



MAV Museo della figurina

A “museum of wonders”: half a million curiosities of the world, a journey through memory and fantasy.

Museo della Figurina



The Museo della Figurina was born out of the passionate collecting work of Giuseppe Panini, founder in 1961, together with his brothers Benito, Franco Cosimo, and Umberto, of the famous sticker company of the same name. Throughout the years Giuseppe Panini collected hundreds of small colour prints, and in 1986 this extraordinary collection became a museum, located in the Panini factory buildings.

In 1992 Giuseppe Panini and the company decided to give the museum to the municipality of Modena – as the capital of modern stickers and trading cards, the latter city was considered to be the museum's most suitable site. The museum is situated in the charming Palazzo Santa Margherita and has been part of Fondazione Modena Arti Visive since 2017.

Besides trading cards and stickers proper, the collection comprises other items akin to those in terms of technique and function, such as old small prints, matchboxes, letter seal stamps, paper money, menus, pocket calendars, picture card collection albums published by companies or created by collectors following their own taste and fantasy, as well as other collectibles.

One of a kind in terms both of quantity and quality, thanks to the rare character of many items kept in its collections, the museum preserves, inventories, and catalogues these collections according to international standards specific to the material in question, thus becoming a point of reference for researchers in this field.



After walking through an evocative “tunnel of wonders” the visitors enter the exhibition room, which contains six display “wardrobes” conceived as so many supersized albums that can be browsed through thanks to eight pull-out side panels.

Precursors: recurring iconographic themes from ancient prints to contemporary picture cards and stickers

Chromolithography: the invention of chromolithography and the process leading from the initial sketch to the printed trading card

Origin and Spread: trading cards, from the French beginnings in the second half of the nineteenth century to the Italian adventure of the prize competitions in the 1930s

Liebig: the most famous trading-card collection in the world

More Than Just Trading Cards: cigarette cards, pocket calendars, letter seal stamps, menus, place cards, hotel luggage labels, and other minor collections

Modern Trading Cards: post-World War II sports trading cards and albums

Every display structure or “wardrobe” develops a specific theme that is both linked to the others and complete in itself, presenting the viewer with original prints and items. There are 2,500 pieces on display, while the total of the pieces kept by the museum is around 500,000. This room grants visitors a thoroughly original glance onto the history and customs of the last 150 years.

Services



Along with the display of the permanent collection, a 12-meter-long window hosts temporary exhibitions dedicated to various subjects which change with each show – science fiction, old advertisements, astrology and myth, biodiversity, etc. Check the programme at www.fmav.org/museo-della-figurina/

The Museum also organises conferences, screenings, and meetings on the topics of the temporary exhibitions as well as on specific themes regarding the practice of collecting.

The Museum has a bookshop. It also offers access, upon reservation, to its specialised library and archive. Accessibility is guaranteed for people with disabilities. For each temporary exhibition, guided tours are organised periodically.

The Museum enriches its collections by accepting big and small donations. The works and objects donated are preserved through high-standard conservation practices and are made known to the public through exhibitions and publications.

Workshops



The Museo della Figurina offers workshops and edutainment activities for children, teenagers, and adults. These workshops are led by trained educators of the FMAV Edu Department; they aim to deepen the visitors' understanding of the Museum's collections, as well as to spark their curiosity and interest.

Through the richness and diversity of the images presented and the topics addressed, the Museum represents no less than a visual encyclopaedia of nineteenth- and twentieth-century knowledge, while offering an original starting point for a reflection on contemporary issues. The educational activities reflect, therefore, the variety of themes present in the collections, from History to emotions, from animals to alphabets, from Nazi and Fascist propaganda, and Colonialism, to scrapbooking. Workshops generally consist in a guided tour of the exhibitions followed by activities intended to deepen the visitors' knowledge through practice and experience. These activities take place in spaces of the museum specifically conceived for such workshops.

FMAV – Museo della Figurina

Palazzo Santa Margherita
Corso Canalgrande 103, 41121 Modena



tel. (during the museum opening times):
(+39) 059 2032919 | biglietti@fmav.org
www.fmav.org/museo-della-figurina/

Admission to the museum is included
in the price of the ticket to the current exhibition

For opening times and special openings,
please check our website: www.fmav.org

Getting Here

By Car

Motorway: Autostrada A1
Milano/Bologna. Exit at Modena
Nord then follow directions
to the city centre

Car Parks

Ex Amcm, via Carlo Sigonio (free)
Ex mercato ortofrutticolo,
via Ciro Menotti (fee-paying car park)
Novi Park, Viale Berengario (fee-paying car park)
Piazzale Tien An Men (free)



By Train

Modena is located on the
Milan-Piacenza-Parma-Bologna as well as
on the Verona-Mantua-Modena railway lines.
The Museum is within walking distance from the train
station. Exit the station, walk down Viale Crispi, then
Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, Corso Cavour, and finally
Corso Canalgrande. From the station you can also
take one of the buses available (lines 4, 7A or 11)
and get off at the 'Canalgrande Biblioteca' stop

Bike Sharing

Opposite Palazzo Santa Margherita, you can find
a 'C'entro in bici' bike-sharing station

Precursors

This section showcases historical engravings, original moulds, and reproductions of prints that have influenced the iconography of trading cards. These prints, which appeared in Europe in the fifteenth century, were made with techniques such as xylography (woodcuts) and chalcography (copper-plate engraving).

The works in this section have been selected and reproduced from the oldest and most representative ones in the museum's collection, and they are organised according to the classification of popular prints evolved by Achille Bertarelli. Prints were originally produced for religious purposes. Over the centuries, they became more and more secular, emancipating themselves from their original function. They focused on satire and chronicle, and above all on the diffusion of knowledge, a function which was to make the world of trading cards a specifically encyclopaedic one.

The ancient collection

The deity

The world and its beings I

The world and its beings II

The human being I

The human being II

The human being III

Body and mind I

Body and mind II



Chromolithography

The birth of trade cards and the wide spread of images in the second half of the nineteenth century find their origin in a printing technique that was to revolutionise the world of graphic art-chromolithography, officially patented in Paris in 1837 by Godefroy Engelmann (1778-1839). Although polychrome prints had been obtained before, either by using moulds of various colours or by colouring each print by hand using watercolour, chromolithography made possible the production of a great quantity of polychrome prints at a low cost.

Moreover, compared with previous techniques, chromolithography allowed a wider colour range and an accuracy of detail unthinkable before.

Chromolithography stemmed from the process of lithography, invented in Munich in 1798 by Aloys Senefelder (1771-1834) and initially used to reproduce sheet music.

Chromolithography stones

The art of chromolithography

Overprinting I

Overprinting II

Overprinting III

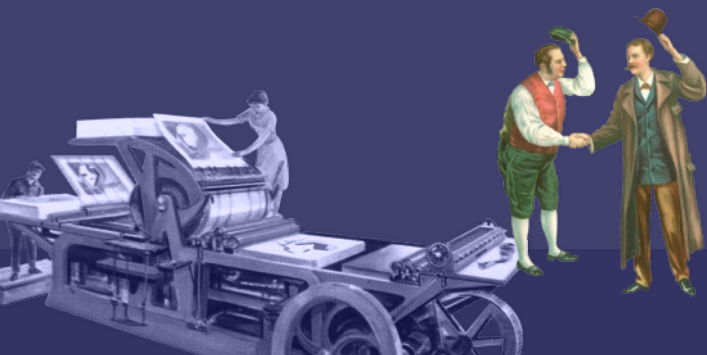
The printing sheet

From the original sketch to the print I

From the original sketch to the print II

The uses of chromolithography I

The uses of chromolithography II



Origin and spread



The first trade cards most probably appeared in France in the second half of the nineteenth century, but they quickly spread throughout Europe and the United States thanks to the coincidence between the advent of chromolithography and the need for advertisement created by the industrial revolution. Nineteenth century trade cards were different from contemporary trade cards or stickers; they consisted in small prints with an advertising slogan. Generally produced in sets of 6 or 12 cards sharing the same theme, they were given out in shops or department stores in order to encourage the customers to come back. This formula was such a success that before long many lithographic printing workshops started producing images specifically to this end, with blanks in the forms of title blocks left to be filled with a promotional message, thus presented in an artistic way. In other cases, upon request from the retailers, images of objects sold by the shop were inserted, such as a clock for a clock seller, and so on. Some companies, like the Bon Marché department store, began to commission original and exclusive images.

The beginnings in France

Universal Expositions

Bon Marché and Suchard

In Switzerland

In Germany

German albums

In Italy

Italian prize competitions

In Belgium and the Netherlands

In the Anglo-Saxon world



Liebig

The history of trade cards would not have been the same without the contribution of a company that, more than any other, has linked its name to them: Liebig, producer of the famous meat extract. The formula was published in 1847 after several years of research, although legend has it that the recipe was invented by Justus von Liebig after working overnight in his laboratory, searching for a cure for a friend of his daughter's who suffered from typhus fever. Liebig produced not only trade cards, but also a large variety of gadgets and prints, such as menus, place cards, coasters, pocket calendars, and much more. To get an idea of how popular Liebig products were, think for instance that when Stanley travelled to Africa to look for Livingstone, he brought with him a Liebig meat-extract jar; so did the alpinists who climbed the K2 Mountain in 1954. And Jules Verne himself has his protagonists drink cups of tasty Liebig broth in the novel *Around the Moon*.

Justus von Liebig and the birth of the extract

The product and its image

Fabulous Liebig

Women in Liebig cards

Education

Collecting Liebig cards

Advertisement

Liebig housewives

The table

Competitors



More than just trade cards

In a way similar to how Gutenberg's invention of the moveable metal type printing press in the fifteenth century caused the transition from oral to written culture, the invention of lithography and, later, of chromolithography brought about a major transformation in the cultural and anthropological landscapes. We are so used to being surrounded by a great quantity of images of all kinds that it is difficult for us to understand what it meant, emotionally, for people in the nineteenth century to be able to manipulate, and collect, large numbers of colour prints. These offered entirely new opportunities in terms of knowledge and of the creation of imaginary worlds. Small colour prints enabled the viewers to travel to faraway countries, see animals or plants never seen before, reflect on historical events, or simply entertain themselves. In short, these colour prints were a gateway to wonders. At the same time, they responded to new needs in communication brought about by the changes that affected European and North-American societies at the time-industrialisation, large-scale distribution and supermarkets, urbanisation. Many producers and retailers quickly realised the magnitude of the appeal exerted by colour images and started to use them in packaging and advertising, sometimes also giving them out complimentary in order to gain their customers' loyalty. Labels of all kinds, cigar wrappers, letter seals, matchboxes, business cards: everything came to be decorated with vividly coloured chromolithographs-and everything, indiscriminately, became a collectible.

Trade cards and cigarette cards

Cinema and television

Die-cut prints and scrapbooking

Pocket calendars, menus, and bookmarks

Chromolithography and tobacco

Ads

The Gambini-Ruggiero collection

Letter seal stamps

Playing cards and Notgeld

Children magazines





Modern trading cards

World War II split the twentieth century in two, leaving Italy a defeated and suffering country. Post-war Italy was searching for the energy needed to rise again and reconcile its different factions. Sport was to serve as the glue that would hold the country together again—the extraordinary feats of Coppi and Bartali in cycling and the legendary adventure of the Turin football team, by functioning as new symbols with which to identify, restored the Italian people's enthusiasm and capacity to dream. This is the atmosphere in which the modern trading card finds its origin, gradually becoming a product of its own, independent from others. Sport was what gave companies the impulse to make picture cards a standalone branch; such an initiative came from small but very active publishing houses showing creativity and experimenting new formulas. Within a few years, new companies appeared dedicating themselves exclusively to the production of picture cards.

The rebirth

Modena and its surroundings

Simple but beautiful cards

Picture cards for playing

More than just football

Trade cards and knowledge

Trade cards become a business

In the far reaches of the world

Stickers and show business

Stickers, comic strips, and cartoons

