Nature has always been a favourite source of inspiration for artists, and they have interpreted it according to their own culture and perception. That’s why Aboca decided to bring “Arte” (Art) into the “Orto” (Garden), proposing a visit to an important art gallery like the Pinacoteca di Brera, paying particular attention to the world of plants represented in the paintings, and then finding the same plants within the Orto Botanico di Brera.

An artistic-botanical tour designed for big and small alike, to discover art and nature together.

My name is ____________

Today’s date is ____________

I’m here with ____________
Nature has always been a favourite source of inspiration for artists, and they have interpreted it according to their own culture and perception. That's why Aboca decided to bring “Arte” (Art) into the “Orto” (Garden), proposing a visit to an important art gallery like the Pinacoteca di Brera, paying particular attention to the world of plants represented in the paintings, and then finding the same plants within the Orto Botanico di Brera.

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Find the plant
Hi there explorers!

This booklet will help you discover the connections between the works of art in the Pinacoteca and the medicinal plants grown in the Botanical Garden of Brera. The booklet contains 11 sheets on 11 works of art.

How do you find the works of art?

At the top right of each sheet there is a room number, and on the back of the cover page you’ll find a map of the Pinacoteca... this is your first adventure! Once you have arrived in the room indicated, the hunt for the work of art begins!

On each sheet, a detail of the chosen work of art has been put into a circle written ZOOM ART. Look out for the detail, spot it and you will have found the work of art. Well done!

Arm yourselves with a pencil and write down on the sheet the title of the work, the name of the author and the year in which it was painted. Now sit yourselves comfortably in front of the work and read the information on the sheet, have a good look at the painting and... turn the page! Here, Frizzo asks you to PLAY WITH ME, a series of activities including games of observation, drawings and much, much more.

Have fun!

Perhaps Not Everyone Knows That... The Botanical Garden of Brera is actually a real and officially recognised MUSEUM, just like the Pinacoteca of Brera. The works that it exhibits are the PLANTS, some of which are very special!
The "ArteOrto" artistic-botanical tour is open for visits from the Pinacoteca or from the Botanical Garden of Brera.

The Ancient Observatory of Brera is also accessible.
The "ArteOrto" artistic-botanical tour is open for visits from the Pinacoteca or from the Botanical Garden of Brera.

The "ArteOrto" artistic-botanical tour is open for visits from the Botanical Garden of Brera or from the Pinacoteca.
Dear explorers, you are free to adventure between the Pinacoteca and the Botanical Garden, but please respect a few rules:

- Slow down, you observe things better walking than running
- Lower your voices: you are busy on an exciting hunt, but there are also people here who like to relax among the works of art and the garden!
- Please leave the place behind with a sense of wonder... not with paper and litter. Both the Garden and the Pinacoteca have bins for those!
- The works of art don’t like to be touched, and the room assistants in the Pinacoteca will be watching carefully to make sure this doesn’t happen.
- The plants don’t like to be trampled, picked or mistreated. But you’re very welcome to look at them up close, smell them and touch them gently.
- You can take as many photos as you want in the Garden and the Pinacoteca. In the latter case, be careful to not use the flash as you could damage the work of art.
- In the Garden, shortcuts through flowerbeds are not allowed... and anyway, it’s wonderful to walk along the corridors of green, it’s like going through a maze.
- We know, it would be lovely to have a picnic in front of a work of art, right? Unfortunately it’s not possible, you can’t eat in the Pinacoteca, it’s a real shame!
- And finally... it is absolutely forbidden to not look at, to skim over, or to not tell your friends about the project ARTEORTO FAMILY!

AND REMEMBER... The plants don’t flower all year round, but they are beautiful all the same and worth observing in every season!

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**LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU**

The main character in the work is **Saint Stephen**, who is to your left, and he is busy discussing something with men in oriental robes: they are the doctors of the Sanhedrin, that is, those who issued laws and administered justice in Jerusalem.

In the background, the painter has created a fantasy scene with buildings both from the imagination and inspired by reality. At the bottom, a borrago plant is painted, whose name derives from the Latin borsa, a rough woollen fabric, which is echoed here in the work of the standing gentlemen trading wool, and a **woodcock**, a long-billed bird that represents wisdom, which contrasts with the **guinea fowl**, a symbol of false pride.

**FUN FACTS FROM THE GARDEN**

The borrago is a plant with blue-purple flowers that appear only briefly. Since ancient times, it was thought to possess the power to relieve melancholy and revive the spirit. The plant’s juice is an antidote against all poisons and venomous animal bites. A useful oil can be extracted from its seeds to cure skin diseases and prevent wrinkles. Its blue flowers can be used to garnish salads and fruit salads and the leaves are delicious eaten raw. It is used today for its purifying, anti-inflammatory, expectorant, diuretic and diaphoretic (that is, perspiration-activating) effects.
When artists had to draw faces, they mostly used portraits of real people! They inserted the faces of their friends, acquaintances, important people and often themselves in their paintings. Who are you going to put into your picture? Have fun changing the detail of Carpaccio’s painting, drawing the face of a member of your family or one of your acquaintances!

The character in the centre is Saint Jerome. In this painting you can easily recognise him from his red cloak. Jerome, often depicted in cardinal vestments, wanted to live like a hermit and withdrew to the desert. There, he met a lion that had a thorn stuck in its paw. Jerome took pity on it and, fearlessly pulled out the thorn. From that day on, the lion followed him docilely, becoming one of his attributes, or rather one of the symbols that help us to recognise him.

The skull, the books and the stone in his hand are also objects that are there to allow us to recognise this saint.

The name Hedera derives from the Greek word helissein, “to twist up”, and this plant does indeed twist and turn to great heights, clinging to rocks and trees. That is why it represents love and fidelity. However, in ancient Greece it was the symbol of Dionysus, the god of wine, who was represented with his head circled in a crown of ivy.

Among the Greeks and later the Romans, there was a widespread belief that wreathing ones head with a crown of ivy prevented the effects of excessive wine-drinking. Currently in medicine, ivy leaves are used in the treatment of bronchial secretions. It is very important to remember that the leaves and berries, if swallowed, are toxic to humans.
My name is [INSERT NAME HERE] and I am a hermit.

Weary of living in luxury, I withdrew to an isolated place where I could pray, where there are dry trees and [INSERT PLANT NAME HERE], a climbing plant that is very resilient, just like me. A docile [INSERT ANIMAL NAME HERE] often follows me, who is [INSERT PERSONAL QUALITY HERE] at the moment. I always take some [INSERT ITEM HERE] with me, which I have placed on the rocks.

I am so busy praying that a thick, white [INSERT COLOUR] has grown on my face, while on my head I no longer have any [INSERT BODY PART HERE]; in fact I am bald.

I threw away all of my clothes and cover myself with a [INSERT COLOUR] [INSERT MATERIAL HERE].

In order to never forget that I will die sooner or later, I carry a [INSERT OBJECT HERE] with me.
When a “client” asked an artist to produce a painting, he usually wrote a letter in which he explained in detail what he would like the artist to depict in the work.

What would the Vimercati family have written to commission this painting by Giovanni Cariani? Let’s try to imagine it together: look at the work and complete the commissioning letter below.

Dear Mr Cariani, in the painting you are about to paint I would like you to depict a victorious Christ in the centre: his gaze will have to be _________________________.

In his left hand he should be holding up a _______________, coloured standard, the symbol of the resurrection. Two saints should be painted at his side; to his left will be St. John the Baptist, holding a stick and a cartouche, pointing downwards with his other hand to a ________________, to bring to mind the phrase “Behold, the Lamb of God” (“Ecce Agnus Dei”) with which he baptised Jesus. At the bottom, there should be the image of us, the clients, husband and wife, our clothes must be painted as follows: _________________________. In the background, an olive tree should be placed, which is a symbol of _________________, with one _______________ on a branch. In the lower part of the painting, in the middle, there will be, in miniature, a ________________________, from which Christ has risen.

LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU

This is a coloured oil on canvas painting by the painter Vincenzo Campi. The friars of San Sigismondo of Cremona bought this work for the convent refectory in 1623 from the heirs of the artist, a man who had become famous because he knew how to paint in a very realistic way.

The main character is a fruit seller at the market, who is selling fruit and vegetables. In the background, to the left, there is a boy climbing on the branches of a tree to gather the fruit, while a woman gathers those that have fallen to the floor.

HALL XV

FUN FACTS FROM THE GARDEN

The hazel has always been considered a magical tree, so much so that its wood is used to make the forked wands used by wizards, fairies, fortune tellers and diviners to find hidden treasure, precious metals and underground water.

A hazel branch also protects from lightning, from scorpions and from snakes and the bites of poisonous animals in general. Hazelnuts were found in many medicinal preparations and beauty treatments, for baldness, joint pain, and persistent coughs. An edible oil with emollient properties is obtained from the seeds.
“Roll up ladies and gentlemen, roll up and buy my delicious fruit!
Buy my peaches, cherries and sweet watermelons!
Buy these tender artichokes, tasty pears, potatoes, pumpkins e blackberries!
And these apricots? Does nobody fancy them?
Juicy white e black grapes! Ripe figs to make jam!
Do you want some porcini mushrooms picked this morning?
Hazelnuts to give you thick, shiny hair?
Who wants to make a tasty soup with cabbage, beans e asparagus?
Come on and roll up ladies and gents! Come and buy!”

A self-portrait is a work in which the artist depicts himself. In 1568, the year in which this painting was painted, the artist was appointed abbot of the Facchini Academy in the Blenio Valley, an association of artisans and artists who were inspired by Dionysus, god of wine, and who spoke an incomprehensible dialect, calling themselves different names from their own; Lomazzo actually called himself “Compà Zavargna”. Here the artist is portrayed with the thyrsus, the stick of Dionysus, covered in ivy. In the picture there are other symbols, including the emblem on the hat, the seal of the Academy and the laurel wreath woven from vines, symbols of glory and of happiness together.

Myth says that the laurel plant is the nymph Daphne who, to escape the love of Apollo, asks her mother, Creusa, to help her, and so she transforms her into a plant. Apollo won’t be resigned to his loss and turns her into an evergreen plant, consecrated to him: from that moment on it is used as a symbol of divine wisdom and its branches adorn the heads of the wise and valiant.
The decoction of bay leaves is useful against digestive disorders and flu diseases, while the essential oil that is obtained by distilling leaves and twigs is used for joint pain.
LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU

This painting was part of a polyptych, a work composed of several panels held together by a precious frame. Some elements of this polyptych and the frame have now been lost or destroyed.

In this painting the painter has added many details, each one of them telling us a story. The main protagonists are those at the centre. You can easily recognize the Madonna and Child.

The Madonna is seated on a throne and is dressed in a rich damask dress, a precious fabric with stylised or floral designs.

**FUN FACTS FROM THE GARDEN**

The wood of the pear tree, excellent for making musical instruments, was considered useful in signalling the presence of ghosts, because it was believed to creak when they passed! It was also an excellent remedy against mushroom poisoning and was reduced to ash and drunk to counteract the poison. The pear was much-loved especially by nobles who could taste the many varieties. Just think that many years ago they were on-the-go snack fruits: cooked, covered in caramel and pierced onto skewers, they were sold on the street by cooked pear sellers.
This polyptych was painted by Niccolò di Liberatore, a painter who had signed his own painting by writing "Nicholaus Alumnus Fulginiae", that is "Niccolò born and apprenticed in Foligno", a city in Umbria. Giorgio Vasari, a famous art historian, interpreted the phrase as follows: "Niccolò the Student of Foligno" and from that moment this artist was nicknamed "the Student". In the central part of the work is the Madonna enthroned with a Baby Jesus and the angels, in the other frames there are several saints, each recognizable by a symbol that characterises him. The background is in very thin leaves of pure gold while their feet are planted in a garden which has been meticulously detailed.

**FUN FACTS FROM THE GARDEN**

The myth tells that carnations were born from the tears of a young shepherd who had foolishly fallen in love with the goddess Diana, the goddess of the hunt, who first seduced and then abandoned him. The carnation also appears in Christian tradition, depicted in art in the hand of the Madonna or Jesus. According to a Medieval legend, when the Madonna saw Jesus crucified, the tears that began to spring from her eyes fell to the earth and were transformed into carnations. Today, it is used to treat throat and gum infections and in gastrointestinal illnesses.

**Title of the work**

**Author**

**Date**

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**Pear** The pear is a very sweet fruit and for this reason is connected with something positive, with good health. In general, it is associated with the gentleness of Mary and recalls motherhood.

**Candle** The candle is positioned on the step, as an offering at the feet of the Virgin. According to some, it represents the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**Pomegranate** The reason for the pomegranate was that it was an oft-used decoration in Renaissance fabrics. The pomegranate is a symbol of fertility and wealth because it contains red beans and juices.

**Cartouche** Carlo Crivelli was very proud to be a painter and his pride often manifested itself in him leaving his signature. In this work he writes his name on an understated cartouche: the writing is in Latin and, translated, it says: "Carlo Crivelli, Venetian, appointed knight, he painted".
As I’ve already explained, you can easily recognise every saint by certain objects or their **dress**. Carefully read what four of them have to say and then try to write their respective names. Keep a sharp eye, because under each person the painter has written his name!

“My name is __________________________. I am wearing a twill, a brown habit, and I have wounds on my hands and feet called the stigmata. I am the patron of Italy.”

“I’m __________________________ from Siena. I am also Franciscan and I have a very thin face, because I am often fasting.”

“My name is __________________________. I was a Roman soldier who converted to Christianity. Painters usually represent me tied to a pole and pierced with arrows, but this time Niccolò has painted me in beautiful attire and my martyrdom is recalled by the bow gripped in my hand.”

“My name is __________________________. Tired of the decadent lifestyle I once had, I went into the desert to pray. I am half naked and I hold a rock in my hand.”

---

**LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU** This painting portrays the marriage between the Madonna and Saint Joseph. What a lot of people are attending this wedding! All the women who have been invited are behind the **Madonna**, while the men are near **Joseph**. Look carefully at the men. Can you see? Many of them have sticks in their hands. The apocryphal Gospels tell us that, to choose Mary’s spouse, a dry branch of oleander was delivered to each of the suitors. Only that of Joseph miraculously flourished, and he became the chosen one. In fact, in the painting, Joseph is the only one holding a flowering branch in his hand; two suitors are left disappointed, instead, they are depicted breaking the stick that has not flowered.

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**FUN FACTS FROM THE GARDEN** The **oleander** is a shrub with white, red and pink flowers which, with its colour and perfume, cheers the Italian summers, especially in central and southern Italy. It is a plant that is found in many gardens even if it is toxic, for this reason, in antiquity its flowers were used at funerals. The ancient Romans believed that it even killed snakes. This plant causes nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, dizziness, severe heart problems and difficulty breathing. In folk medicine, dried and pulverized leaves were used to treat scabies, a disease caused by parasites that creep under the skin.
LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU

The episode depicted is the Last Supper. Christ is painted in the centre at the back of the scene and he is clearly visible from the red of his habit, the colour of blood and the Passion of Christ. Among the characters in the foreground, one is turned towards you: it is Judas, the treacherous apostle, who holds a bag in his hands with the coins received for betraying Jesus. He is watching you and making you participants in his betrayal! On the table there are many dishes full of food; among these, some slices of lemon, a symbol of salvation, for its properties as an antidote.

**FUN FACTS FROM THE GARDEN**

Despite being very widespread on the Italian peninsula, the lemon originated in the East, India and China, where it was widely used for its antiseptic, anti-rheumatic and toning properties. In ancient Roman times it was used as an antidote to snake bites and other poisons. The Emperor Nero was a great consumer, because he was obsessed with a foreboding that he would be poisoned.

Today, the lemon is used for rebalancing the metabolism and its refreshing, diuretic, digestive and astringent properties. In addition, it is rich in vitamin C, mineral salts and an essential oil that has multiple uses also in cosmetics.

**Play with me**

Draw the characters in modern clothes

Often in antiquity, the painters made their characters wear clothes that were fashionable in the years when the paintings were created, so in this case some characters have clothes typical of the 1500s. Imagine you are the painter and draw the same scene putting the various characters in clothes that are in fashion today. What clothes would you make Mary and the guest in the foreground wear?
LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU

The author painted this picture of Alessandro Manzoni at the request of his wife Teresa. In this painting, Alexander, who posed fifteen times, is portrayed with a pensive and serious face, without any object identifying his great capacity as a writer. In his left hand, in fact, instead of a book, he holds a snuffbox, a box that is used to contain a mixture of spice powder and nose tobacco. A very expensive daily object of use for Manzoni and still kept in his house-museum.

FUN FACTS FROM THE GARDEN

Tobacco is a large annual herb, up to 2 metres high, native to South America. It was discovered by Christopher Columbus, described the natives' use of it in his diary, and only in 1559 was it brought to Spain and used as an ornamental plant in the Royal gardens of Philip II.

The genus “Nicotiana”, from which we derive our word nicotine, was in honour of Jean Nicot, ambassador of the French court who sent some seeds to Caterina de' Medici, who used them to treat her son's ulcers in a lard-based ointment. Nicotine, which in high doses can cause respiratory paralysis, is used in agriculture as a pesticide against lice and plant and animal mites.
LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU

Hayez has painted the beautiful hands of an odalisque, of whom we also see part of the face and the bright blue turban that wraps her head, which arrange a vase of colourful flowers on the windowsill of a harem, a part of the house reserved only for women and children. The setting recalls the Orient, and it is suggested not only by the title of the work, but also by the Persian rug placed under the vase and from the horse shoe shape of the arch. Among the colourful flowers is the lily, a symbol of purity, and the nasturtium, a symbol of battle. Each flower in the painting has been painted from life.

FLENT FACTS FROM THE GARDEN

This plant is known by two common names: “nasturtium” because its aroma reminds us of that of Nasturtium officinale, or watercress, and also, in Italian, “monk’s hood grass”, because the flowers recall the hoods of monks.

Native to Peru and Mexico and introduced into Europe by Dutch merchants, the nasturtium is widespread in culinary and medicinal use because the leaves which are rich in Vitamin C were used in the past for the treatment of scurvy. Today it is cultivated for ornamental use in Europe for its showy and abundant flowers in warm shades of yellow, orange and red. An excellent antibiotic for skin and scalp infections, the therapeutic properties of the nasturtium (Tropaeolum majus) are found in the leaves, flowers and seeds.

Portraits were the photographs of the past!
These days, taking a photo is a simple daily action, which everyone does without any effort or complicated equipment! In the past, it wasn’t like that: if you wanted your own picture, you had to call an artist to get yourself a portrait!

Take a journey through time and take a selfie with the techniques of the past! Draw your family portrait below, and make it more realistic by including your own everyday objects!
In this picture, there are lots of geometric shapes – take a good look!
The window, the column, the patterns on the rug... they have both regular and irregular shapes, which become decorative motifs. Try to spot them and copy them below!
Nature has always been a favourite source of inspiration for artists, and they have interpreted it according to their own culture and perception. That's why Aboca decided to bring "Arte" (Art) into the "Orto" (Garden), proposing a visit to an important art gallery like the Pinacoteca di Brera, paying particular attention to the world of plants represented in the paintings, and then finding the same plants within the Orto Botanico di Brera.

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My name is

Today's date is

I'm here with

Why
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My name is ________________________________

Today’s date is ________________________________

I’m here with ________________________________

Why

What

Where

When

Who

Why