

ROMA



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The Ara Pacis will be seen in a new light, thanks to the contribution from Bvlgari

Rome, July 2nd 2020 - An agreement has been signed by Roma Capitale and Bvlgari to give a new light to the Ara Pacis. The monument will be thus enhanced thanks to the relamping of the existing lighting system, an upgrade made possible in part by a donation made by Bvlgari to Roma Capitale. The donation, of 120,000 euros, is just one of the numerous ongoing patronage initiatives carried out by the Company to protect and promote the cultural heritage of the Eternal City. Bvlgari's contribution to the funds of Roma Capitale will allow the Capitoline Superintendence for Cultural Heritage to carry out the complete relamping of the museum complex that will cost around 200,000 euros.

The Mayor of Rome Virginia Raggi thus commented: "I thank Bvlgari for the renewed commitment for the enhancement of the cultural heritage of our city. Rome starts off with greater impetus: we work to make the city more beautiful and accessible to everybody", thus the Mayor of Rome Virginia Raggi.

Jean-Christophe Babin, CEO of the Bvlgari Group, added: "This new act of patronage is once again a way to give back something tangible to the Eternal City, which for over 130 years has been a point of reference for Bvlgari, a generous muse and an exclusive setting. We are proud and delighted to be able to contribute to enhancing the beauty of a monument that is so iconic and which celebrates the greatness of an emperor whose refined aesthetic taste led the radical architectural and urban transformation of Rome, projecting it into our past, present and future."

The works are expected to be completed by the end of the year. The Superintendence will follow the tender procedures laid down by the public procurement code to select a contractor. The renewal of the lighting system was made necessary by EU regulations on energy saving, as well as the natural obsolescence of the old installation. It will affect the lights in the great

structure that houses the monument, the exhibition area on the lower floor and the auditorium of the Ara Pacis.

The primary goal is to highlight the friezes and decorations in the rectangular enclosure and on the altar using dedicated lighting, and also to improve the understanding of the monument as a whole. The architectural relationship between the transparent protective housing and the altar itself will also be emphasised through specially-designed light flows.

Additionally, the project is looking at creating greater energy efficiency thanks to the use of lights that consume less, last longer and offer effective colour rendering. This will lead to a reduction of running costs to around one seventh of the levels of the existing halogen system, and a drastic cut in maintenance costs given that LED light fittings are known to run for much longer than equivalent halogen lights.

The history of the Ara Pacis

Officially opened on 30th January 9 BC to celebrate the Emperor Augustus' pacification of areas and peoples administered by Rome, the Ara Pacis was originally sited along the old Via Flaminia and its main front looked onto the Campo Marzio, in the middle of the huge open space where traditionally the army did its exercises. However the rise in the land level, the proximity of the River Tiber and the intense building activity in the area quickly caused great damage to the marble structure, which in just a few centuries disappeared into the city subsoil. The rediscovery of the first sculpted blocks goes back to 1568, under Palazzo Peretti in Via in Lucina, and other finds came with further digs carried out between 1859 and the early 1900s.

The fragments that were discovered became part of various collections including the Uffizi Gallery, the Louvre, Villa Medici and the Vatican Museums, and it was only in the 1870s – thanks to a discovery made by the German archaeologist Friedrich von Duhn – that they were correctly attributed to the Augustan altar of peace. Once that was established, projects began to reconstruct it, but it was only in 1938 that the fascist regime decided that the Ara Pacis was to be rebuilt next to the Mausoleum of Augustus, inside a structure that was designed by the architect Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo. The Ara Pacis was thus put back together again in a few months in the summer of 1938, while around it rose the housing that was designed to

protect it, the Mausoleum was fully uncovered, and the new Piazza Augusto Imperatore was finished.

The monument was officially opened on 23rd September 1938 nestled inside a glass structure, but it was soon established that this did not provide sufficient protection. Restoration was first carried out in 1970, and in 2000 a new project by Richard Meier was approved, with the Ara Pacis Museum opening in 2006.

It is in this new museum set-up that the friezes, amongst the most important made in the first imperial era, continue to celebrate today the family of the first emperor, Rome's main priestly colleges, and the divine protectors of the Eternal City.