeed, among the grave goods were also a helmet in bronze, of the type found in Piceno, Slovenia and the Veneto; a

short iron sword, as used in Switzerland, Eastern France and southwestern Germany; the head of an iron spear and a pair of archaic Greek anatomically shaped greaves in bronze sheet, probably imported from Etruria.

The highly varied origin of the objects is probably due to the custom of ceremonial gift giving among leaders of the various communities. The tomb also contained an embossed bronze sheet *situla* decorated with figurative motifs and fragments of a funerary urn.