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Surprised workers find centuries-old paintings hidden at convent in Italy. Take a look

BY **ASPEN PFLUGHOEFT**

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Restoration workers at a 700-year-old convent in Italy found several centuries-old paintings hidden under the whitewashed walls, officials said. *Google Street View August 2022 © 2024 Google*

The church and convent of Sant'Antonio al Seggio sits on an intersection of southern Italy's narrow cobblestone streets. Its arched entrance faces a bench and a handful of foliage.

Inside the cozy building hid a collection of forgotten paintings.

After over 700 years of nearly continual use, this convent in Aversa was deemed unsafe due to structural problems, the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts

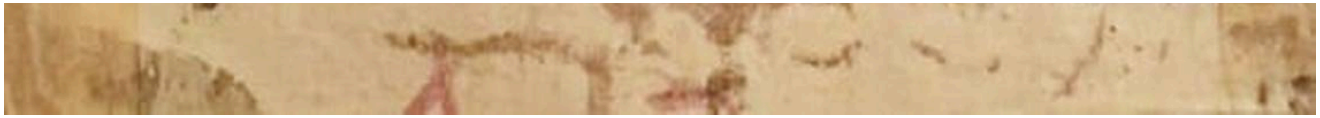
and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento said in a July 3 news release.

The medieval convent was temporarily closed while workers fixed the structural issues and, starting in December, restored the interior.

A duckling painting found at the medieval convent. *Photo from the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento*

During the restoration project, workers noticed traces of color reemerging on the whitewashed walls of the cloister, or living area. They investigated, carefully removing the top layers of white paint.

Hidden underneath, the surprised workers found several centuries-old paintings. The forgotten wall art was likely added to the convent during a renovation in the 16th century or later before being covered up.



A painting of a nun's face found at the 700-year-old convent. *Photo from the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento*

Officials shared photos of the partially uncovered paintings with McClatchy News.

A painting showing the hand of a friar dressed in green garb. *Photo from the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento*

One painting shows a nun’s face, officials said. Another depicts a young friar in green garments. On another section of the wall was a painting of a small yellow duckling.

A colorful painting found at the convent. *Photo from the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento*

More abstract paintings show colorful foliage or decorative elements, photos show.

A centuries-old painting found at the convent. *Photo from the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento*

Workers are still analyzing the rediscovered paintings and restoring the 700-year-old convent, officials said.

Aversa is a small city on the outskirts of Naples and a roughly 150-mile drive southeast from Rome.

Another painting found at the convent. *Photo from the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento*

Google Translate was used to translate the news release from the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Provinces of Caserta and Benevento.

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