

WNY *La Voce di New York*

— *america Oggi* 1988 —

Editor in Chief: Giampaolo Pioli

The First Italian English Digital Daily in the US

English Editor: Grace Russo Bullaro

≡ ENGLISH EDITION NEWS NEW YORK U.N. PEOPLE ENTERTAINMENT ARTS LIFESTYLES FOOD & WINE TRAVEL BUSINESS SPORTS ITALIAN EDITION



Travel

June 12, 2026

World Monuments Fund Opens an Office in Milan

The organization's engagement in Italy began during the catastrophic 1966 floods in Venice and Florence



Italian Hours

Lucy Gordan



The Museum's facade. All photos courtesy of ESSECI

At the end of May the World Monuments Fund (WMF), headquartered in Manhattan’s Rockefeller Center, announced the opening of its first office in Milan, Italy. The announcement coincided with the launch of this office’s first project: the revival of the Golden Room in Milan’s Poldi Pezzoli Museum. Work started on June 8 and the Museum will reopen on September 15.

“Italy is where the history of World Monuments Fund began, and it continues to be central to some of our most important projects today. For me, cultural heritage is something alive and deeply human, capable of preserving memory, identity, and meaning across generations,” said Fiorella Ballabio, Executive Director of World Monuments Fund in Italy. “In an era where everything seems increasingly fast-paced and intangible, its value becomes even more vital. Opening a dedicated office in Italy represents a natural and significant step, allowing us to be closer to the communities, institutions, and artisans who care for our heritage every day, working alongside them with care and sensitivity. Our responsibility is simple: to protect what we inherit and pass it on to future generations with even greater awareness, strength, and beauty.”



The Golden Room until recently

World Monuments Fund’s engagement in Italy began during the catastrophic 1966 floods in Venice and Florence. Italophile Colonel James Gray (1909-94), an electrical engineer stationed at Rome’s US Embassy, and WMF’s founder, quickly mobilized international technical support and funding to aid both cities. Through more than 30 projects, the World Monuments Fund played a critical role in stabilizing the cities’ historic buildings and artworks, while expanding local participation in conservation and establishing approaches that shaped how heritage emergencies have since been addressed internationally.

Since the 1960s, World Monuments Fund has committed more than \$23.5 million to 84 projects throughout Italy, spanning archaeological sites, synagogues, cathedrals, museums, and cultural landscapes—with landmark conservation campaigns especially in Rome, Florence, and Venice. Among its most impressive projects have been the *Galleria Carracci* in the *Palazzo Farnese* (2011-15), the Temple of Portuno (2006-13), The Temple of Victorious Hercules in the 1990s, *Santa Maria Antiqua* in the Roman Forum, and the Arch of Janus, all in Rome, and the *Scuole Grandi* in Venice.



The Golden Room in 1883

“This new chapter builds directly on World Monuments Fund’s deep experience in Italy and reaffirms our long-standing commitment to protecting the world’s cultural heritage,” said Bénédicte de Montlaur, President and CEO of World Monuments Fund. “Establishing a permanent presence in Milan strengthens our ability to develop relationships with Italian partners and build significant projects at major historic sites. We see this office as both a recognition of Italy’s central role in the history of conservation and a strategic step to build our future in this country and around the world.”

The Golden Room at the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan is a centerpiece of nineteenth-century museographic innovation conceived by the collector Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli. Designed as a unified architectural and artistic environment for the display of his Renaissance masterworks, the museum pioneered the period-room concept—a model that later influenced institutions such as the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and The Frick Collection in New York.

The Golden Room was severely damaged during Allied bombing in 1943 and further altered by postwar interventions. The World Monuments Fund is partnering with the museum to recover the Golden Room’s original proportions, architectural unity, and decorative program, reuniting dispersed elements and revealing concealed features for the first time since World War II.

 Share on Facebook

 Share on Twitter

 



Lucy Gordan

Italian Hours

Former editor at the American Academy in Rome and at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, with journalistic accreditation in Italy and the Vatican, I'm culture editor of the US monthly Inside t...