

Angela Cerasuolo

The founding of the Capodimonte Museum in 1957 and the creation of its Conservation Laboratory: scientific conservation/restoration in Naples in the context of postwar Italy.

The lecture will deal with the birth of the Capodimonte Museum, which was inaugurated in its present location on May 5, 1957.

Since the early 19th century, the 'modern' art collections had been housed in the Palazzo degli Studi, today's MANN (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli), along with the archaeological collections. After the end of the World War II, the Soprintendente Bruno Molajoli had the opportunity to shape his project of transferring them in the Royal Palace of Capodimonte, which became available after the end of the Savoia monarchy.

The new conservation and scientific laboratories that were set up on this occasion according to advanced standards, and the restorations carried out in this period are illustrative of the state of the art at the time in Italy.

Molajoli consciously positioned himself within the international context; he invited the most qualified and well-known restorers of the time to work in Naples in the new laboratory. The standards used in carrying out the interventions and the level of control and assistance offered by the scientific laboratory will be the subject of my presentation. On the basis of a discussion of selected illustrative works of art among those whose restoration we have again carried out in recent years, the lecture throws light on one museum laboratory at such an important time in the development of conservation science, highlighting the progress and contradictions of those decisive years.