

MUSEO VINCENZO VELA

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HOUSE-MUSEUM

Opening hours

January–May
October–December
10 am–5 pm

June–September
10 am–6 pm

Sundays
10 am–6 pm

Closed on Mondays

Closed
1 January,
24–25–26 December

Open
Easter Monday, Whit Monday,
6 January, 1 May, 1 August,
15 August, 1 November,
8 December

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MONUMENTAL PLASTER-CAST GALLERY
NINETEENTH-CENTURY COLLECTIONS
TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS
PANORAMIC GROUNDS





THE MUSEUM

Villa Vela, the house-museum today run by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture, was donated with its collections to the Swiss State in 1892 by the painter Spartaco Vela (1854–1895), son of the better known Vincenzo Vela (1820–1891), one of the greatest 19th European sculptors and a leading exponent of Realism in sculpture. The villa was officially designated the «Museo Vela» in 1898 and thus became the first museum in the Italian part

of Switzerland. Surrounded by a splendid garden, Villa Vela is considered the most important historic artist's residence in Switzerland and one of the most significant in Europe. The interior was renovated (1997–2001) by the renown architect Mario Botta, whereas the display of the permanent collections was recently reorganized (2015).



THE COLLECTIONS

In addition to Vincenzo Vela's collection of original plaster casts, exceptional in terms of quality, which assembles the original plaster models of almost all of his sculptures, the museum houses important other collections: preliminary models made out of terracotta and plaster, a picture gallery, the antique library, a fine series of drawings and remarkable set of period photographs. Moreover, there are the

legacies of Vincenzo's painter son Spartaco – mostly his own paintings – and of Vincenzo's elder brother Lorenzo (1812–1897), a refined animal sculpture artist. The latter's legacy includes models, marbles of his own production, as well as his outstanding personal collection of Lombard and Piedmontese paintings.

THE PRESENTATION

The aim of the new presentation is to bring back to the audience's attention the main intent of the original layout conceived by Vincenzo Vela himself. The huge central octagonon – a kind of sacred space – was already the focus of the villa during Vela's lifetime. All of the sculptor's most famous works are grouped in theme-based rooms spread around the central salon. A selection of paintings taken

from the family gallery evokes the different tastes of the family members having collected painting, whereas drawings and preliminary sketches, prints and period photographs testify of the different stages of a sculpture's genesis. Temporary exhibitions are regularly held in the villa and in the park. A rich programme of cultural events enriches the museum's offer.

