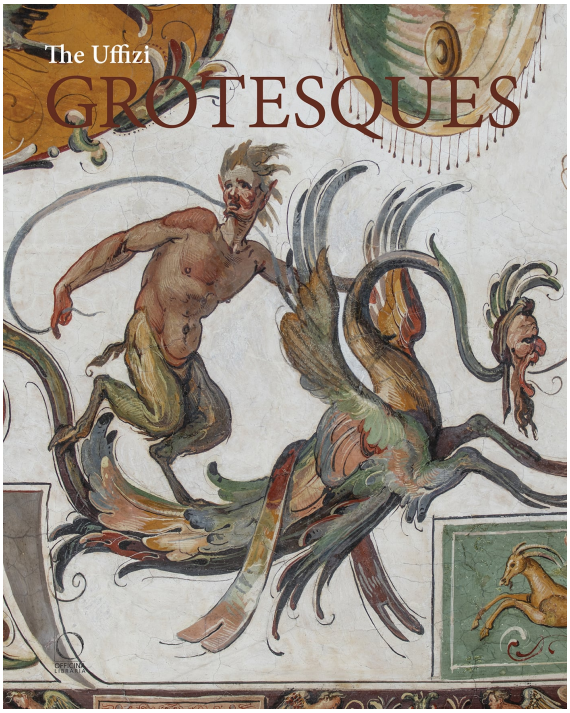
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The Uffizi Grotesques

A Guidebook

Valentina Conticelli

ISBN	9788833673509
Publisher	Officina Libraria
Binding	Paperback / softback
Territory	World excluding Italy and France
Size	250 mm x 200 mm
Pages	128 Pages
Illustrations	125 color
Price	£25.90

- Contains numerous high quality illustrations in colour
- Describes 16th century decoration of the Uffizi Galleries, one of the most famous museums in the world, which hosts millions of visitors every year
- The grotesques are a feature that greatly fascinates visitors of the Uffizi Galleries

The grotesques that adorn the Gallery of Statues and Paintings, the original name for the Uffizi's corridors, belong to different periods. The most imaginative and most artistically admirable, however, are the earliest ones, contrasting with the classical severity of the antique statues in the Medici collection there displayed. Commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici in 1581, they occupy the 46 bays of the eastern corridor (about 150 metres), then a simple loggia, but closed the following year probably to protect the new frescoes.

The cycle celebrates the marriage between Francesco I and Bianca Cappello, which took place in 1579. The celebration of the Grand Ducal couple and the wish for offsprings explains the abundance of erotic themes, often depicted through ingenious iconography. The playful aspect, the pursuit of the marvellous and the monstrous prevail. The figurations move between great fantasy and allusiveness, originality and licentiousness, according to typical grotesque canons.

Valentina Conticelli is an art historian at the Uffizi Galleries since 2006; she is an expert in the history of the collections and iconology of the Medici family. Among her latest publications are the large volume dedicated to the*Grotesques of the Uffizi* (2018) and the catalogue of the exhibition *Eleonora di Toledo and the invention of the Medici court in Florence*, co-edited with Bruce Edelstein (2023).

Publish date 11th Jan 2027