



FRIENDS *of* FLORENCE

Spring 2019 Newsletter



Left to Right: Christine Simmons, Executive Director American Friends of the Prado, Miguel Falomir, Director of the Prado Museum, and Simonetta Brandolini, President Friends of Florence, announcing joint restoration project of the Fra Angelico *Annunciation*, November 14th 2018.

Dear Friends of Florence,

Last year was a very special one for the Friends of Florence Foundation as we celebrated our 20th anniversary working together to preserve the unparalleled cultural heritage of Florence and the surrounding region. Through your generous support and thanks to our wonderful team of conservators and partners, we identified and completed an array of projects in 2018 some of which are described below. With this newsletter, we want to tell you about upcoming programs and highlight some of our recent work.

NEWS

Looking ahead, we are delighted to announce our spring program **“The Mature Michelangelo: Artist and Architect”** taking place **May 31– June 6, 2019, in Florence and Rome**. Our primary historians are William Wallace, the Barbara Murphy Bryant Distinguished Professor of Art History at Washington University in St.

Louis and best-selling author and art historian Ross King.

Exploring Michelangelo's years as an established artist, designer, and architect, the group will tour important sites pertaining to his multi-faceted practice including museums, private collections, places of worship, architecture, gardens, libraries, villas, and the Renaissance master's preferred marble quarries. The group will visit Friends of Florence's "live" restoration-in-process of Michelangelo's *Pietà* in the Opera del Duomo Cathedral Museum.



Pietà by Michelangelo in the Opera del Duomo Cathedral Museum (1547-1555 circa).

Because space is limited, we invite you to learn more about the trip [here](#).

Dr. King will lead a program **“Exploring Monet’s Life and Works” in France in June 2020**. We will have more to tell you when the schedule is finalized.



In partnership with the American Friends of the Prado Museum, Friends of Florence contributed funding to restore the Prado's *Annunciation* by Fra Angelico to be included in a major exhibition opening May 28, 2019; *Fra Angelico and the Rise of the Florentine Renaissance*. On view through September 15, the exhibition is part of the Prado's

Bicentenary celebration. We hope your travels bring you to Madrid for what promises to be a stunning exhibition.

RECENT AND IN-PROCESS PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTS

Among the extraordinary outcomes of restoration work are the unexpected revelations that enrich our understanding of art history, architecture, and influential Florentine masters. In this issue, we highlight four major projects either completed or underway that are emblematic of our work.

Chapel of the Crucifix in the basilica of San Miniato al Monte



Detail of thirteen paintings by Agnolo Gaddi.



Detail of *Ascension* painting by Agnolo Gaddi.

It was especially fitting to celebrate our 20th anniversary with the completion of the restoration of the 15th-century Chapel of the Crucifix in the Basilica of San Miniato al Monte, a beloved Romanesque masterpiece as it celebrated its 1000th year when it was established as a basilica by Bishop Ildebrando.

Designed by Michelozzo and completed in 1448, the Chapel features a ciborium in Carrara marble with inlay and gilding, an altar, thirteen paintings by Agnolo Gaddi dating to the 1300's, a vault with glazed terracotta panels by Luca della Robbia, bronze eagles attributed to Maso di Bartolomeo, and a gilded wrought-iron gate from the 19th century.

The 14-month process required a team of twelve restorers supervised by Dr. Daniele Rapino.

We are deeply grateful to our donors who made this restoration possible: Ellie and Edgar Cullman Jr.; Catharin Dalpino; the Peter Fogliano and Hal Lester Foundation; Lauren and Phil Hughes; Rob and Anne Krebs in honour of Col. Zane V. Kortum; Nancy and Jeff Moreland; Ellen and James Morton; Ann O'Brien; Terri and Rollie Sturm; and Alison and Bonifacio Zaino.



Chapel of the Crucifix, San Miniato al Monte, Florence, Italy

Pisano-designed pulpit in the church of Sant' Andrea in Pistoia



Pulpit by Giovanni Pisano, 1301.
Church of Sant' Andrea in Pistoia, Italy.

In November, we began work on the distinctive pulpit created by Giovanni Pisano, an early Renaissance masterpiece completed in 1301 in the church of Sant' Andrea in Pistoia. It is first undergoing a two-year monitoring program with stability studies followed by conservation. The first phase focuses on urgently needed procedures while enabling the study of how various components of the pulpit—a tour de force of sculpture and architectural design—are attached to each other. This phase includes research using the latest technological methods to determine the stability of the entire structure and what conservation methods to employ.

The Soprintendenza archeologia belle arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Firenze e le province di Pistoia e Prato drafted the program for the pulpit's study and restoration that was presented to and accepted by Friends of Florence.

The project is being conducted with the approval of the Diocese of Pistoia and the Parish of Sant' Andrea and with the University of Florence (Department of Earth Sciences and Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering) regarding the studies, tests, and structural analysis.

National Archeological Museum's Medici and Lorraine Gem Collection on view for the first time



Hermaphroditus. Last quarter 1st century B.C. (cameo).
Late 16th - early 17th centuries (mount).



Bust of a bacchant or Dionysus. First half 1st century B.C.
(cameo). 17th century (mount)

Last year, we were delighted to launch another important project with the National Archeological Museum of Florence with the December opening of the stunning Medici and Lorraine Gem Collection on view for the first time in newly refurbished section of the Museum. The last ruling dynasties of the Duchy of Florence, the Medici and Lorraine families collected the diminutive masterpieces—Babylonian, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, and post-Classical—dating from 2300 B.C. to the early 18th century. Friends of Florence funding supported two years of study and preparatory work, the refurbishment of the gallery, new display cases, and interpretive material including touch-screens to showcase one of the largest and most important gem collections in the world. The first display in what will be ongoing rotating installations includes 432 objects from the over 2,300 pieces in the collections.

Another project showcasing the Museum's coin collection opened in February 2019.

We are grateful to Martha and David Slosburg and The Jay Pritzker Foundation for their generosity in helping us realize this important project.

Restoration of *Putto with a Dolphin* by Verrocchio

A particularly delightful project is [*Putto with a Dolphin*](#) a newly restored statue by Andrea del Verrocchio. It will be featured in the exhibition *Verrocchio, Master of Leonardo* on view March 9–July 14, 2019 in Palazzo Strozzi.

Verrocchio's influential practice as an artist, goldsmith, and architect led him to develop a studio renowned for training artists including Leonardo da Vinci. The statue, commissioned by Lorenzo the Magnificent for the Medici family villa at Careggi, was later moved to Palazzo Vecchio where it is held today.



Andrea del Verrocchio. *Putto with a Dolphin*, 1470–c. 1475.



Andrea del Verrocchio. Detail of *Putto with a Dolphin*, 1470–c. 1475, during conservation.



Andrea del Verrocchio. Copy of *Putto with a Dolphin*, 1470–c. 1475, crowning the fountain in the “Michelozzo Courtyard” of the Palazzo Vecchio. The original, which was installed on the fountain for many centuries before being moved indoors for conservation purposes, is now featured in the exhibition *Verrocchio, Master of Leonardo* on view in the Palazzo Vecchio through July 14, 2019.

Verrocchio, Master of Leonardo is organized by the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi and the Musei del Bargello in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. where it will be on view September 29, 2019–February 2, 2020, with the support of the Comune di Firenze, Regione Toscana, Camera di Commercio di Firenze, and a grant from the Fondazione CR Firenze. Intesa Sanpaolo is the main sponsor.

THANK YOU AND GRAZIE

In addition to our projects and educational programs showcasing the breadth of Florentine culture, we are thrilled to be able to conduct some restoration activities in public view, as with the Verrocchio’s charming *Putto* in the Palazzo Vecchio museum and Fra Angelico’s sublime *The Annunciation*. Museum visitors can see the science and technology involved in this complex work as well as the tremendous care taken by the conservators. These singular works of art will be featured in major exhibitions this year and next enabling even more people to enjoy their revival.

Careful documentation is also an important part of our process, allowing us all to examine intricate details, regard figures previously hidden under centuries of decay, and appreciate palettes returned to their original glory, among other discoveries.

We appreciate your interest in our work and invite you to join us. By supporting our projects and participating in our programs to experience this world first-hand, you help ensure these treasures will be conserved properly and safeguarded now and for future generations.

To support and learn more

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to Friends of Florence

By becoming patrons of the arts, our donors inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations and help to preserve Florence's extraordinary cultural legacy.

