



FONDAZIONE SORGENTE GROUP

*Istituzione per l'Arte e la Cultura*

P R E S S R E L E A S E

**An original Eiffel Tower Staircase and photos for the 1889 Exposition in show**

- From April 20th it will be possible to admire, in Galleria Colonna, Rome, a portion of a helicoidally shaped staircase, acquired by Fondazione Sorgente Group in an auction
- Together with the staircase, 20 photos regarding the context in which the tower was designed and realized, will be exhibited.
- The Mayor of Rome, Gianni Alemanno, will be present at the event.



**Rome, 20th April 2012.** Finally, in the Galleria Alberto Sordi, formerly Galleria Colonna, an important part of the Eiffel Tower' staircase will be on show. It's a portion of the staircase connecting the second to the third floor of the world most famous Tower, which was acquired by **Fondazione Sorgente Group** during an auction in New York, in July 2011. Prof. **Claudio Strinati**, as Scientific Director of Fondazione Sorgente Group introduces the show "Paris 1889, the Universal Exposition: the Tour Eiffel is born". The Mayor **Gianni Alemanno** will be present.

Aside of the staircase there will be 20 photos showing the construction of the pavilions of the 1889 Universal Exposition, the same year of the erection of Tower: a romantic trip through old pictures provided by the Library of Congress of Washington DC, by the French National Library and the Central Institute for Documentation and Cataloguing of Rome (ICCD) .

The show is held in the exhibition area of Galleria Colonna, belonging to Sorgente Group, which has subscribed the protocol Romaexhibit / Art and Exhibitions in Rome ([www.romaexhibit.it](http://www.romaexhibit.it)).

Until June, people can admire the portion of helicoidally shaped staircase, 450 cm tall, with a diameter of 173 cm ca. and dated to 1889 like the rest of the monument of which it was part of. It was substituted in 1980 for safety reasons and for reducing the whole weight. The stairs were divided into 24 sections of different lengths, from 8'6" feet to 25'6" feet (2,6 -7,8 meters) and deposed on the ground with the help of cranes. One of those sections remained inside the Eiffel



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Tower, where is still exhibited. Three sections were donated to important French museums: the Musée d'Orsay, the Villette in Paris and the Musée de Fer in Nancy. The remaining portions were sold at auction on the 1st December 1983. This sale, which was held in the symbolic context of the Eiffel Tower, was a huge success for participants as many collectors from around the world desired to have a piece of the legendary building. Today we can find pieces of the staircase in many and prestigious location all around the world: in the Yoshii Foundation of Yamanashi, Japan, in the Statue of Liberty in New York and next to the copy of the Eiffel Tower in Disneyland. Even artists as the French singer Guy Béart have acquired a section of the staircase. The sculptor César has used a piece of the staircase in a tribute to the famous Tower.

**The Eiffel Tower** represents an example of fine engineering. Its structure, with a height of 324 meters, is the highest in Paris. It was built in less than two years, from 1887 to 1889. Inaugurated on 31st March 1889, it was opened officially on the 6th of May of the same year, after just 2 years, 2 months and 5 days of work. Three-hundred steel workers assembled 18,038 pieces of forged steel, using two and a half million rivets. The tower is 324 meters high with its own antenna, while the television antennas on its summit are 20 meters high. It weighs 10 thousand metric tons but its foundations dig only 15 metres below the level of the ground. For over 40 years it was the tallest building in the world. Its maintenance requires 50 metric tons of paint every 7 years. Depending on the environment temperature the Eiffel Tower's height can vary by several cm. Due to the dilatation of the metal its height can increase up to 15 cm during the hot summer period. On windy days, the peak of the tower can sway up to 12 cm.

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**Fondazione Sorgente Group, Istituzione per l'Arte e la Cultura**

In January 2007, thanks to the financial support of the Sorgente Group, the non-profit *Fondazione Sorgente Group – Istituzione per l'Arte e la Cultura* was established with the aim of enhancing, promoting, and disseminate – on a national and international level – the manifold expressions of the Italian cultural and artistic heritage. The *Fondazione Sorgente Group* owns a rich art collection put together through the recognition, selection and choice of valuable works of art appearing on the antiques' market and at national and international auctions. It comprises a collection of Roman and Greek marble and bronze archaeological masterpieces, and a collection of antique paintings from the 15th to the 18th century. The Foundation carries out primarily activities of research, enhancement and promotion of its own art collection, through the direct organization and the participation in museum exhibitions, press dissemination, publication and organization of conferences, involving renowned academic and scientific personalities and by accepting to lease its possessions to private and public institutions and bodies, such as Fine Arts Departments, Universities, Museums, Research centers. The *Fondazione* is also the curator of the *Collection M*, established in the 1930s and gathering Roman and Greek archaeological works in addition to a rich selection of antique paintings by some of the most famous painters of the past, basing the selection of the works of art on criteria of distinction and uniqueness. The collection of old master is focused primarily on 17th century Italian painting, with outstanding pieces of great painters such as Guido Reni, Guercino and their important pupils, and with 18th century vedutism pieces of Paolo Anesi, Andrea Locatelli and Hendrik Van Lint. The Board of Directors of the *Fondazione Sorgente Group* is chaired by Prof. **Valter Mainetti** and Mrs. **Paola Mainetti**, Vicepresident. The Scientific Coordination is delegated to Prof. **Claudio Strinati**.

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