



ARTS & CULTURE

Ancient Greek, Roman Statues Reappear After Years in Storage

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Visitors to Rome can now see one of the most important private collections of ancient Greek and Roman marble **sculptures**.

The 90 works from the Torlonia Collection opened this week in the newly rebuilt Palazzo Caffarelli, overlooking the Roman Forum.

Among the works is a marble **fountain** that was made in ancient Greece. Experts on ancient Rome believe the fountain once stood in the **garden** of the general and statesman Julius Caesar. At the time, it was already hundreds of years old.

The 620-piece Torlonia collection is believed to be the greatest private collection of classical art in the world.

It was begun more than a century ago by Prince Alessandro Torlonia. He found many of the pieces on the grounds of his family's Roman properties. Wealthy from a business relationship with the Vatican, the family purchased other well-known sculpture collections.

In 1884, the Prince built his own museum to show off his collection. When the museum closed in 1976, the pieces went into storage.

“The reappearance of such a...collection is a very important event,” said art historian Salvatore Settis. “When I saw them for the first time it was very emotional because I knew most of those pieces from books, but I had never seen them.”

The Torlonia family chose Settis to help with the difficult job of deciding which works should be shown to the public.

Anna Maria Carruba helped prepare the statues for the show.

“Many of these pieces were already **restored** from (the year) 1600 onwards. We didn’t need to work on the structure of the statues but only on the surfaces, cleaning them,” she said.

Italy’s culture minister Dario Franceschini says the works “take your breath away.” He spoke to reporters on Monday.

He added that it was **unfortunate** that COVID-19 safety restrictions would limit the number of people who can visit.

The show will stay open until June 29, 2021. It is the result of public and private cooperation among the culture ministry, the city of Rome, the Torlonia Foundation and the Roman jeweler Bvlgari.

Show organizers said there had been plans to bring the artworks to other countries, but the coronavirus **pandemic** has left those plans uncertain.

I’m Susan Shand.

The Associated Press reported this story. Susan Shand adapted it for Learning English. George Grow was the editor.

Words in This Story

sculpture – *n.* a three-dimensional piece of art that is made from stone or metal

fountain – *n.* an outdoor, stone structure that water flows through

garden – *n.* an outdoor area of flowers and shrubs

restore – *v.* to return something to its original condition

unfortunate – *adj.* not having good luck

pandemic – *n.* a contagious disease that moves from country to country
