



HOMO FABER

Crafting a more human future

## Homo Faber: Crafting a more human future 2020 Living Treasures of Europe and Japan

10 September –11 October 2020

Fondazione Giorgio Cini  
San Giorgio Maggiore Island, Venice, Italy



©Courtesy of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini

- **Homo Faber** returns in 2020 for a second edition of the ground-breaking cultural exhibition dedicated to the best of European craftsmanship
- It welcomes **Japan** as a special guest, with exhibitions featuring a selection of the country's National Living Treasures, a prestigious designation for its finest master artisans, and exceptional objects they made using revered traditions, from lacquer to textile dyeing

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HOMO FABER at Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, 10 Sept. - 11 Oct. 2020

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- **17 exhibition spaces**, each dedicated to different aspects of craftsmanship, imagined by a world-class team of designers, curators and architects on site at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini
- An immersive experience allowing visitors to meet artisans and watch them work in real time
- Open 10am to 6pm daily from 10 September–11 October. Tickets to be bought on site or at [homofaberevent.com](http://homofaberevent.com)

**Homo Faber 2020** returns to celebrate the best of European and Japanese craftsmanship in the beautiful premises of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice. The month-long event will host 17 exhibitions and installations presenting the work of European master artisans and also welcomes Japan as a special guest. Exhibitions will spotlight the country's venerated craftsmanship traditions and honour its influence on European craftsmanship. Together, the exhibitions showcase a wide array of materials and expertise, from traditional skills in danger of being lost to the most cutting-edge contemporary techniques.

The world-class curators, designers and architects creating the 17 exhibition spaces are: Italian architect Michele De Lucchi, London-based fashion exhibition designer and curator Judith Clark, Japanese designer, professor and curator Naoto Fukasawa, French museum director and porcelain expert David Caméo, Belgian-Italian gallerist Jean Blanchaert, acclaimed architect Stefano Boeri, American director and visual artist Robert Wilson, German designer Sebastian Herkner, vintage car broker, expert and collector Simon Kidston, Japanese museum director Tokugo Uchida, renowned Japanese photographer Rinko Kawauchi, French curator and porcelain specialist Frédéric Bodet, Italian university professor and craftsmanship expert Stefano Micelli, French interior designer and scenographer Sylvain Roca and Italian architect and Professor Alessandro Pedron.

Visitors will be able to discover the excellence of European craftsmanship through a series of showcases which reveal European master artisans, their techniques, traditions, workshops, innovative methods and the creativity of their individual crafts. Spectacular exhibitions will explore the human element at the heart of fine creations, the cherished savoir-faire, the unique narratives, territorial influences, and diverse materials which enrich each masterpiece, for an authentic celebration of European exquisite artisanship.

From Europe's treasure trove, the exhibition will broaden its horizons to explore the entwining cultural relationship between Europe and Japan, the special guest. Homo Faber 2020 honours the official recognition that Japan gives to its finest masters, designating them as keepers of important intangible cultural properties. It is considered a great honour to be a National Living Treasure, as they are known. Visitors will have the possibility to see some of the magnificent objects they have made - exquisite porcelain, a lacquered harp, hand-dyed kimonos and much more – as well as a photographic exhibition that shows them in their ateliers.

The event offers the public a rare opportunity to explore San Giorgio Maggiore Island and the magnificent structures of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in an exhibition that covers nearly 4,000 square metres. It builds on the successful

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inaugural exhibition in September 2018, which drew 62,500 visitors and featured 410 artisans and designers, 900 unique artworks, and 91 live demonstrations.



Laila Pozzo@Michelangelo Foundation

"By celebrating European fine craftsmanship and the great traditions of Japan, we salute master artisans who aspire to be their very best", says Johann Rupert, co-founder of the Michelangelo Foundation, which is organising Homo Faber

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2020. "They are indeed living treasures: they create great value in our lives and demonstrate the vitality of the fine crafts in today's world."

The event brings visitors diverse, immersive experiences, including the chance to meet master artisans as they create something extraordinary in front of visitors' eyes. Evocative images and video installations will transport spectators to master artisans' workshops across Europe, affording them intimate views into the world of fine craftsmanship. The world's most prestigious luxury brands will reveal the craftsmanship behind their pieces and a rendering of an iconic staging of Puccini's opera, *Madama Butterfly* will take visitors on a theatrical journey.

"Homo Faber 2020 offers a unique window into what is possible when the heart and mind finds expression through the hands", says Franco Cologni, co-founder of the Michelangelo Foundation. "Once again, in the glorious venue of Venice, and with our guests from Japan, we are pleased to showcase extraordinary talent and offer a new perspective on creativity."

Beyond the walls of Fondazione Giorgio Cini, a series of "satellite" exhibitions will take place around the city of Venice, in a multi-location exhibition entitled **Homo Faber in Città**. A unique itinerary winding through the streets of Venice mapping key locations for the metiers d'art, will allow visitors to keep investigating the beauty of craftsmanship beyond Homo Faber. Discover Venice's rich artisanal heritage with visits to Venetian artisans' workshops, the Fenice ateliers, Vivaldi's violins exhibited in the church of Santa Maria della Pietà, the Domus Grimani exhibitions and much more.

## The exhibitions:

### 1. Porcelain Virtuosity

A celebration of contemporary porcelain craftsmanship across Europe and Japan, with work by master ceramicists Katsuyo Aoki (Japan), Tamsin van Essen (UK) and Ruth Gurvich (France), along with pieces from porcelain manufacturers Meissen, Sèvres, Nymphenburg and Bernardaud. Curated by David Caméo, former head of Sèvres and the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris and Frédéric Bodet, curator and porcelain specialist.

### 2. Pattern of Crafts

German designer Sebastian Herkner invites artisans from Japan and Europe to interpret the geometric pattern on the square in front of the Basilica of San Giorgio in marble, mosaic, wood marquetry, textiles and other techniques. Their fine work reflects the designer's signature style while showcasing the unmatched contributions of master artisans to the world of interiors.

### 3. Dressing a Diva

This exhibition dedicated to the Italian actress Lyda Borelli, wife of Vittorio Cini, the founder of Fondazione Giorgio Cini, will show the original costumes of Lyda as well as contemporary recreations by the master Venetian tailor Stefano Nicolao who has been making period costumes for theatre, opera, ballet, film and television productions since 1980.

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The exhibition will be enriched by videos, vintage images, and archive material of the Institute of Theatre and Opera of Fondazione Giorgio Cini, to reveal the craftsmanship behind creating the allure of a diva.

#### **4. 12 Stone Garden**

On display are objects by 12 National Living Treasures of Japan, master artisans whose mastery of traditional skills makes them a valued part of the country's cultural heritage. Among the exquisite works, chosen by Naoto Fukasawa and Tokugo Uchida, director of the MOA Museum and Hakone museum, are kimonos, an *urushi* lacquered harp and a bamboo flower basket. All the objects are displayed on 12 stone shaped blocks designed by Naoto Fukasawa inspired by the traditional Japanese garden.

#### **5. The Ateliers of Wonders**

The stunning photographs of Rinko Kawauchi, exhibited in the Renaissance-style cypress cloister, give visitors a close-up look at the workshops of the National Living Treasures of Japan whose work is presented in the 12 Stone Garden exhibition. The award-winning photographer captures the artisans as they create precious objects using centuries-old techniques, expressing tradition at the cutting edge.

#### **6. Masterful Gestures**

In the magnificent surroundings of the Cenacolo room, talented master artisans from Europe and Japan will work in front of visitors, demonstrating their exceptional skills and dexterity and how time-honoured techniques can imbue the present with everlasting beauty. Curated by the Michelangelo Foundation for Creativity and Craftsmanship.

#### **7. The Modern Artisan Project**

Discover the modern face of craftsmanship in a sustainable luxury Autumn/Winter capsule collection of menswear and womenswear "Designed in Italy and crafted in the UK" by Italian design students and British artisanal talents. The year-long project, born from the partnership between YOOX NET-A-PORTER and The Prince's Foundation, the educational charity established by HRH The Prince of Wales, places a spotlight on innovation, bringing digital data insights and artisanal textiles to the world of luxury sustainable manufacturing. The collection will be launched mid-2020 in celebration of YOOX NET-A-PORTER GROUP's 20th anniversary and will be inspired both by the work of Italian polymath Leonardo Da Vinci and the rich heritage of British and Italian textile craftsmanship.

#### **8. Italy and Japan: the Marvellous Liaisons**

Through demonstrations, workshops and artworks, visitors can explore the dialogue between fine Italian craftsmanship and Japanese tradition with a selection of objects handmade by Italian master artisans and inspired by Japanese culture. Discover the Japanese tea ceremony and enjoy the 600-year-old art of Ikebana as demonstrated by the Venice chapter of the Ohara School. The exhibition is curated by the Fondazione Cognigni dei Mestieri d'Arte.

#### **9. Singular Talents – The Red List**

Step inside the workshops of 12 contemporary European master artisans who are upholding craftsmanship skills that are now at risk of disappearing. 12 specially commissioned films draw back the curtain on rare crafts such as the last remaining French artisan who creates handmade silver cutlery and the craftswoman who cuts and sews harnesses in

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the English countryside. These skills are all featured on our newly devised European Red List, inspired by the British Heritage Crafts Association's Red List of Endangered Crafts. Curated by the Michelangelo Foundation.

### 10. Blossoming Beauty

In an enchanted fairy tale flower garden envisioned by interior designer and scenographer Sylvain Roca, the Venetian glass manufacturer Venini crafts a collection of glass vases in collaboration with renowned flower artists. Philippa Craddock, Heiko Kalitowitsch, Nikki Tibbles, Anna ten Donkelaar, Lewis Miller, White Pepper and Mantas Petruskevicius will also design bespoke bouquets to complement these exquisite vases, animated by the idea that "blossoming" is the manifestation of creativity and know-how.

### 11. Next of Europe

A cabinet of curiosities will showcase an impressive selection of objects crafted by master artisans who not only embody the finest European craftsmanship but are dedicated to transmitting their savoir-faire to the next generation through apprenticeships and training. Visitors can even see some of these European living treasures working in the room, a rare opportunity to witness first-hand how these masters create objects of such fine craftsmanship. Curated by Jean Blanchaert, a Belgian-Italian gallerist, antiquarian and artist and designed by Stefano Boeri, the Italian architect who currently serves as chairman of the Triennale in Milan.

### 12. Mechanical Marvels

Visitors can see how the master restorers from the Italian workshop Cremonini breathe new life into magnificent vintage cars, such as Gianni Agnelli's 1960s bespoke three-seat Ferrari. Special attention will be given to a young generation of artisans, designers and engineers, who will be called on to collaborate on a unique project. Lamborghini will reveal how the cars of the future will integrate fine craftsmanship. Curated by Simon Kidston, a Geneva-based world expert on vintage cars, and Stefano Micelli, a professor and expert on Italian contemporary craft.

### 13. WAITING with peace and darkness

The iconic American director and visual artist Robert Wilson shines a light on the Japanese inspiration behind his theatrical productions, notably Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. This evocative exhibition will allow visitors to be immersed in Wilson's staging genius, as he transforms the former Gandini 1960s swimming pool into a dramatic theatrical stage with his signature use of lighting, sound, costumes, artworks, videos, props and furniture, created in collaboration with master artisans using time-honoured techniques. Featuring video portraits of Japanese choreographer Suzushi Hanayagi.

### 14. Details: Genealogies of Ornament

Witness the transformative power of craftsmanship in this multi-layered exhibition designed by Judith Clark which showcases 15 luxury Maisons dedicated to making the finest watches, shoes, kimonos, jewellery, and much more. Observe master artisans at work in intimate studio spaces inspired by Antonello da Messina's painting of St Jerome in his study. Beautifully crafted wall panels and tiled floors reflect the heritage of each craft and its tools. At the centre of each room, a selection of beautiful, meaningful objects will reveal the "genealogies" of the techniques used by the

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artisans. The craftsmanship of exhibition-making will be demonstrated by students from City and Guilds of London Art School.

### 15. Magnae Chartae

Inspired by the paper artists of Japan and Europe, and curated by Michele De Lucchi, this exhibition pays tribute to the diversity of paper crafts, including paper making, book restoration, bookbinding and calligraphy. Visitors can witness the skill and artistry of artisans at work in the room or use the on-site "ink bar" to try out the gold nib of a Montblanc pen. Discover paper artworks made by highly skilled artisans and decorated handmade Italian wallpapers. Photographs by Italian photographer Susanna Pozzoli will showcase the Gangolf Ulbricht paper making workshop in Berlin.

### 16. Doppia Firma

This exhibition brings together innovative European designers and Italian master artisans to create unique contemporary objects. 12 creative partnerships including celebrated designer Ugo La Pietra, as special guest will take their inspiration from the theme of outdoor living. The fruitful dialogue between creativity and craftsmanship at the heart of this project will be celebrated in an outdoor exhibition in the gardens. Curated by the Fondazione Cologni dei Mestieri d'Arte and Living Corriere della Sera and designed by Studio Salaris.

### 17. Eilean

Welcome aboard Eilean: step onto a legendary 1936 yacht expertly restored by Italian master artisans. Moored in the Venetian waters off San Giorgio Maggiore Island, this beautiful Bermudan ketch, whose name means "Little Island" in Gaelic, was built by boat builders in Scotland. Admire the beauty of her design, the quality of her materials and discover the meticulous craftsmanship of the Italian master artisans who brought her back to life. Curated by Officine Panerai, a luxury Italian watch manufacturer.

#### Notes for editors

#### **Homo Faber**

*Crafting a more human future*

10 September – 11 October 2020

Fondazione Giorgio Cini, San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

Register for tickets at [homofaberevent.com](http://homofaberevent.com)

**Homo Faber** is the main event organised by the **Michelangelo Foundation for Creativity and Craftsmanship**, an international non-profit organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland, which was set up to celebrate and preserve master craftsmanship around the world and strengthen its connection to design. Rooted in a tradition of culture and excellence and in the realities and challenges of today's global economy, the foundation aims to support those who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of master craftsmanship and to foster a new cultural movement built around the values that are essential for their work. The Foundation focuses on Europe as a starting point for its activities, in recognition that

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**fondazione  
GIORGIO CINI**



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craftsmanship has been a vital part of the economic and cultural fabric of the region for centuries, providing both a rich heritage and a competitive advantage in a global world. [michelangelo.foundation.org](http://michelangelo.foundation.org)

Collaborating on **Homo Faber 2020** with the Michelangelo Foundation are partner organisations that share its vision including: the **Fondazione Cologni dei Mestieri d'Arte**, the **Fondazione Giorgio Cini**, and **The Japan Foundation**.

### **Fondazione Cologni dei Mestieri d'Arte**

The Fondazione Cologni dei Mestieri d'Arte is a private, non-profit institution founded in 1995. Based in Milan, it promotes cultural, scientific and educational initiatives for the protection and diffusion of artistic crafts. The Fondazione Cologni's mission is to inspire a "new Renaissance" of the artistic crafts and rescue them from the threat of extinction. Many of its initiatives focus on young people and training future generations of artisans. [fondazionecologni.it](http://fondazionecologni.it)

### **Fondazione Giorgio Cini**

The Fondazione Giorgio Cini is a non-profit cultural institution based in Venice, Italy. Established by Vittorio Cini in 1951 with the aim of creating an international cultural centre re-integrating the San Giorgio Maggiore Island into the life of Venice and the region, today it is an important centre of humanistic studies and encourages the creation and development of educational, social, cultural and artistic institutions in the surrounding territory. [cini.it](http://cini.it)

### **The Japan Foundation**

The Japan Foundation, established in 1972, in Tokyo develops international cultural exchange programmes globally. The foundation's aim is to promote Japanese culture to the world through programmes and activities in the following categories: art, cultural exchange, Japanese-language education and Japanese studies. The foundation has a global network, with 25 overseas branches in 24 countries. As part of their cultural programme, the foundation offers successful applicants support in the form of grants, research scholarships and training opportunities. [jpf.go.jp](http://jpf.go.jp)

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