



FRIENDS of FLORENCE
Conserving Art for Over 25 Years

Fall 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

As the fall season gets underway, we are eager to share our latest news with you.

In September, the Palazzo Strozzi and Museo di San Marco jointly opened *Fra Angelico*, the first major exhibition in Florence of the Renaissance master's work in 70 years. Fra Angelico (Guido di Piero, Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, c. 1395-1455) is widely considered one of the greatest and most innovative artists of the Italian Renaissance.

Comprising over 140 works and four years in the making, the stunning joint presentation features illuminated manuscripts, paintings, drawings, and sculptures. The project enabled new research and discoveries because of diagnostic investigations and the extensive restoration campaign undertaken on many of the works. It also provided a unique opportunity to reunite altarpieces that had been disassembled and dispersed over centuries.

Four important works on display in the exhibition were conserved thanks to Friends of Florence's support. In fact, since our founding 26 years ago, we have supported conservation of ten works by this master. In addition, there are three other artworks in the exhibition that we had restored in past years.

The *Deposition of Santa Trinità* opens the show in Palazzo Strozzi, and we thank Peter Fogliano and Hal Lester for their major gift for this important project.



Santa Trinita Altarpiece (Deposition from the Cross), 1429-1432. Installation view in the *Fra Angelico* exhibition, Palazzo Strozzi and Museo di San Marco, Florence, Italy, September 26, 2025 - January 25, 2026.
Photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNO Studio

The *San Domenico Altarpiece (Fiesole Altarpiece)* in the Convent of San Domenico, where Fra Angelico lived as a young friar and returned to often, was also restored over a two-year period with the support of several of our donors and we thank Jim

and Janet Dicke II, Tom and Ann Fries, Kent and Celia McClelland, Jeff and Nancy Moreland, the Jay Pritzker Fund, and Ben Quinones for their support.



San Domenico Altarpiece (Fiesole Altarpiece), 1420-1423; 1501. Main panel with Madonna and Child enthroned with eight angels and Saints Thomas Aquinas, Barnabas, Dominic, and Peter Martyr. Installation view in the *Fra Angelico* exhibition, Palazzo Strozzi and Museo di San Marco, Florence, Italy, September 26, 2025 - January 25, 2026. Photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNO Studio

Restoration work on his *Crucifixion* (1433-34), a masterpiece of sublime artistry, spirituality, and presence, was completed in the Chapter House of the Convent of San Domenico in Fiesole in July. We remain grateful to the Convent Fathers for their kind hospitality, and for the generosity of Gerhard De Geer, and doctors Camilla Alderighi, Raffaele Rasoini, and Steven Woloshin.



Crucifixion, 1433-34. Chapter House, Convent of San Domenico, Fiesole, Italy. Presentation after 2025 restoration with support from Friends of Florence Foundation. Photo courtesy Friends of Florence

Whereas the Convent remains cloistered, visitors may view the restored fresco in the Chapter House at specific times during the presentation of *Fra Angelico*.

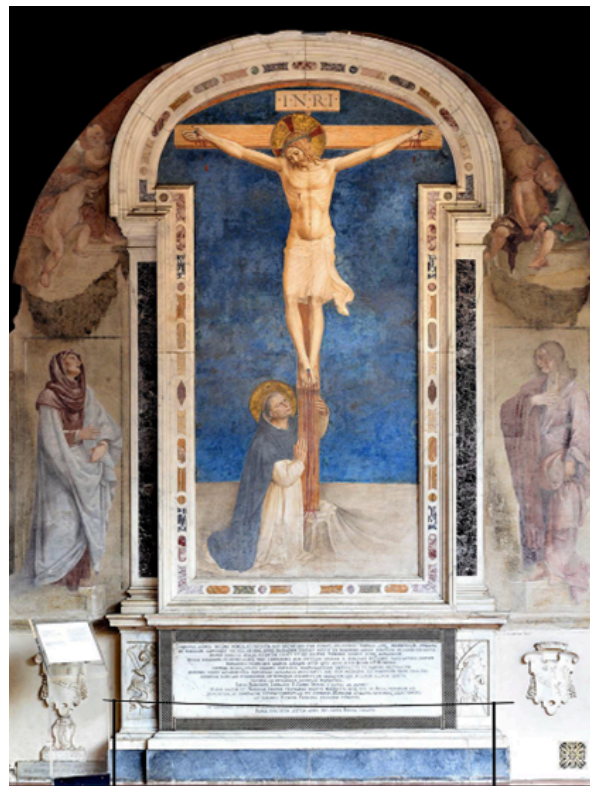
The exquisitely decorated panels for the *Armadio degli Argenti* (Cabinet for the Silver Votives), also at the Museo di San Marco, were restored prior to the

exhibition. The large panels, commissioned by Piero di Medici for the Basilica della Santissima Annunziata, depict 35 scenes from the life of Christ. It was used to safeguard silver objects gifted to the church by its congregants. We thank Phil and Lauren Hughes for their support of this project.



Armadio degli Argenti (Cabinet for the Silver Votives at Santissima Annunziata), c. 1450.
Installation view in the *Fra Angelico* exhibition, Palazzo Strozzi and Museo di San Marco, Florence, Italy,
September 26, 2025 - January 25, 2026. Photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNO Studio

Finally, the *Crucifixion with San Domenico* (c. 1442) is in the Cloister of Sant'Antonino in the Museo di San Marco. During an early redecoration of the Cloister two centuries later, two figures were placed on each side of the fresco by Cecco Bravo (1601-1661) of the weeping Madonna and St. John. Decorative elements were also added around the fresco. The restoration was completed in September just a few days prior to the beginning of the exhibition. We thank Dr. Emilio Bizzi for his support and generous donation.



Crucifixion with San Domenico, c. 1442. Cloister of Sant'Antonino in the Museo di San Marco.
Photo courtesy Friends of Florence

We salute all those involved in the organization of the extraordinary exhibition including the conservation team and curators Carl Brandon Strehlke, Curator Emeritus of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Stefano Casciu, Regional Director of the Musei Nazionali della Toscana; and Angelo Tartuferi, former Director of the Museo di San Marco. Bravissimi!

PROJECTS UPDATES

***St. Michael the Archangel and the Dragon* by Piero del Pollaiuolo**

The Museo Stefano Bardini is celebrating its centennial this year, and Friends of Florence is helping mark the occasion by restoring a superb painting by Piero del Pollaiuolo (1431-1498): *St. Michael the Archangel and the Dragon* (1460-1465). The painting was a nominee in the 2024 edition of our Salone dell'Arte e del Restauro di Firenze Award.

The painting portrays the Archangel in armor fighting the Devil, depicted as a dragon. We know from Giorgio Vasari's *Lives* (1568) that the painting was originally one of a two-side processional banner made for the Company of St. Michael the Archangel in Arezzo. Unfortunately, the other side representing the Crucifixion is lost.



Piero del Pollaiuolo (1431-1498), *St. Michael the Archangel and the Dragon* (1460-1465). Museo Stefano Bardini, Florence, Italy.

The banner was carried in processions twice a year: on the feast day commemorating the Archangel's appearance on Mount Gargano and on the saint's own feast day. Due to exposure to the elements, it fell into poor condition. The banner was housed in the Company's (now destroyed) church until 1766. Eventually it was purchased by antiquarian and art dealer Stefano Bardini who specialized in the Renaissance. He gifted his collection and palazzo to the city of Florence upon his death in 1922. The municipality restructured the property and opened it to the public as a museum in 1925.

As we do whenever possible, work on the painting is being performed on site for the next several months so museum visitors can still see the artwork and witness the meticulous restoration process first-hand. We thank Catharin Dalpino for her generous gift for this project.

Donatello's equestrian monument to Gattamelata

Our [collaboration](#) with Save Venice to restore [Donatello's equestrian monument to Gattamelata on the Basilica of St. Anthony in Padua](#) has begun! We thank Stacy Simon for her major gift for this important project. For more images, click [here](#).





EVENTS

Bella Musica concert in the Basilica of Santo Spirito

This summer, Friends of Florence was delighted to organize a free Bella Musica concert featuring musicians from the Young Ambassadors of European Mozart Ways from Salzburg, one of the most prestigious conservatories in Europe, in the Basilica of Santo Spirito. With your help, we have supported seven extensive projects in Santo Spirito.



Photo courtesy *Florence Daily News*, August 28, 2025

The evening's program featured both work by Mozart as well as other celebrated composers including Haydn. Chamber pieces were alternated with orchestral arrangements to showcase both the virtuosity of individual musicians and the talent of the group as a whole.

Some 150 people attended, and numerous passersby stood by the doors of the church. Fittingly, it was held on the evening of August 28, the feast day of St. Augustine in the very basilica founded by the Augustinian order.

Wine Auction

In March next spring, we are holding a two-week, online wine auction ending on March 26, 2026, with prestigious wines and exclusive experiences offered in the lots.

The wines will be from many foremost producers including Marchesi Antinori, Marchesi Frescobaldi, Ornellaia, Sassicaia, Castiglion del Bosco, and Chianti Classico special vintages.

Lots for exclusive experiences based on three-to-four-day itineraries in and around Florence and Tuscany will be presented as well as the opportunity for two people to attend our October 2026 program on Michelangelo and Titian.

Special lots include unique access to museums and collections and the opportunity to underwrite a unique restoration project in Florence.

The auction will be conducted by the Pandolfini Auction House in Florence. All proceeds directly benefit our conservation projects. We invite you to join us and support our urgent work!

THANK YOU AND GRAZIE MILLE

Saluti,

Simonetta

Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda
President, Friends of Florence

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