



Florence's Uffizi Gallery is one of the oldest and most famous art museums in Europe. Photo: Getty Images/Timur Arbaev

**ART + AUCTIONS**

# This Famed Italian Museum Has New Plans to Teach Children About Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and More

A new initiative at the Uffizi in Florence aims to engage children who visit the institution that's renowned for its prolific collection of Italian Renaissance works

By Shivani Vora

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The Uffizi in Florence might be one of the most famous art museums in the world and at the top of the must-hit list for any tourist in town, but, for children, going can be a drag. After all, what kid enjoys looking at hundreds of works of centuries-old art which have little meaning in their tech-dependent lives? Enter UffiziKids, a new initiative that aims to engage children who visit the storied institution that's renowned for its prolific collection of Italian Renaissance works from artists such as Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Botticelli. The program is comprised of two parts: online and on-site. To start, the museum has debuted a dedicated UffiziKids web page with information on kid-friendly exhibits and printable worksheets with images and maps on themed routes that children can follow; current examples for the latter include Monsters in Art! and Flowers at the Uffizi.

UffiziKids also includes an on-site component with staff of about 40 people who play the role of kids' representatives by wearing a pin with an UffiziKids logo. These employees are on hand to answer questions—no matter how nonsensical—from their youngest guests about the art they're viewing but may not necessarily understand.



A room full of Michelangelo and Raphael paintings within the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy.

Photo: Getty Images/Roberto Serra

In an interview with the *Art Newspaper*, Silvia Mascalchi, the coordinator of the Uffizi's education department, says that, "If you communicate with children in the right way, you can open their eyes to the wonder of art." She continued, "We want to make art normal for children, so that when they're older they'll think: 'I'm heading to the city, I'll pop into the museum.'"

On the new UffiziKids web page, the museum states that the program, "is a qualified point of reference for all those adults who are aware of how important contact with cultural heritage is in the growth and training of young people and how this represents an integral part of their individuality as people and citizens."



A presumed self-portrait by Leonardo da Vinci inside the Uffizi Gallery.

Photo: Getty Images/DEA

Launching UffiziKids is a smart move, according to Filippo Curinga, the owner of IDI Travel, an Italy-based company that plans luxury private trips to the country. “My clients who visit Florence all want to see the Uffizi first and foremost and could spend

all day there, but their kids hate going,” he says. “We really have to work hard to engage them.”

An interactive game or another activity where young visitors are doing more than just simply looking at the art could be the trick to entertain them and turn that boring museum trip into a fun one, says Curinga. “No matter what, though, you shouldn’t spend more than an hour and a half maximum with any child at the Uffizi or at any museum,” he says. “Otherwise, you risk losing their attention and interest.”

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