

**TRY IT YOURSELF** How do you organise your time? Try making it visible. You can either draw or write it down.

A calendar is a current system used to measure and arrange time over the year.



The Este were particularly interested in astrology; they consulted the astrologer Pellegrino Prisciani about the right timing for marriages, business matters, even battles.

Some details of the painting were covered with golden powder; entering the hall in the dim candle light, the visitor could slowly catch the glow from the walls, finding himself surrounded by stars!

The lower section is where the Duke is portrayed as a wise and fair governor of his state, taking part in the activities of the court and the townsfolk. Looking carefully, can you count how many times Borso stands out in the frescoes?

The central section is colored in deep blue. It illustrates the correspondent zodiac sign, coming with three other figures known as decans: each decan is believed to influence ten days of the month. These zodiac signs refer to western astrology, which has its roots in Africa, Asia, and Europe starting from the 8th century BC.

The upper section shows the triumph of the deity who presides over that month, surrounded by other mythological figures and ordinary life scenes related to that time of the year. These divinities are the ones that were worshipped by ancient Romans and Greeks, and were widely known in Italy at the time.

The 'Salone dei Mesi' (Hall of the Months) is decorated as a large calendar. The walls are divided into twelve zones, separated by painted columns; each zone is dedicated to a different month, and it is subdivided into three horizontal sections:



"Schifanoia Workshop" was developed as a part of the accessibility improvement project for the Museo Schifanoia, promoted by the Comune di Ferrara and funded by the European Union - NextGenerationEU, and relating the PNRR investment for the removal of physical and cognitive barriers in museums, libraries and archives to promote a wider participation in cultural life. This map is designed to visit the museum exploring different perspectives on its heritage.

Curated by "Senza titolo" Progetti aperti alla cultura.

Inside the Museo Schifanoia visitors can access multimedia tools and resources that make its history and collections accessible to all audiences.

Discover all the tools by scanning the QR Code



## GLOSSARY

**MYTHOLOGY:** the collection of myths of a people or a faith and the study of their origin and meaning.

**ASTROLOGY:** the study of the stars and their movements, through which we believe we can learn about the influence of stars and planets on the world and on human behavior.

**WORKSHOP/OFFICINA:** a place where many people work together. The most important artists and craftsmen of the time worked at Palazzo Schifanoia. This is why we talk about the Ferrara Workshop.

## OFFICINA SCHIFANOIA

**Palazzo Schifanoia** was built between 1385 and 1391, commissioned by Alberto V d'Este and later expanded under Borso, first Duke of Ferrara, in the late 15th century. The name given to the palace reveals its intended purpose: "schifar", or "to avoid", to ward off boredom! Borso d'Este summoned the leading local artists to decorate the building. Guests and ambassadors came from all over Italy and were welcomed in the large halls, all painted with frescoes and golden stuccos: everyone was amazed by the richness of the palace and the mightiness of the Duke and his city. In 1598 the Este left Ferrara; Palazzo Schifanoia began a slow decline, until its frescoes were covered with a white plaster coat. Today the ancient rooms have been restored, and now serves as Civic Museum, housing a public collection of sculptures, pottery, coins and illuminated manuscripts.

**Schifa-noia:** avoid, but also loathe the bore of government commitments. A place where to escape into entertainment and pleasure!

**TRY IT YOURSELF** Why don't you think of a word or an expression that can express a similar concept? You can use your own language or another, or even a made up language.



# MARCH

The upper section represents Minerva, goddess of wisdom, seated in a chariot drawn by two unicorns, accompanied by three children ; the chariot is surrounded by people reading and talking to each other, and women working at a loom.

The central band illustrates the sign of the Aries with the three decans on his side: a woman wearing a red dress with golden sleeves, a man with ripped clothes, holding the rope that fastens his hips, a blonde-haired young man holding an arrow and a ring.

In the lower part Borso stands on the horse, ready to go hunting with dogs and falcons, and in another scene he is hearing a request from a farmer. Field work of tree pruning is depicted in the background.

Many stories are illustrated in the Hall of the Months. Its missing parts allow us to use our imagination to complete it, creating new stories made of images, between dream and reality.

Not all the decorations have survived to the present day: The East and the North walls are well-preserved because they were made with the fresco technique, applying the color into the wet lime plaster to bond it in the wall. The South and the West walls were painted on dry plaster, a less durable technique that led to significant damage, and eventually left the large blank spaces we can see today.

**TRY IT YOURSELF**  
draw two months in the blank spaces on this page.



The upper section represents Venus, goddess of love, sitting on a two swan-drawn chariot, and Mars, god of war, kneeling in front of her. Groups of young men and women are standing on either side of a river, covered in roses, playing music, flirting and kissing each other.

In the central part we can see the sign of the Taurus, its body marked with golden stars that form the constellation. The decans are a man with a long turban holding a white key in his hand, a woman with a child, a red-colored man with boar tusks, holding an arrow and a dragon, with a white horse and a dog on his side.

In the lower section the Duke Borso is coming back from a hunting trip and offers a coin to a jester. The background is described as a scene of the traditional palio, with children, donkeys and horses racing.

# APRIL