

Beat: Travel

ITALY - VERONA - THE STATUE OF JULIET FILLED WITH LOVE LETTERS

DISCOVERY MADE DURING RESTAURATION

Verona, Italy, 21.02.2015, 12:25 Time

USPA NEWS - Hundreds of love letters and keys to the popular 'lovelocks' have been found inside a bronze statue of Shakespeare's heroine Juliet in the northern city of Verona.

The statue, created by Nereo Costantini in 1969, was removed from its original location in the courtyard of 'Juliet's House' in February 2014 due to wear and tear after years of exposure to the elements and 'assaults' by the broken hearted and incurably romantic. Now artists who were tasked with restoring the statue and casting a copy to replace the original say many of these pilgrims in love had stuffed notes, letters and other items through the several cracks in the bronze, completely filling the space inside. The copy is now in place in the courtyard of Juliet's House in readiness for the expected influx of tourists to the city where Shakespeare set his tale of star-crossed lovers for St Valentine's Day on February 14.

The original statue is housed inside. A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2000, Verona is a wonderful example of urban, artistic and architectonic integration of the historical era of the past 2000 years.

Piazza Erbe is the best example: architecture from the Roman, Medieval and Renaissance periods harmoniously conjoined with the period of the Della Scala Family and 19th-Century palazzi.

Not far away, Piazza dei Signori, Verona's drawing room, is another example of perfect historical stratification, adorned by the monument dedicated to Dante Alighieri.

Near the Adige River, other remarkable buildings from the Roman and Scaliger periods mark the most influential historical eras for the city: the fortress of Castelvecchio, now site of the Modern Art Museum; the Scaliger Bridge, an outstanding example of Medieval architecture; and the Scaliger Arches, superb tombs built for the lords of Verona.

On the other bank of the river, it is possible to admire the remains of the Roman Theatre, where the performances of the Shakespearian Festival and the Verona Jazz Festival take place.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-3372/italy-verona-the-statue-of-juliet-filled-with-love-letters.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): David Franciamore

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