



FRIENDS *of* FLORENCE

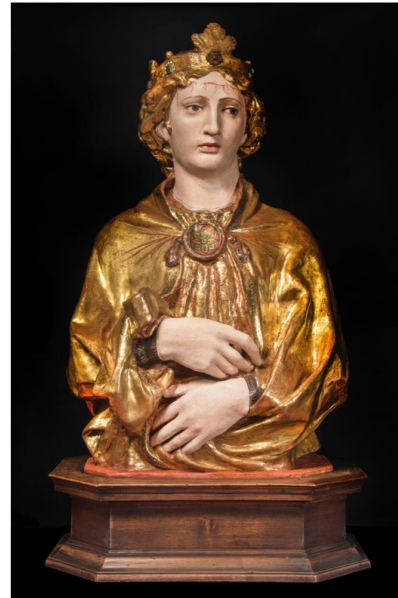
Spring 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends of Florence,

This spring we celebrated the completion of six projects including our latest restoration campaign at the magnificent 11th century **San Miniato at Monte Abbey** with its distinctive Romanesque façade. We began work there in 2017 and have since supported the restoration of Michelozzo's Tabernacle (Chapel of the Crucifix) and the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal.

This latest campaign included the main apse comprising a sublime Byzantine mosaic, pulpit, choir screen, glazed terracotta crucifix, and a reliquary bust of San Miniato—winner of the Fifth Edition of the Friends of Florence Prize Salone dell'Arte e del Restauro di Firenze. The composition and newly revealed details now communicate a complete narrative to all who visit. The before-and-after photography below speaks volumes.

Our very special thanks to Stacy Simon who supported this project in memory of her husband, Bruce, stalwart benefactors of our mission. We are also grateful to Dr. Maria Maugeri with the Soprintendenza ABAP of Florence who oversaw the campaign; the Abbot, Fr. Bernardo Gianni; and the monastic community of San Miniato al Monte.



Reliquary bust of San Miniato, c. 1420, in the Sacristy of the Basilica of San Miniato al Monte, Florence, Italy. After restoration. Wood, stucco and papier mâché. 87 x 54 x 36 cm. Photograph by Torquato Perissi



Reliquary Bust of San Miniato. Before and during restoration. Photograph by [Torquato Perissi](#)



Christ Crucifix, c. 1515. . Attributed to the [Buglioni](#) workshop. Glazed terracotta mounted on wood, 135 cm x 95 cm. Before, during and after restoration. Photos by Filippo [Tattini](#)



Basilica of San [Miniato](#) Abbey. Details of mosaic in the apse, pulpit, and choir screen after restoration. Attributed to the [Buglioni](#) workshop. Mosaic: stone, glass, gold leaf, ceramic, painted tesserae. Surface area: 55 square meters. Pulpit and choir screen: marble. Photographs by Antonio [Quattrone](#)

We are delighted to share three other outstanding projects achieved thanks to your generosity. We completed the restoration of *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (c. 1383), a beautiful altarpiece in the church of SS. Apostoli e Biagio, thanks to supporters David John and Diane Marie Canepari. Janet and Jim Dicke II generously supported the publication of the Horne Museum General Catalogue and the restoration of Edgar Degas' seminal painting *Family Portrait* on view in the Musée d'Orsay depicting the artist's aunt and her family in Florence with whom he stayed in 1858-59. The painting will travel to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in the exhibition *Manet/Degas* and will be on view September 24 – January 7, 2024.

Please join me for on a virtual tour on our [website](#) of these inspiring examples of artistic expression and, in the case of the publication, Herbert Percy Horne's compelling story of amassing an exceptional collection of drawings which he left to the nation of Italy, his

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Madonna and Child with Four Saints, c. 1383, an altarpiece in the church of SS. Apostoli e Biagio



*Madonna and Child with Four Saints, c. 1383. Attributed to Jacobo Di Cione.
Tempera painting on wooden panel, 147 cm. x 232 cm. Church of SS. Apostoli e Biagio, Florence, Italy.
Photograph by Ottaviano Caruso*

We are thrilled to report that an exquisite altarpiece in the church of SS. Apostoli e Biagio in Florence has successfully undergone an in-depth maintenance process. Attributed to Jacobo Di Cione, the work is a polyptych (a multi-panel painting on wood) completed circa 1383. We are deeply grateful to David John and Diane Marie Canepari for their contribution to the project. Gallerie degli Uffizi Director Eike Schmidt and Uffizi staff member Simona Pasquinucci oversaw the work conducted on the premises under the watchful eyes of Fr. Daniel Mauricio Filho, parish priest of the church.

After conducting research and a thorough evaluation, the restorers determined that the altarpiece required maintenance—a preemptive process to avoid damage and improve the work’s environmental conditions and the ways in which it exists and functions—rather than intensive conservation or restoration.

Madonna and Child with Four Saints comprises five sections divided by small twisted colonnettes. The inner parts of the spaces between the pinnacles are occupied by medallions depicting, from left to right: *St. Peter*, the *Angel*, the *Virgin Mary*, and *St. Paul*. The panels depict, from left to right: *St. Lawrence*, *St. John the Baptist*, the *Madonna and Child with Saints*, *St. Francis*, and *St. Stephen the Protomartyr*. The predella is composed of five panels depicting the *Adoration of the Magi* in the center and various saints on either side.

The altarpiece suffered in the devastating 1966 flood of Florence when water damaged virtually the entire surface of the work. It was subsequently restored in the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, with restorers Paolo Gori and Jacopo Ascoli working on the predella in 1967 and Leonardo Passeri addressing the polyptych proper from April 1968 to December 1969. It was delivered to Casciani (“Studio 4”) in Florence in 1989 to complete the restoration process.

This current intervention involved ultraviolet fluorescence to detect and highlight paints with a natural or synthetic base, glues, oils, and other organic materials such as egg white

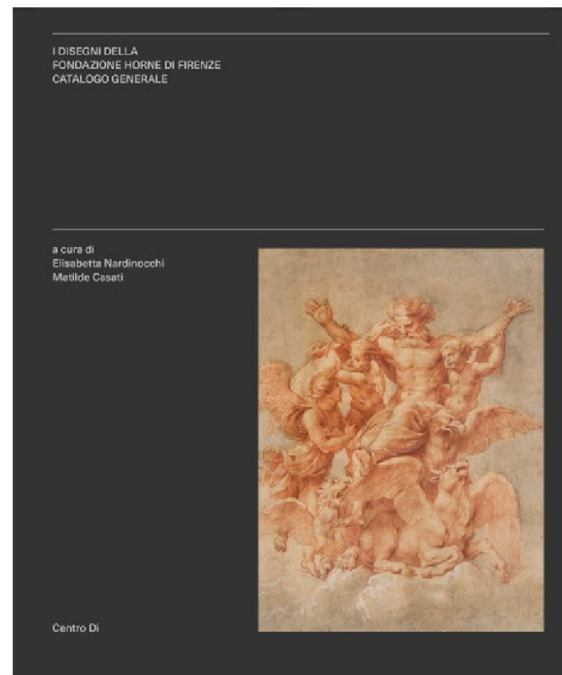
(often brushed on panel paintings as a protective layer). Resin-based varnishes display a greenish-yellow fluorescence, while protein-based patinas show a distinctive blue-grey tone. Later retouching and repainting is evident in the form of darker and more opaque patches by comparison with the original palette. That is why it is often easy with this kind of inspection to differentiate between repainting and original work—given that repainting is more recent, it shows up darker. Other technologies like infrared light and x-rays either confirm or correct these initial observations.

Infrared inspection enables sensors to obtain information about layers lying beneath the paint layer, such as a preparatory drawing, the use of charcoal and second thoughts, or the presence of signatures and other distinguishing marks no longer visible to the naked eye.

The process included meticulous surface cleaning, treating for wormwood, regluing, puttying, retouching, and general stabilizing.

Publication of “General Catalogue of the Horne Museum Drawing Collection”

We have been collaborating with the Horne Museum in Florence since 2013. In our spring 2020 e-newsletter, we noted the completion of the conservation of a group of 48 drawings by the Venetian artist Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1692–1770) housed there and a painting by the Maestro di Badia a Isola (1290–1320) in Venice’s Palazzo Cini Gallery. With our friends at the Horne, we are delighted to announce the realization of a major project—the publication of the General Catalogue of the Museum’s holdings of 809 drawings from the 15th to the early 20th century. One of the most important collections of drawings in Italy, it contains work by Bernini, Constable, Füssli, Parmigianino, Pontormo Raphael, Rubens, and Tiepolo, among many others.



General Catalogue of the Horne Museum Drawing Collection, 2023. Published by Centro Di. Cover image. Photography by Antonio Quattrone, courtesy Horne Museum, Florence Italy

The catalogue, published by Centro Di and three years in the making, is designed for scholars and art-lovers alike. With new photography and essays by the editors Elisabetta Nardinocchi, Director of the Horne Museum, and art historian Dr. Matilde Casati, readers will now be able to explore the trove and better understand Horne’s connoisseurship and influences. The editors’ meticulous research uncovered histories of the collection, identified lesser-known artists, and reveals new insights into the practices of master draftsmen and the collector himself.

Herbert Percy Horne (1864-1916) was a man of many interests and talents. In addition to being an art collector, he was an accomplished poet, architect, typographer, designer, and art historian. He donated his home and collection to the Italian state in 1916, thus facilitating the launch of the Horne Foundation and Museum to preserve and publicly display the collection and thereby foster new scholarship.

Our bond with the Horne runs deep, and helping study, catalogue, and digitize the collection over time—thanks to the generosity of Janet and Jim Dicke II—has been a project dear to our hearts. We thank Director Elisabetta Nardinocchi for involving us in the project and Dr. Matilde Casati for her steadfast dedication to the task. We trust that the catalogue will help familiarize people both with the collection and the man who assembled it and donated it to the community—an extraordinary gesture of humanity and good will.

The General Catalogue of the Horne Museum Drawing Collection is available for purchase

Restoration of Edgar Degas' *Family Portrait* in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Edgar Degas *Portrait de Famille* (the Bellelli Family) 1858-1869. Oil on canvas, H. 201 x L. 249.5 cm. ©C2RMF/Thomas Clot

During our June 2022 trip to study Claude Monet's (1840-1926) oeuvre within the context of the Western canon, our group visited the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, home to one of the largest collections of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artworks in the world. There we encountered works by Edgar Degas (1834-1917), notably his magnificent *Portrait de Famille* (the Bellelli Family) inspired by his experience in Florence where he stayed with family members from summer 1858 through spring 1859.

The portrait is currently a highlight of *Manet/Degas*, a major exhibition co-organized with the Musée d'Orsay where it is currently on view until July 23. It will travel to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York where it will be presented from September 24, 2023, through January 7, 2024. The exhibition's chief curator is Laurence des Cars, Director, the Louvre Museum. The curatorial team includes Isolde Pludermacher, General Curator of Painting at the Musée d'Orsay; Stéphane Guégan, scientific advisor to the president of the Musées d'Orsay and l'Orangerie; and Stephan Wolohojian, John Pope-Hennessy Curator in Charge of the Department of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Thanks to generous support from Janet and Jim Dicke II, in agreement with the American Friends Musées d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie, our Foundation was able to restore the painting. Degas began the masterwork in 1858. Following its public display in the 1867 Salon, he returned the painting to his studio, completing it in 1869.

The large-scale work depicts the Bellelli family: his aunt Laure de Gas, her husband, Baron Gennaro Bellelli, and his young cousins Giovanna and Giulia. The portrait reveals tension between his aunt, who was mourning her father's recent death (his portrait is on the wall behind her), and uncle, who had been exiled to Florence from Naples, seated with his back to the viewer. In correspondences, the artist noted that he had been influenced by Italian Renaissance masters Botticelli and Giorgione and Flemish portraitist Anthony van Dyck.

IN-PROCESS PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Ada Salvi and Jacopo Tabolli on the excavation site during the discovery of a statue.



Restoration first aid on the excavation.



Simonetta Brandolini, Jacopo Tabolli and Wilma Basilissi during the first cleaning operations of the Apollo.

Photos Courtesy Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le province di Siena, Grosseto e Arezzo - Comune di San Casciano dei Bagni

We are pleased to relay that an agreement between Friends of Florence and Soprintendente Arch. Gabriele Nannetti was signed in March 2023, for funding to the tune of €70,000 to restore 34 bronze masterpieces from the sacred basin in **San Casciano dei Bagni**. The funding is of vital importance ahead of the exhibition illustrating the discovery of the San Casciano bronzes due to open at the Palazzo del Quirinale in late June 2023.

THANK YOU AND GRAZIE MILLE

We continue to be humbled by your interest in and support of our work. Wishing you a very happy, healthy, and culturally enriching summer.

Saluti,

Simonetta

Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda
President, Friends of Florence

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