



# SISMER Forum

14<sup>th</sup> edition

Saturday, September 12th, 2015

Istituto degli Innocenti  
Florence



*"Lo duca e io per quel cammino ascoso  
intrammo a ritornar nel chiaro mondo;  
e senza cura aver d'alcun riposo,*

*salimmo sù, el primo e io secondo,  
tanto ch'i' vidi de le cose belle  
che porta 'l ciel, per un pertugio tondo.*

*E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle."*

The Divine Comedy, Inferno XXXIV

...thence we came out, and saw again the stars...



## O-270: The gift of life

The footsteps of generations of noble governors still resound along the narrow corridor.

Since the 16th Century, the eyes of the hundreds of portraits hanging from the walls have witnessed the transit of some of the most important historical figures of all time.

In 1564 Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Florence, ordered the building of an elevated enclosed passageway connecting Palazzo Vecchio to Palazzo Pitti in the event of his son's marriage. The corridor would allow the Dukes to move safely from their residence to the government palace in a time of severe political instability.



The task of designing the Corridor was appointed to Architect Giorgio Vasari, who created a path twisting around Medieval towers, churches' façades and ancient buildings.

The Corridor connects the North Bank and the South Bank of the Arno river crossing the Ponte Vecchio, whose historical meat market had to be moved to avoid its smell reaching into the passage. It was soon replaced by the goldsmith shops that still occupy the bridge.

Walking along the passageway, panoramic windows offer visitors breathtaking views of the Arno river and of the charming church of Santa Felicità.

Such views were so beautiful that Adolf Hitler himself gave order to save the Ponte Vecchio from destruction during WWII.

Little by little the Corridor, whose walls host one of the biggest collections of self-portraits in the world, gets narrower until it ends up in the luxuriant Giardini di Boboli, where guests can finally see the sky again.

The Corridor is a legacy of an era when Florence was the cradle of Renaissance. From there, world-famous artists donated their priceless masterpieces to all mankind, shaping culture and art all over the world.

The timeless charm of this city shows through its buildings and monuments, that we can still admire through the panoramic windows of the Vasari Corridor.