

PERCORSI DEL MAGICO A BOLOGNA

selection on the occasion of the exhibition

La Grande Magia

Opere scelte dalla Collezione UniCredit

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LA GRANDE MAGIA AT THE CIMITERO MONUMENTALE DELLA CERTOSA

The symbolic universe of the Certosa is rich in esoteric elements: sphinxes, oil-lamps, caducei and the best-known symbol of Eternity, the Ouroboros, the serpent that bites its own tail. The history of the place itself is also filled with episodes of haunting or fantastic stories, of the dead speaking to the living through the monuments and... of their spirits. Finally, the Bolognese cemetery contains the tombs of sorceresses and psychics, including Anna D'Amico, the 'most renowned clairvoyant of the 19th century', who ran a 'magnetic medical surgery' in which 'the Sleepwalker' gave consultations for many years. Anna's fame was so great that she has two sepulchral monuments in the Certosa!

1. Guidi Tomb – 1st Cloister and Entrance

The monument is dedicated to Giovanni Guidi, who died in 1818. The work is a typical example of the painted memorials executed during the Jacobin period, although the iconography in the Egyptian style is very rare. The rich symbology alludes to the moral qualities of the deceased and includes the Ouroboros (the serpent that bites its own tail), a symbol of eternity..

2. Legnani Tomb - Third Cloister

The painting is dedicated to Girolamo Legnani († 1805). The use of the Egyptian style reflects the diffusion of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's 18th century models, and many of the symbols present are typical of Masonic culture.

3. Giuseppe Ceri, Quirico Filopanti - Cloister VII

The periodical *Ehil' cha'l scusa...* of 1844 imagined in this Cloister the engineer

Giuseppe Ceri who, on a night in which the 'dull silver moon illuminates the walls of the Charterhouse', is surrounded by bats that 'are gradually closing in on his top hat'. In *Aneddoti bolognesi* (1929) the protagonist is Quirico Filopanti: in search of will-o'-the-wisps, he is tricked by the caretaker Marcellino Sibaud, who 'began to move around in various directions' with a lantern.

4. Olindo Guerrini (1845-1916) aka Lorenzo Stecchetti - Columbarium's Room

The simple memorial tablet dedicated to the Guerrini family commemorates one of the most important figures in Bolognese satirical culture. In his *Canto dell'Odio*, dedicated to a lovely lady who refused to offer him her favours, Olindo Guerrini imagines uncovering her tomb and cursing her, ending with 'Here shall you ever die a new death, oh accursed / slowly being pierced with pins / and with your shame, my vengeance / between your eyes I seal'.

5. Frassetto Tomb - Campo Carducci, boundary wall along the canal

The monument is dedicated to the famous anthropologist Fabio Frassetto (1876-1953) and his son, killed during the Second World War. The sculptor Farpi Vignoli has portrayed them engaged in an eternal dialogue on death, to which the skull held by the father alludes.

6. Giosue Carducci (1835-1907) - Campo Carducci

In 1879 the future winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature composed the ode *Fuori alla Certosa di Bologna*, in which he retraces the age-old history of the place. At the end the dead address the living in the following words: 'Oh! Love one another in the sun! It shines on the life that passes the eternity of love'.

7. Capuchins Enclosure - Room II

After 1801 some monastic cells were reutilised to display a number of skulls, each identified with a label. This unusual feature made an impression on many foreign travellers. One of the most celebrated was Lord Byron, who relates how the caretaker showed him one, exclaiming: 'This was Friar Desiderio Berò who died at the age of forty, one of my dearest friends. I asked his fellow monks for his head and they gave it to me. [...] Here it is with its excellently preserved teeth. He was the wittiest companion I have

ever known'. Subsequently these spaces were used to house tombs and monuments.

8. Anna Bonazinga and Pietro D'Amico - Cloister VIII, cloister annexed to the Main Cloister

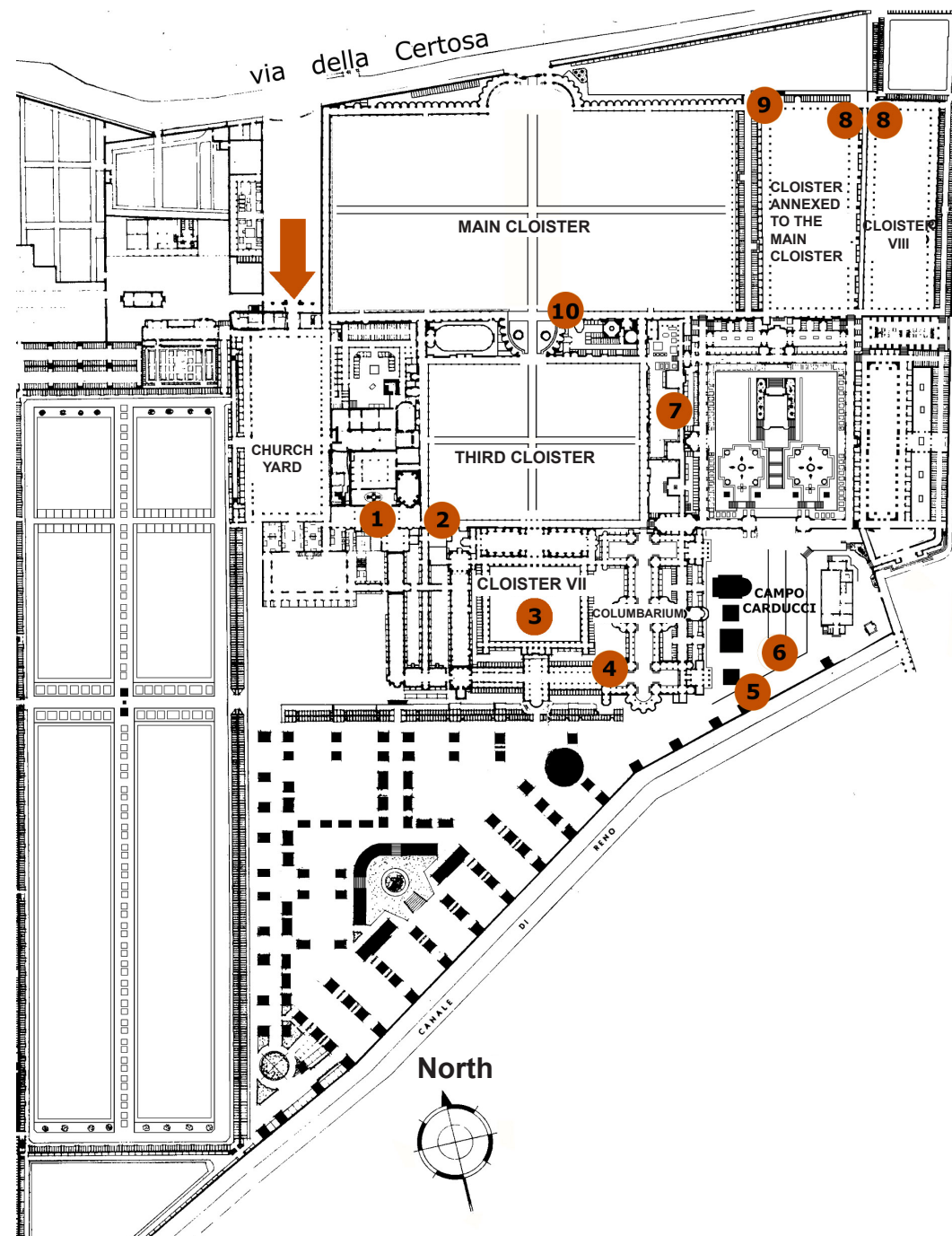
Husband and wife were well-known enthusiasts for Mesmerism, as can be seen from the numerous adverts they placed in national periodicals and newspapers of the time. Anyone who consulted the 'Sleepwalker' would be comforted with 'necessary information and advice, and the whole thing will remain in the greatest secrecy, so that each person will feel able to be sincere and hope to obtain a good result'. Anna D'Amico (1830-1906) is the only Bolognese to have two monuments in the Charterhouse.

9. Francesco Albergati - Cloister annexed to the Main Cloister

In 1845 Bernardo Gasparini published *Due notti alla Certosa di Bologna*. In the poem the author describes some nocturnal encounters with the ghosts of famous fellow citizens. One of them is Marchese Francesco Albergati, who expresses his eager desire to clear up the rumours about his wife's 'suicide', hoping that his tragic account will show that he had nothing to do with the matter.

10. Colbran | Rossini Tomb - Main Cloister

Jules Janin, a celebrated French art critic of the 19th century, visited Bologna in 1838. There he met the composer Gioacchino Rossini, to whom he addressed these words: 'This morning I met your most fanatical admirer: an entertaining fellow, the caretaker of the Certosa, who in fact is waiting for the melancholy place to take on a different appearance and glory when you finally take up citizenship in the Bolognese abode of the dead'. Rossini replied with a laugh: 'Ah! I touch wood and come to you. Good heavens! I could even reach an agreement with that gentleman my admirer: just have the patience to wait, don't be in a hurry'. He concluded with a wink: 'but I would be inclined to play for time...'



All the details of the tour are available in Italian at www.certosadibologna.it