

# Naples' 10 Best Contemporary Art Galleries and Museums

Of all cities in Italy, Naples is one of the best for contemporary art. With top museums and excellent galleries, housed in captivating historical buildings and managed by gallerists firmly established in the international art arena, Naples will particularly surprise lovers of Pop Art, Arte Povera, conceptual art and photography, which are found in abundance across its art spaces. Read our guide to the ten best venues for an amazing contemporary art trip in Naples.



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## Madre

The **Madre** museum is the top destination in Naples for contemporary art lovers, and one of the best museums of contemporary art in all Italy. The impressive, three-storey building that hosts the museum is situated in the very heart of Naples' historical centre, a stone's throw away from the **National Archeological Museum**, and was renovated by Portuguese architect **Alvaro Siza**. You can actually feel the solemn love and dedication to the arts while walking across the Madre's large exhibiting rooms, passing by works of such artists as Sol Lewitt, Richard Serra, Mimmo Paladino and Jeff Koons. Despite a troubled history of scarce economic resources which more than once have put this beautiful museum at the risk of closing, the Madre still proudly stands to defend its outstanding permanent collection, and continues to organise a regular programme of quality art exhibitions.

*Madre, Via Luigi Settembrini 79, Naples, Italy, +39 081 1931 3016*



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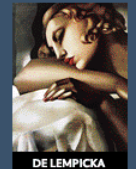


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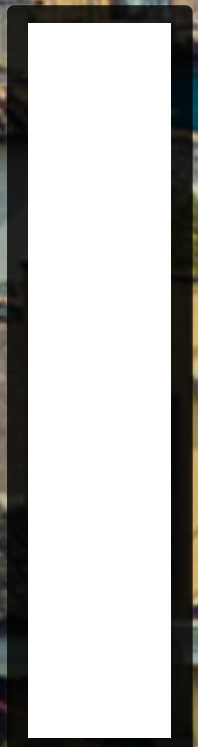




Image Courtesy of Madre

## PAN

The Palace for the Arts in Naples, or [PAN](#), comes second only after the Madre among the city's most prominent galleries of modern and contemporary art. It sits in a refined quarter of the city regularly frequented by art aficionados as well as fashionistas, and is housed in a historical, 18th century building, Palazzo Roccella, with an exhibiting space amounting to a total of 6,000 square metres. Born as a centre for the documentation of the arts, the venue started being used for art shows only at a later stage, and does not have a permanent collection. A recent retrospective of Andy Warhol's work, called Vetrine (Shopwindows), curated by top art critic Achille Bonito Oliva, has been a sensational success, with visitors lining up for the entire length of the street that leads to the museum during the inaugural days.

[PAN](#), Via dei Mille 60, Naples, Italy, +39 081 795 8604

## Plart

Plastic, everyday objects can fit in a museum just like a painting or a sculpture, especially if they feature a striking design. In fact, in Naples there is an entire museum celebrating plastic and, more generally, polymeric materials. The [Plart](#) has a unique permanent collection of bags, jewels, lamps, toys, electronic devices and other ordinary items characterised by extraordinary design, including pieces by Lucio Fontana, Tony Cragg, Haim Steinbach, Verner Panton and Amanda Leveté, among others. The museum also boasts a special multimedia lab which offers fascinating insight into the world of polymers through interactive installations, and produces an intense range of activities aimed at promoting an understanding of how science can be put at the service of art and design.

[Fondazione Plart](#), Via Giuseppe Martucci 48, Naples, Italy, +39 081 1956 5703

## Largo Baracche Art Space

Despite sprawling right on the side of one of Naples' main shopping streets, via Toledo, the [Spanish Quarter](#) is an underprivileged area but with such a unique, distinctive culture that it is one of the most vibrant parts of the city. Here, between two narrow streets with lines of clothing extending from one side to the other that are so associated with the city of Naples throughout the world, is found [Largo Baracche](#), a small, unimpressive square which holds a secret: beneath the ground, a series of tunnels originally built as a shelter during World War II has been transformed into an artist-run space, and has built a reputation of hosting intelligent, provocative exhibitions of contemporary art.

[Largo Baracche Art Space](#), Quartieri Spagnoli, Naples, Italy

## Galleria Lia Rumma

An incredibly talented gallerist with an exceptional taste for contemporary art, [Lia Rumma's](#) career began in the 1970s. Ever since, she has worked with some of the most important international artists out there, actively contributing to making their stars shine brighter. The list includes the likes of performance artists [Marina Abramovic](#) and Vanessa Beecroft, photographers Thomas Ruff and Andreas Gursky, and artist Ettore Spalletti, among many others; and she was one of the first to bet on and encourage the talent of Anselm Kiefer, now a worldwide acclaimed painter. In recent years, a branch of Galleria Lia Rumma opened in Milan; but the home gallery in Naples still offers top quality exhibitions - the latest was a solo show of works by internationally renowned artist William Kentridge.



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### Alfonso Artiaco

The [Alfonso Artiaco](#) gallery opened in 1986 in Pozzuoli, a smaller town not far away from Naples, and moved to the big city only in 2012. The gallery is now found in the larger, beautiful premises of a historical building in Piazzetta Nilo, a lovely but bustling square in the city's centre. For his gallery, Alfonso Artiaco selects talented artists, both Italian and international, working across a range of media, from painting to sculpture, from photography to installation. Here, top contemporary artists such as Sol Lewitt, Jannis Kounellis and Liam Gillick have exhibited their works. The current exhibition present works by American conceptual artist Robert Barry.

[Alfonso Artiaco, Piazzetta Nilo 7, Naples, Italy, +39 081 497 6072](#)

### Casamadre

One of the latest additions to Naples' contemporary art scene, [Casamadre](#) is the new creation of Eduardo Cicelyn, the former director of Madre museum. Cicelyn is well connected enough in the national and international art arena that last year's inaugural exhibition could count on works by top Italian artists like Francesco Clemente, Domenico Bianchi and [Michelangelo Pistoletto](#), and international figures such as Jannis Kounellis, Antony Gormley and [Anish Kapoor](#). The gallery is found in Piazza dei Martiri, one of the most enchanting squares in Naples, in a meaningful, special place: here, in 1969, prominent gallerist Lucio Amelio, now deceased, inaugurated a gallery that made the history of the arts in Naples for many years. Casamadre is open by appointment only.

[Casamadre, Piazza dei Martiri 58, Naples, Italy, +39 335 814 95 31](#)

### Dino Morra Arte Contemporanea

Gallerist [Dino Morra](#) opened his exhibiting space to create a platform where to present the works of those local young artists whose practices please his discerning taste. The gallery, opened in 2010, initially showcased a mix of art and design pieces, but with time Morra restricted his curation to the best visual artists he could find in Naples and the surrounding region. Last year, in occasion of the relocation to a new venue, Dino Morra Arte Contemporanea organised its first exhibition of a non-Italian, the Greek Mary Zygouri; however the gallery won't stop fostering local talent, which remains the main focus of its exhibition programme. Dino Morra's gallery is currently in the process of relocating again to a bigger space - and a bigger future.

[Dino Morra Arte Contemporanea, Vico Belledonne a Chiaia 6, Naples, Italy, +39 392 94 20 783](#)

### Andrea Ingenito

Naples's art scene has a special relationship with Pop Art, and particularly with the work of its forefather, Andy Warhol. A close friendship with gallerist Lucio Amelio brought Warhol to Naples in the 1980s, and the city inspired several pieces of the legendary artist. The best-known of these is arguably the series Vesuvius, a set of paintings depicting the iconic volcano that overlooks the city coloured with bold, unnatural tints, as per Warhol's signature and celebrated style. [Andrea Ingenito Contemporary Art](#) gallery represents a selection of works by Warhol and fellow Pop Artists such as [Robert Rauschenberg](#) and [Roy Lichtenstein](#). The gallery's roster also includes top Italian artists like Alighiero Boetti, Mimmo Paladino and Mario Schifano.

[Andrea Ingenito Contemporary Art, Vicolo Santa Maria Cappella Vecchia, 8/a, Naples, Italy, +39 02 367 98346](#)

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*Image courtesy of Piero Renna Arte Contemporanea*

### PRAC - Piero Renna Arte Contemporanea

The contemporary art scene in Naples has traditionally put an emphasis on the Arte Povera movement and on photography, neglecting to some extent the modern developments of the pictorial arts. The [Piero Renna Arte Contemporanea](#) gallery tries to fill this gap. Piero Renna, the architect who inaugurated the gallery just last autumn, founded his new exhibiting space with the support of a more established Italian gallery specialised in pictorial arts, the [Forni Gallery](#) in Bologna. Of the shows that PRAC has had a chance to present so far, one was an exhibition of paintings by Tommaso Ottieri called Purgatory, a series of urban landscapes transmuted into infernal scenarios through the artist's peculiar technique.

*[Piero Renna Arte Contemporanea](#), Via Nuova Pizzofalcone 2, Naples, Italy, +39 081 764 0096*



*Image courtesy of Piero Renna Arte Contemporanea*

*By Graziano Scaldasferri*

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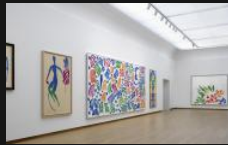
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