



David Hockney meets Fra Angelico at the Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella

*A dialogue between antique and contemporary
on the occasion of the exhibition Fra Angelico at Palazzo Strozzi and the Museum of San Marco*

Firenze, September 11 2025 – From 26 September 2025, Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella will present in its historic Florentine spaces *Annunciation II, After Fra Angelico* (2017), a monumental work by the renowned British artist David Hockney: a direct dialogue between one of the most important masters of contemporary art and Fra Angelico, the central figure of the major exhibition taking place simultaneously at Palazzo Strozzi and the Museum of San Marco.

David Hockney (Bradford, UK, 1937) is regarded as one of the greatest living artists, a leading figure on the international scene from the 1960s to the present day. Painter, draftsman, and tireless experimenter, he has renewed the figurative language with works ranging from Pop Art to his most recent digital explorations.

The work *Annunciation II, After Fra Angelico* – displayed in the sacristy frescoed by the Florentine Gothic artist Mariotto di Nardo at the historic headquarters in Via della Scala 16 in Florence—is a contemporary reinterpretation of the famous *Annunciation* frescoed by Fra Angelico around 1440 in the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence. Within a large painting over 2 meters wide, Hockney applies his unique style to reimagine in reverse perspective a masterpiece such as Fra Angelico's *Annunciation*, which he had known since childhood thanks to a poster hanging in the corridor of his elementary school. The result is both homage and challenge: a tribute to the Angelican subject while at the same time a break from Renaissance perspective conventions.

The choice of venue highlights a profound historical connection: when the Dominican friar Fra Angelico painted his *Annunciation* at San Marco, the Dominican community of Santa Maria Novella had already been active for centuries. Founded in 1221 in Florence, **Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella** is the world's oldest pharmacy, with more than 800 years of uninterrupted activity. Its heritage in the art of apothecary is deeply intertwined with the history, figures, and social fabric of Florence, in a continuous alchemy of stories and marvels. From formulas preserved in the manuscripts of Dominican friars to fragrances that have developed over centuries, every preparation reflects an ancient knowledge that has renewed itself while preserving authenticity, bearing living witness for over eight centuries to Italian craftsmanship throughout the world.

Today, Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella embodies that cultural and spiritual heritage, making natural the encounter between Dominican tradition and a contemporary outlook, into which Hockney's work is seamlessly inserted. The display in dialogue with Mariotto di Nardo's frescoed sacristy creates a bridge across historical epochs: his frescoes narrate the Passion, the ultimate expression of the Incarnation announced in Fra Angelico's *Annunciation*, to which Hockney responds with his visual research. The exhibition context thus connects past and present, tradition and innovation, underscoring the mission of Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella to enhance Florentine heritage as a living and relevant legacy.

The installation will be **open to the public** free of charge from 26 September 2025 to 25 January 2026 inside the historic first operational headquarters of Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa



Maria Novella on Via della Scala 16 in Florence: a space where, for eight centuries, knowledge, art, and fragrance have been preserved.

“Enterprise is culture,” emphasizes Carlo Pesenti, President of Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella and CEO of Italmobiliare. “On one hand, businesses are custodians and interpreters of an intangible heritage of values, traditions, and identity. On the other, companies play an important role in enhancing, promoting, and supporting culture. For more than 800 years, Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella has embodied this duality, and on this occasion renews its role as guardian of both tradition and innovation, a heritage of Florence and a symbol of Made in Italy worldwide, offering the public an experience that weaves together historical memory, contemporary art, and Florentine allure.”

“With the display of this work by David Hockney at the Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella,” declares Arturo Galansino, Director General of Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, “we emphasize how the art of Fra Angelico continues to speak to the present. The encounter between a Renaissance master and one of the leading painters between the 20th and 21st centuries is testament to the universal power of his images, capable of generating new meanings in dialogue with the great contemporary masters.”

The exhibition at Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella is jointly produced by **gres art 671** and **Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi**. gres art 671 – currently hosting the group exhibition *de bello. notes on war and peace*, exploring perceptions of wars and conflicts through the works of more than 30 artists – is the new art space based in Bergamo, promoted by Fondazione Pesenti, which develops exhibitions and events, installations and workshops, fostering a new vision of the interaction between art and the city, in support of a culture of community.

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