

CORTEMPORANEA

Never too young to make a difference

Pietro Ruffo

May 8 – October 29, 2022

On May 8, 2022, the House Museum Palazzo Chigi Zondadari opens to the public, promoted by **Flavio Misciattelli**, president of the **Palazzo Chigi Zondadari Foundation**, who wanted to return the Palace and the artworks it houses to the community.

“Returning Palazzo Chigi Zondadari and the works in its collection to the community reflects the family’s commitment to preserving its masterpieces, which trace the artistic history of Siena from the 14th century to today,” says **Flavio Misciattelli**. “Opening to contemporary art and artists marks a new season of commissions, as was the case for the Chigi Zondadari family, aiming to establish a vibrant and lasting relationship between present and past, where mutual references and inspirations weave a new way of living and understanding art.”

“One of the main objectives of this administration is to highlight and celebrate the beauty of this city with every possible cultural project,” explains the **Mayor of Siena, Luigi De Mossi**. “So, together with the Misciattelli family, we considered the possibility of returning to the community one of the palaces that made Siena’s history. **Palazzo Chigi Zondadari** can become, while respecting the tradition it represents, a true meeting point between past and present, opening up to contemporary art and young artists who travel the world through their work.”

Commissioned by **Cardinal Antonfelice Zondadari** (1655–1737) and his brother **Bonaventura** (1652–1719), first Marquis Chigi Zondadari and founder of the dynasty, the Palace - family residence since 1724 - was the last to be built in Piazza del Campo, in a prominent location near Chiasso Largo.

The Palace, as it appears today, features the typical Baroque-Neoclassical Roman architecture of the 18th century, designed by **Antonio Valeri** (1648–1736), last pupil of **Gian Lorenzo Bernini**, called upon to modernize and expand pre-existing medieval structures acquired by the Chigi at the end of the 1600s.

It is a linear structure, with five levels of windows, an inner courtyard, and a graceful main staircase.

The **piano nobile**, now reopened to the public, is the most interesting part, with its sequence of salons and galleries redefining the rectangular layout of the Palace. The frescoed ceilings, the noteworthy art collection, and the wall decorations in three rooms with Venetian leather hangings named “corame” (1684–1687) - particularly valuable and wear-resistant - offer a faithful glimpse into the wealth and prestige of the Chigi Zondadari family’s patronage.

The interiors are further enriched by works of renowned painters, especially **Placido Costanzi** (Rome? 1702 – Rome, 1759), pupil of **Francesco Trevisani**, who followed the style of Carlo Maratta and Benedetto Luti.

Costanzi was commissioned by Cardinal Antonfelice Zondadari to paint frescoes depicting episodes from the lives of **Pope Alexander VII** (born Fabio Chigi) and the Cardinal himself.

Another painter, **Marco Benefial** (Rome 1684 – 1764), pupil of **Bonaventura Lamberti**, also worked on various paintings.

In the 19th century, **Francesco Nenci** (Anghiari, 1782 – Siena, 1850) completed the decoration of the rooms.

A rich collection of artworks, archaeological finds, paintings, and sculptures - including the **bust of Alexander VII by Gian Lorenzo Bernini** - bears witness to the Chigi Zondadari family’s attention to art and beauty.

On the occasion of the **House Museum’s opening**, the **CORTEMPORANEA** project was launched. This initiative transforms the Palace’s courtyard into an exhibition space for site-specific works by Italian and international artists, invited by **Flavio Misciattelli** to freely interpret the space.

The first artist involved is **Pietro Ruffo**, who created ***Never too young to make a difference*** - a title borrowed from one of the most iconic slogans of the Fridays For Future movement - dedicated to the younger generations and their commitment to driving change in global social and environmental policies.

The exhibition opens with a large hand-painted ceramic amphora, over two meters tall. On the inner courtyard wall, **video projections** filled with characters interact with the symbols of the Contrade. The show continues up the stairs into the **House Museum**, where **globes** and **smaller vases** are displayed.

Past and future meet through youthful figures playing with the architectural elements of the building itself, creating animations that immerse the viewer in a compelling and engaging space.