President’s Message from Mark Rosen

September 15, 2019

Dear Members of the Italian Art Society,

I’d like to begin the new academic semester by wishing our members a healthy and productive year, and thanking you all for your support of the society and participation in our sessions. We hope to see many of you at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference in St. Louis (October 17–20), where we are sponsoring three sessions, including one chaired by former IAS President Sheryl E. Reiss!

The late spring and early summer months were busy ones, most notably thanks to our annual IAS/Kress Lecture in Italy presented by Tim McCall (Associate Professor of Art History, Villanova University). His talk, “‘No Great Sin in a Lord’: Galeazzo Maria Sforza and the Materiality of Lordship in Renaissance Milan,” took place at the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan. I wish to thank Brera director James Bradburne and his staff for graciously allowing the use of the museum’s Sala Passione for the presentation, and also give a nod to former IAS President Sean Roberts for introducing the speaker and hosting the post-talk dinner. The Kress series will continue at another site in Italy in May or June 2020; a call for proposals will go up early in the new year. The Kress Foundation has graciously extended support for the funding through 2024, as well as begun a five-year cycle to continue offering Kress Travel Grants. We will soon advertise for spring-2020 conference-travel support.

At the 54th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo in May, the IAS sponsored three interlinked sessions organized by Licia Buttà concerning the fourteenth-century painted ceiling of the Sala Magna in Palazzo Chiaromante-Steri in Palermo. We are very pleased to continue our sponsorship at Kalamazoo in 2020, when organizers Francesco Gangemi and Alison Locke Perchuk pay tribute to Dorothy Glass’s incomparable contributions to medieval art history with two sessions on Italian sculpture. In addition, at the College Art Association in Chicago we will sponsor “From Cloaca Maxima to America: Italy’s ‘History of Shit,’” organized by Sasha Goldman and Danielle Abdon and chaired by Pamela O. Long. At the Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Philadelphia in April, 2020, we have four sessions on the slate: “Visual Networks of Healing in Renaissance Italy,” “Lively Things: Material Culture in Early Modern Italy,” “New Perspectives on Italian Art,” and “Women and Gender in Italian Trecento Art and Architecture.” Thank you not only to our organizers and presenters but also to the Awards Committee for their work.

In the last Newsletter I mentioned that the IAS website is in the midst of major upgrades. This is still ongoing work, and we thank you for your patience as we’ve had some glitches with membership renewals. The organization is greatly indebted to the long-term commitment undertaken by Webmaster Jean Marie Carey to improve the interface and design. As always, I’d like to thank those who have been especially instrumental in the organization over the summer months, especially Vice President Sarah Wilkins and Treasurer Janna Israel.

I’d like to make a final appeal to consider serving as a committee member or board member for the IAS. The website will soon have a call for nominations, with a deadline of November 15. We are an all-volunteer organization, and many of those currently serving are fortunate enough earlier in our careers to have presented in an IAS-sponsored session or to have received a research, publication, or travel grant. We always could use your help in continuing to advance our mission.

Cordiali saluti,
Mark
in the Emerging Scholars Committee (ESC) is limited to current graduate students and those who have received a graduate degree within the last four years.

Each nominee must submit a current CV as well as an IAS Nomination Form that includes a statement of interest (150 words max.) indicating the position to which s/he is being nominated. When you save the form, please include the last name of the nominee as part of the file name.

A nominee who is interested in more than one position should indicate order of preference. The deadline for nominations is November 15, but inquiries and nominations can be sent to the Nominating Committee Chair at any time at nominations@italianartsociety.org. Look for additional information on the website soon at https://www.italianartsociety.org/officers-committees/officer-committee-vacancies/

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: (2-year term)
- Treasurer
  - 1 opening

COMMITTEES: (3-year terms)
- Awards Committee:
  - 3 openings
- Emerging Scholars Committee:
  - 1 opening
- Membership, Outreach, & Development Committee:
  - 2 openings
- Program Committee:
  - 2 openings
- Nominating Committee:
  - 1 opening

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM: (3-year terms)
- Newsletter Assistants:
  - 1 opening
- Social Media Coordinator:
  - 1 opening

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Sessions Sponsored by the Italian Art Society at the Sixteenth Century Studies and Conference to be held in St. Louis, MO, October 17-20, 2019.

Session I: Pope Clement VII, the World beyond Europe, and the Visual Arts: The New World and Africa

Session Chair: Sheryl E. Reiss, Newberry Library

In recent years, the interests of art historians working on early modern Italy have expanded significantly to include encounters with cultures beyond Europe. In the wake of this “global turn,” scholars have opened our eyes to cross-cultural exchange with the Americas, Africa and Asia, and to modes of representing non-European “Others.” Pope Clement VII (reg. 1523-1534), the focus of this paper, is well known for his vacillating relationships with European rulers including the Holy Roman emperor Charles V, the French king Francis I, and the English king Henry VIII. Less well known are his dealings with the world beyond Europe. This paper explores Giulio de’ Medici’s interactions—both as cardinal during the pontificate of Leo X and as pope—with the world beyond Europe. Along with Muslim cultures (especially that of the Ottoman Turks), these interactions were with the recently-encountered cultures of the western hemisphere and with Christian Africa. Particular emphasis will be placed upon how Clement’s engagement with the non-European world can be studied through visual representations and gifted objects. Works of art to be considered include the decorations of the Villa Madama in Rome and the Medici Villa at Poggio a Caiano outside Florence; the Mixtec manuscript Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus I, the famed Cortés map of Teotihuacan, and other objects from the western hemisphere including turquoise masks; and gifts from Emperor Dawit II of Ethiopia.

Papers:

Irene Backus, Oklahoma State University, “From Ming Deer to Ottoman Tulips: Medici Porcelain and the Migratory Ornament.”


Kelli Wood, University of Tennessee, “Conchology, Collecting, and the Crafting of Early Modern Nature.”

Session II: Fiat Lux: Giovanni Bellini and Andrea del Sarto on Art, Religion, and Science

Session organizers: Steven J. Cody, Purdue University Fort Wayne, and Eric R. Hupe, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts

Chair: Meredith J. Gill, University of Maryland, College Park

Light is essential to the visual arts and to vision itself. Over seventy years ago, Millard Meiss drew attention to the ethereal representation of light in fifteenth-century painting, arguing for it as “a major pictorial theme.” Indeed, Renaissance artists used the effects of light to engage with notions of divinity, sacred wisdom, and visual experience. But how does one talk, in any serious manner, about something that is fundamentally intangible? The ethereal
nature of light presents a challenge for the artist who attempts to depict it, the beholder who attempts to appreciate it, and the art historian who attempts to study it. In focusing on two of Italy’s artistic luminaries, this panel serves as a forum for the exploration of light’s formal, symbolic, metaphorical, and scientific dimensions, as a step toward reconstructing the rich fifteenth-century context in which art, religion, and science found a common language in light.

Papers:

Eric R. Hupe, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, “Standing in the Light of God: Giovanni Bellini’s St. Francis in the Desert.”

Steven J. Cody, Purdue University Fort Wayne, “Andrea del Sarto and the Splendor of the Luco Pietà.”

Christine Zappella, The University of Chicago, “The Meta/Physics of Light, Confraternal Worship, and Andrea del Sarto’s Monochrome Life of St. John the Baptist.”

Session III: Why the Renaissance Matters: The Value of Renaissance Art History in the Modern and Contemporary World.

Session Organizer: Anne H. Muraoka, Old Dominion University

Chair: Marcia B. Hall, Tyler School of Art, Temple University

This panel addresses the significance of the Renaissance beyond the Renaissance era. Papers address the seminal role of Renaissance narrative painting on modern art and film; how the pulsating rhythms of modern art draw from Renaissance experiments in addressing and engaging the viewer; how a case study on the visually impaired in Renaissance Venice helps us understand the parallels between the Renaissance world and our own; and finally, how Renaissance artists and viewers shared the values of the millennial generation that we see in the classroom - interaction, collaboration, and active engagement. An elucidation of the relationship between the Renaissance and the modern and contemporary world can provide a better understanding of the past, as well as the present.

Papers:

Peter Weller, Independent Art Historian, “Padua, St. Francis, and the Moving Picture.”

Javier Berzal de Dios, Western Washington University, “A Pulsating Rhythm: Learning from Modern Ruminations on Crivelli and Berruguete.”


Sarah M. Cadagin, Savannah College of Art and Design, “From One Millennial to Another: Teaching the Renaissance in the 21st Century.”

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Sessions Sponsored by the Italian Art Society at the Renaissance Society of America annual conference in Philadelphia, PA, to be held April 2-4, 2020.

Session I: Visual Networks of Healing in Renaissance Italy

Organizers and chairs:
Sandra Cardarelli, University of Aberdeen, UK, and Valentina Živković, Institute for Balkan Studies, SASA, Belgrade

This session explores faith and medicine as two of the traditional methods of healing represented in the visual arts in the Renaissance, and how its local and global dimensions influenced Italian art. Visual imagery will be examined to establish the ways in which narratives of healing practices and healing saints were formed and became an integral part of cultural traditions. Healing will be discussed in both its physical and metaphysical dimensions to highlight the ways in which religious and cultural values related to healing translated into shared visual idioms that were sought after, acquired, adapted and effectively utilized to foster new religious cults and/ or healing practices. As imagery was actively used to forge devotional, social and political networks between different locales, main centres and liminal communities, we will examine how the practice and representation of healing differed and influenced dominant cultural centres and the periphery.

Papers:

Theresa Flanigan, The College of Saint Rose, “Art, Compassion, and Healing at the Tomb of St. Francis in Assisi.”

Louise Marshall, University of Sydney, “Topographies of Salvation: The City Model in Renaissance Plague Images.”

Alessandra Foscati, School of Arts and Humanities, Center for Classical Studies, University of Lisbon, “Healing Saints and Disease: Images and Texts.”
**Session II: Lively Things: Material Culture in Early Modern Italy**

Organizer and Chair: Kelly Whitford, Wheaton College, MA

This panel offers studies of material and visual culture in early modern Italy, c. 1300-1550, that engage questions of enlivenment, agency, presence, and materiality. In the early modern era, works of art seemingly came to life, paintings wept, statues spoke, reliquaries healed, and automata moved. In all these ways (and many others), art, ritual, and cult objects acted as lively things. This panel seeks to examine the blurred lines between beholders and objects in order to broaden our understanding of the interactions between people and material culture in early modern Italy. Scholars invested in this question have been powerfully influenced by David Freedberg and Hans Belting who examined pre-modern images and sculptures that defied the category of the object by seemingly appearing as present and alive. Bissera Pentcheva, Elina Gertsman, Ninotchka Zchomelidse, and Megan Holmes, to name a few, are shaping the field by taking up questions about the multi-sensory, performative, and liminal characteristics of medieval and early modern art and architecture. Additionally, the categorical boundaries defining humans and objects continue to be erased, questioned, and redrawn by scholars of actor network theory, performance theory, new materialism, and thing theory.

Papers:

Anna Majeski, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, “Astrological Cosmologies and Embodied Viewing in Giusto de’Menabuoi’s Baptistry frescoes.”

Nele De Raedt, Ghent University, “The Protective Power of Architectural Features: Beholders and Buildings in Fifteenth-Century Italy.”

Steven F. H. Stowell, Concordia University, Montreal, “Agency and Origins: Specialized Patronage of Miracle-Working Images in Renaissance Italy.”

**Session III: New Perspectives on Italian Art**

Session Organizers: Kelley Helmstutler Di Dio, University of Vermont, and Ilaria Andreoli, ITEM-CNRS, Paris

Chair: William Wallace, Washington University, St. Louis, MO

This session creates a space for emerging scholars (recent Ph.D.s or Ph.D. candidates) of Italian art to present their work. Proposals on any area of Italian early modern art (1300-1600) are welcome. We are particularly interested in scholars working in new methodologies, new areas of study, or innovative approaches to more traditional areas of Renaissance studies. The intention is to provide new scholars a forum to present their ideas and methods and an opportunity to receive constructive feedback from senior scholars who will serve as respondents.

Papers:

Stephen Mack, Rutgers University, “New Approaches to Non Finito. A Rough Aesthetic After Donatello and Before Michelangelo.”

Vincenzo Sorrentino, University of Pisa, “Seeking a Roman Identity: the del Riccio and Michelangelo.”


**Session IV: Women and Gender in Italian Trecento Art and Architecture**

Organizer and Chair: Judith Steinhoff, University of Houston

This session examines both the patronage and the representation of women in 13th- and 14th-century Italian art, topics that remain under-explored despite the large body of scholarship on women and gender in other cultures and periods. Papers go beyond the stereotypical gender identities and roles promoted by the Church and theological writings, to seek a complex understanding of the models for and the lives of Trecento women. Topics include the role of gender in women’s religious education, patronage and design of architectural space. Papers address royal women, cloistered women, and laywomen from orders and regions throughout Italy.

Papers:


Angelica Federici, Cambridge University, UK, “Convents, Clausura and Cloisters: Female Religious Patronage in Medieval Lazio”

Janis Elliott, Texas Tech University, “The Art of Royal Propaganda: Recovering the Queen of Naples’ Reputation.”
CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Sessions Sponsored by the Italian Art Society at the 55th International Congress on Medieval Studies Kalamazoo, MI, to be held May 7-10, 2020.

Sessions I + II: Quo vadis? Medieval Italian Sculpture Studies in the New Millennium In Honor of Dorothy Glass.

Session Organizers and Chairs:
Francesco Gangemi, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, and Alison Locke Perchuk, California State University Channel Islands

Dorothy Glass’s 2005 paper, “Quo Vadis? L’étude de la sculpture romane italienne à l’aube du troisième millénaire,” balanced a brief sketch of the historiography of medieval Italian sculpture studies as practiced during the last millennium with suggestions for directions such studies might take in the new one. Many of the issues and approaches she signaled as potentially fruitful have since been integrated into scholarship: for instance, the paired study of iconography and liturgy has led to a richer understanding of the social and ritual functions of religious sculpture, including its role in the creation of sacred space, while investigations of patronage have highlighted, in particular, the role of the laity in the development of medieval Italian art. But as scholars know only too well, history has a way of tracing its own course, and the intervening fifteen years have brought dramatic changes to medieval art history unanticipated by Glass’s essay, including the environmental, ethical, material, and Mediterranean “turns,” new digital (or digitally inspired) tools and methods, and the emergence of long-suppressed questions of racism and bias, historiography, and the academy. This double session seeks to honor Glass’s many years of contributions to medieval art history by asking, Quo vadimus nunc? Speakers to be announced at a later date.

SPECIAL FEATURES

EXHIBITION REVIEW

Fra Angelico and the Rise of the Florentine Renaissance
Museo del Prado, Madrid
May 28 – September 15, 2019
Reviewed by Anne Leader, Independent Scholar

When it entered the Museo Nacional del Prado in 1861, Fra Angelico’s Annunciation Altarpiece was the museum’s sole example of early fifteenth-century painting, joining a Virgin and Child painted around 1345 by Francesco Traini (inv. P002944) as the collection’s only Italian works made prior to 1462. Beginning in 1941, important acquisitions increased the Prado’s number of Quattrocento works to fifteen, but Angelico’s Annunciation remained the museum’s only illustration of Florentine art from the decades framing Leon Battista Alberti’s treatise On Painting. This singularity heightened the excitement surrounding the purchase in 2016 of Angelico’s Virgin with the Pomegranate and concurrent gift of The Virgin of Saint Anthony Abbot, both from the collection of the Duke of Alba, which in turn inspired this exhibition.

Through eighty-two works of painting, sculpture, and decorative arts, Fra Angelico and the Rise of the Florentine Renaissance contextualizes the Prado’s three Angelico pictures both in terms of the friar painter’s training and development in Florence as well as the reception and understanding of the artist, and early Italian painting more broadly, on the Iberian peninsula from the fifteenth century to today.

Painted around 1425 for Angelico’s home convent of San Domenico in Fiesole, the Annunciation Altarpiece (cat. 29), no longer in its original frame, was exhibited at the exhibition’s center as component parts on adjacent walls, thus allowing close observation of both the main panel, recently restored to splendid effect, and the five Marian scenes that form its predella, which will undergo conservation after the show concludes. Though on view since the mid-nineteenth century, this summer the brilliant picture has attracted huge crowds of madrileños and tourists alike, averaging 25,000 visitors per week; inspired the oldest soccer club in Spain to design a new jersey for the 2019–20 season; and stimulated vigorous sales of the show’s excellent catalog, necessitating a second printing of the Spanish version. Curated by Carl Brandon Strehlke, the exhibition situates Angelico within the artistic boom of early fifteenth-century Florence and demonstrates that he was one of its key protagonists, even though Alberti did not name him in the dedication of his treatise alongside Filippo Brunelleschi, Donatello, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Luca della Robbia, and Masaccio as the leading pioneers of the city’s all’antica style.

Though Angelico’s innovations in the depiction of space, power of storytelling, and brilliance of color and form to capture the depth and range of human emotion have been well known to specialists for some time, as seen in the monographic shows hosted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (2005), the Musei Capitolini in Rome (2009), and most recently at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston (2018), Angelico’s contributions to the development of Italian painting remain underappreciated in standard narratives of the period, which tend to see Angelico as a follower and receiver of Masaccio’s trailblazing style rather than an equal partner in the revolution underway in 1420s Florence. As Strehlke makes clear, it is the Prado
**Annunciation**, painted about 1425-26, that deserves credit as the first Renaissance altarpiece to use a rectangular frame, a decade before Alberti opined on the "open window through which the subject to be painted is seen." (On Painting, 1.19) Angelico’s decision to eschew Gothic arches as the frame for his angelic vision is made all the more revolutionary by his purposeful absence of a gold ground – novelties underscored by comparison to Masaccio’s contemporaneous *Saint Paul* (cat. 26) from the gold-ground Pisa polyptych. The grey sandstone corbel capital (cat. 30B) hung between Masaccio’s gold-backed saint and the *Annunciation*’s Brunelleschian loggia emphasized how Angelico deserves credit for reviving classicizing architectural motifs in the years just before Masaccio adorned the nave of Santa Maria Novella with his *Trinity*.

Four galleries served as preamble to the *Annunciation*, with the first dedicated to the hypothesis that Angelico, then the layman Guido di Pietro, trained in the workshop of Lorenzo Monaco (Barcelona, cat. 8), through whom he absorbed the lessons of the Gaddi family of painters, represented by the Master of the Misericordia, possibly identifiable as Giovanni Gaddi (Madrid, cat. 1). Suggestions for Guido di Pietro’s juvenilia include works that in the past have been attributed to Don Lorenzo himself: portions of two initials from a gradual made in his famed scriptorium (Copenhagen, cat. 5), a private devotional panel now in San Diego (cat. 6), and a predella panel showing the young Saint Anthony Abbot in white robes, suggesting a Camaldolese origin for the otherwise untraced altarpiece (Vatican City, cat. 7).

Works from Spanish collections also attest to knowledge of early Florentine painting in Spain, exemplified by the predella from Starmina’s *Altarpiece of Bonifacio Ferrer* dedicated in 1397 over an altar in the charterhouse of Santa Maria de Porta Coeli at Serra (Valencia, cat. 2). This splendid *bando*, heretofore exhibited only in Valencia and Salamanca, was one of several objects on view that have rarely, if ever, been displayed outside of their home museums.

Echoes of these works reverberate in the next two galleries, where we see Angelico developing, yet still experimenting with, color and the proportions of the human figure. The splendid and unusual Uffizi *Thebaid*, exquisitely lit and hung to accommodate close looking at its myriad vignettes of hermitic life (Florence, cat. 11), was shown alongside subjects expected from emerging artists, including the Met’s *Griggs Crucifixion* (New York, cat. 14) and two experiments with the Virgin and Child (Saint Petersburg, cat. 9 and Rotterdam, cat. 15), which point to Angelico’s lessons from Lorenzo Monaco seen in the first gallery but also show a more robust sense of physical form and space in keeping with contemporary sculpture, here represented by three terracotta reliefs by Donatello (Florence and Detroit, cat. 4; Prato, cat. 12).

A predella showing scenes from the life of St. Michael Archangel (New Haven, cat. 10) hung less comfortably alongside these works, its ruinous condition rendering a definitive assessment difficult. Strong support for an attribution to Angelico is found in the fact that these scenes were painted over an earlier image, seeming to coincide with two documented payments in 1418 to Angelico, then Guido di Pietro, for work on an altarpiece painted by Ambrogio di Baldese, whose work is represented by two lovely tabernacle shutters, never before exhibited outside their home in the Musei Vaticani (Vatican City, cat. 3). Acutely observed narrative details, like St. Michael tenderly cradling a new mother’s head as he guides her and her infant to safety, or the fluttering banner carried by a priest heading a procession, foreshadow Angelico’s fully developed skills of storytelling. However, the elongated figures with protracted, seemingly boneless arms bear little resemblance to the short-statured figures typical of Angelico’s early and mid-career and seen throughout the exhibition.

The third gallery provided visitors with many special treats: the display of the predellas from Angelico’s San Domenico in Fiesole and San Pier Martire altarpieces, brought together in one room from London’s National Gallery and Courtauld Institute of Art respectively (cat. 17 and 19). Equally exciting was the reunification of the National Gallery’s seven panels with the Fiesole polyptych’s components now housed in New York, Remagen, and a private collection. The lovely *Virgin and Child with Twelve Angels*, possibly part of a portable box or cupboard, heretofore not seen outside of Frankfurt (cat. 18), may also have been painted by Angelico for San Domenico in Fiesole shortly after he took his vows there as a Dominican friar. Works by Ghiberti (Città di Castello, cat. 13) and Gentile da Fabriano (New Haven, cat. 16 and Paris, cat. 21) further attest to Angelico’s participation in the Florentine avant-garde, though the Louvre’s spectacular *Presentation in the Temple* from Gentile’s *Strozzi Adoration* almost stole the show.

Visitors could see the Prado *Annunciation* framed by the passageways of the fourth gallery, which presented the recently acquired Alba *Virgin of the Pomegranate* (cat. 22) between exquisite Florentine...
velvets that recall her cloth of honor (Florence, cat. 25), and surrounded by other Madonnas in polychromed terracotta by Donatello (Florence, cat. 20) and Michele da Firenzu (Florence, cat. 24), and another panel by Angelico himself (Barcelona, cat. 27).

Annunciations by Robert Campin (Madrid, cat. 31), Masolino (Washington, D.C. cat. 35), and Paolo Uccello (Oxford, cat. 28) demonstrate not only the wide range of early fifteenth-century approaches to the miracle of the Incarnation, but also point to Angelico’s ingenuity of including Adam and Eve in his rendition of the story, a compositional choice made during painting, as revealed during the restoration and documented by Ana González Mozó in her catalog essay “Strategies for Depicting Sacred Stories.” Small scale works like parts of a dispersed predella (Fort Worth and New York, cat. 38) and a reliquary (Florence, cat. 41) are shown to great effect alongside paintings of similar dimension by Fra Filippo Lippi (cat. 42) and Masolino (cat. 36), once again reminding viewers of Angelico’s central role in the development of Renaissance art.

Another highlight of the exhibition was the reunification of the head and torso of Saint Francis, kept since 1917 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, with the Crucifixion Group for the Compagnia di San Niccolò del Ceppo from which it was cut in the early 19th century. Another reunion brought the Prado’s newly acquired Funeral of Saint Anthony Abbot with what was likely a companion predella panel showing the abbot saint shunning a mass of gold (Houston, cat. 45).

The show concluded with a look at Angelico’s legacy in Spain through a tapestry based on an Angelicano design, which was made in Rome for the Spanish priest Miguel Ferrer, secretary to the Spanish pope Calixtus III, and later bequeathed to the cathedral of Zaragoza (cat. 48). Pedro Berruguete’s Christ on the Cross (Segovia, cat. 49) was commissioned by Tomás de Torquemada, nephew of Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, who was a patron of Angelico when they both were at the convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. Cardinal Torquemada’s Christ on the Cross, now at Harvard, finds echoes in Berruguete’s simple yet striking portrayal of the dying Jesus. Antoniazzo Romano’s triptych (Madrid, cat. 50) was likely commissioned by the Spanish abbot Gudiel de Cervatos while he was in Rome and brought back to Toledo upon his return home.

With the exhibition closing at the printing of this review, readers can hope that in a few years’ time the Prado will mount another show celebrating the cleaning of the Annunciation’s predella. As the first two decades of the twenty-first century have shown, exhibitions on Fra Angelico never fail to draw crowds and always provide new questions to ponder.

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**CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence**

*National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC*

September 15, 2019 – January 12, 2020

An interview with the curatorial team by Alison Fleming, IAS Newsletter Editor

AB = Andrew Butterfield, curator for the exhibition
GH = Gretchen Hirschauer, associate curator of Italian and Spanish painting at the National Gallery of Art
AL= Alison Luchs, Curator of early European sculpture and deputy head of the department of sculpture and decorative arts at the National Gallery of Art
LM = Lorenza Melli, Curator of the Corpus of Italian Drawings 1300-1500/Rome-Munich-Florence, based at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz/Max-Planck Institut, Florence.
DS = Dylan Smith, Robert H. Smith Research Conservator at the National Gallery of Art
EW = Elizabeth Walmsley, senior painting conservator at the National Gallery of Art
JD = John K Delaney, Senior Imaging Scientist at the National Gallery of Art

1. This exhibition "Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence" is described as "the first-ever monographic exhibition in the United States on Andrea del Verrocchio." How did it evolve from an idea into a monumental traveling exhibit? Why is it important to bring Verrocchio’s work to an American audience?

GH: Like all exhibitions, it starts as an idea, as you said. But curators are tasked with taking an idea and turning it into a physical reality. Potential loans are discussed with the lending institution or owner, practical matters such as packing and shipping are resolved, and gradually an exhibition takes shape, not just in the minds of the curators, but in a viable fashion. The presentation in Washington initially was conceived by the late Eleonora Luciano. Verrocchino may be known to Renaissance curators and art historians, and possibly known to others as Leonardo’s teacher, so it is time to present him to a wider audience.
Eleonora, our associate curator of sculpture, had the idea of a Verrocchio show and began working on it in 2013. She had already played a major role in bringing Verrocchio sculptures from Florence to the Gallery, including *David with the Head of Goliath* in 2004 and *Christ and Saint Thomas (The Incredulity of Saint Thomas)* as part of an exhibition on statues from Orsanmichele in 2005-2006. The experiences inspired her to imagine a show bringing together Verrocchio’s sculptures, paintings, drawings, and possible goldsmith works, stressing ways that his creative processes flowed between media. Presenting his techniques was an important component of her idea, which she developed together with Dylan Smith, our Robert H. Smith Research Conservator in the Department of Object conservation.

After the success of her 2011 show on Antico here at the National Gallery of Art, Eleonora wanted to do something more ambitious that had never been done before. Verrocchio, who had never received a monographic exhibition in the United States, was exceptional as an artist who excelled in many media, presenting a unique opportunity to unite the arts. Verrocchio was also a technical innovator and so it seemed natural to incorporate technical studies in the exhibition, something that also grew out of collaboration during Antico.

She spent a lot of time in Florence examining works in situ, like the Medici bronze and stone tombs in San Lorenzo, and she talked with Italian colleagues who, as it happened, were also planning a Verrocchio exhibition as the 2019 death anniversary year of Verrocchio’s most famous pupil, Leonardo da Vinci, approached. We made plans for a collaboration.

A tragic illness prevented Eleonora from completing the project as she envisioned it. It also led to a schedule change; our Verrocchio show was to have happened in 2018 and gone on to Florence, but that became impossible. Our Italian colleagues Francesco Caglioti and Andrea De Marchi and Arturo Galansino ultimately developed their own version of the show, to open in spring 2019 at *Palazzo Strozzi*, with Paola d’Agostino, director of the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, shaping an additional section at that museum. In Washington we were fortunate that Andrew Butterfield, a world expert on Verrocchio whose 1997 book on the artist won the Mitchell prize, was willing to take over as guest curator. When Eleonora died in August 2017, we all were determined to carry on with the great idea of a Verrocchio show. It has inevitably changed from what she had in mind, but we like to think she’d be very excited to see it.

For an American audience, Verrocchio isn’t necessarily a household name. If any Italian Renaissance artists are, they’d be the ones who achieved Ninja Turtle status: Donatello, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci. Well, Verrocchio taught Leonardo and trained artists (Ghirlandaio and Perugino) who taught Michelangelo and Raphael. And, he succeeded Donatello as the leading sculptor in fifteenth-century Florence. Those facts alone would make it worth calling attention to his work in this country.

But his creations stand on their own—for their originality, for the ways he explored nature, antiquity, vibrant ornament, movement in space, ways to give three-dimensional reality to forms on a flat surface, and expressions from joy to rage to compassion. He made all of these visible with “wondrous skill,” as Andrew summarizes it. Visitors will be able to see his mastery of techniques for multiple materials—bronze and silver, marble, clay and plaster, chalk, ink, paint—and the grace and elegance of his human types, as well as a tragic aspect and an earthy, grotesque side that’s often neglected but certainly present in the drawings. And they’ll get a glimpse of his working processes in the form of clay models and drawings.

In addition, Americans can take pride in the fact that their National Gallery of Art contains the most important group of Verrocchio sculptures outside Europe, as well as paintings by his artistic heirs Leonardo, Ghirlandaio, Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi and Botticelli.

2. It is important to note that the exhibition brings together art and science, due to the hard work of a team of curators and conservators. Could you describe the team of people responsible for the exhibit and the roles played by each? How are these various aspects revealed in the exhibition?

At the Gallery the departments of Sculpture and Italian Painting joined forces with their counterparts in object and painting conservation, plus we brought in Gallery scientists. Alison Luchs in sculpture and Gretchen Hirschauer in paintings took responsibility for the respective areas, and Dylan Smith and Elizabeth Walmsley, sculpture and paintings conservators respectively, with scientist John Delaney and his team all participated. Andrew Butterfield became the overall curator, charged with unifying the work of a number of contributors.

Andrew developed the content and organization of the show in collaboration with the curators and conservators for paintings and drawings, and planned and edited the catalog, working with the various authors. He wrote several entries himself, and provided the essay introducing readers to
Verrocchio’s genius, artistic origins, reputation in his time, and extraordinary skill at so many art forms.

C. D. Dickerson, head of the department of sculpture and decorative arts, coordinated planning for the show and the catalog, organizing meetings and communication among the numerous team members, pursuing loans and support, and contributing to the catalog.

Charles Dempsey, professor emeritus of the history of art at the Johns Hopkins University, wrote an essay for the catalog placing Verrocchio in the context of Florentine culture in the time of Lorenzo de’ Medici who, along with his father Piero, was Verrocchio’s principal patron. Italian paintings curator Gretchen Hirschauer together with conservator Elizabeth Walmsley—both at the Gallery—took charge of the paintings section, traveling with Andrew Butterfield to many countries to study works in museums and laboratories, and writing most of the painting entries. They also worked tirelessly on loan negotiations. In Florence, Gretchen participated in the digital imaging project carried out by scientist John Delaney. Lorenza Melli, an expert in the field, selected and elucidated the group of drawings.

I summarized what we know (or surmise) about Verrocchio’s career as a sculptor, and together with our conservators wrote catalog entries on most of the sculptures. In addition, I prepared a chronology of Verrocchio’s life for the catalog that was based on a compilation of the known documents (translated and annotated), which Eleonora had begun but didn’t finish.

LM: I shaped the drawings section in close collaboration with the curator and the team at the Gallery, trying to offer the more complete picture of Verrocchio as a draftsman, allowing for exceptions that couldn’t come for conservation reasons. The drawings in our show, numbering about twenty, shed extraordinary light on his innovative impact—technical, functional and thematic—on drawing in the second half of the fifteenth century. This includes the technique of sfumato in metalpoint, the use of black chalk, the adoption of the sketchbook, and the study of the nude and of the antique.

DS: Because of the range of works to be considered, a team of conservators and scientists contributed to the project. The National Gallery of Art is fortunate to be a leading center for art conservation and the scientific study of art. In the early stages of the exhibition, Eleonora and I worked together to develop a program of technical studies. This would include not only works that would be included in the exhibition, but also the major works that could not be present, which provide essential context. As the exhibition was being researched, when possible, curators and conservators would visit together to consider each work. I focused on sculpture, particularly bronzes, the medium of some of Verrocchio’s greatest masterpieces. This research is reflected in a technical study in the catalog as well as numerous collaborative entries on individual objects. New technical imaging of Verrocchio’s paintings was led by John Delaney, senior imaging scientist, who gathered scientific data for the identification of pigments and co-authored another technical study for the catalog. A discussion of painting technique in Verrocchio’s workshop was provided by Elizabeth Walmsley, senior conservator of paintings, who co-authored the essay on paintings and half of the painting entries.

At the Gallery, expertise was also provided by Kathryn Dooley, Francesca Gabrieli, Lisha Glinsman, and Xiao Ma from the department of scientific research, as well as Daphne Barbour, Shelley Sturman, and Katherine May in the department of object conservation. The project was also supported by international collaborators from a number of institutions. Marcello Piccolo and Constanza Cucci, scientists from IFAC-CNR (Institute of Applied Physics in Florence), also supported analysis of the paintings and sculpture. Further contributions were made by conservators at the various lending institutions, who shared their knowledge of their own works.

JD: The scientific team working on the analysis of paintings (Delaney, Dooley and Gabrieli) worked with the curators and conservators in two ways. The first was to try and find physical evidence that addressed specific research questions. For example, what types of pigments were used in a given painting to represent golden-colored brocades (Ghirlandaio’s Madonna and Child). In other cases, we used new noninvasive chemical imaging methods which provided new information about pigments, binders, and undermodeling layers for the conservators and curators to consider.

EW: Since it is all about looking, we are really grateful for our American and European colleagues who gave us the opportunity to closely examine paintings in their collections. They arranged for pictures to be brought to conservation studios and gave us access to paintings in storerooms. We benefitted immeasurably from lengthy discussions with them, learning about their own research on their paintings and the question of Verrocchio and his workshop. It was exciting to see pictures currently undergoing restoration or those that could not travel for other reasons, even if it was disappointing they could not be included in the exhibition. Our colleagues pulled many files for us and generously shared their unpublished technical findings, so we were able to examine full-size X-radiographs and infrared images side-by-side with the paintings. Photographs can serve as an aide-memoire, but it was the firsthand experience of seeing the paintings up close, the size of the panels, the brushwork, and the palette, that was so crucial for, at least, my understanding of Verrocchio and his influence on his students and contemporaries. And ultimately, all of this looking gave us a context in which to narrow the number of paintings for the focused presentation in Washington.
3. While the art of Renaissance Florence is well known among art historians, are there any works in the exhibit that IAS members are unlikely to have seen before, or ones with which they may be less familiar? Or, are there works that may now be understood in a new way as the result of the research that fueled the exhibition?

GH: I believe most people familiar with Renaissance art will know a few key works, like Verrocchio’s *David with the Head of Goliath* from the Bargello and the painted *Madonna and Child* in Berlin. But most others in the show will be part of a dedicated focus for the first time.

DS: Although many of the works are well known, what is truly exceptional is to see so many masterpieces together in the same space—for example, the bronze *Putto with a Dolphin* and the terracotta *Putto Poised on a Globe* are shown side by side for the first time ever in Washington. In terms of unexpected works, I think these are mostly found among the drawings, where curator Lorenza Melli has brought together several new or recent attributions to Verrocchio. Notable among these are studies of the figure from nature, rather than the idealized forms that one more typically associates with Verrocchio. The Washington venue is also an opportunity to see two terracotta works from private collections that were not seen in Florence and are not often exhibited.

The technical research contributed many new insights into Verrocchio’s works. A much more comprehensive understanding of Verrocchio’s development as a bronze caster is now possible. One result was evidence that *Putto with a Dolphin* is earlier than some art historians have argued, an important consideration as one of Verrocchio’s most inventive works. I think that Verrocchio’s early training as a marble carver was also supported, a point of agreement with the Florentines. Our own putto is made of unbaked clay, so it can’t safely travel. The National Gallery of Art is the only place where it’s possible to bring them together.

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LM: The drawings section includes much that is new. Since exposure time for old works on paper needs to be severely limited, we could not display every drawing that was on view in the Florence exhibition. This limitation presented a surprising opportunity for research on new drawings not initially considered, little known or completely unfamiliar, and new attributions. Besides providing a chance to admire autograph drawings by Verrocchio, the sheets on view in Washington help to reconstruct the function of drawings for transmitting figural ideas to collaborators in the workshop, leading us up to early traces of the young Leonardo.

AL: A number of works received new conservation treatments before the exhibition, including two from Berlin—one painting, the exquisite *Madonna and Child* by Verrocchio or by Perugino while in the master’s workshop, and the clay *Sleeping Youth*, already a show-stopper and more so now. And the unpretentious plaster *Madonna and Child* relief from the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College should be a discovery for many. Its model was one of Verrocchio’s most influential designs, as will be evident when the Oberlin relief appears among related paintings and sculpture. The *Putto with a Dolphin* is famous but not easy to find in Florence; because of its continuous function as a fountain figure until the mid-20th century, it remained at the Palazzo Vecchio rather than moving to the Bargello, and usually is on view in a room in the Palazzo that you have to know about to look for. It appears at the Gallery (with support from the *Friends of Florence*) newly cleaned and treated by Nicola Salvioni. The Florentines have just published a wonderful small bilingual book with discussions on the treatment of the *Putto with a Dolphin* and an investigation on the *Madonna di Piazza* altarpiece in Pistoia. (*Verrocchio Lab*, edited by Arturo Galansino, with essays by Francesco Caglioti, Serena Pini, Nicola Salvioni, Andrea De Marchi, Roberto Bellucci and Cecilia Frosinini).

We’re excited to have the putto; it’s one of the loveliest creations of the Renaissance and as often noted, the first Renaissance sculpture of a figure in a pose that’s designed to be viewed in the round. It’s especially satisfying to have the chance to see it close to Verrocchio’s *Putto Poised on the Globe* at the Gallery, to consider the similarities and differences and the reasons for them. Our own putto is made of unbaked clay, so it can’t safely travel. The National Gallery of Art is the only place where it’s possible to bring them together.

A subtle but significant object is Verrocchio’s bronze candelabrum of 1468/9 from the Palazzo Vecchio, on loan from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Its elegant design and its finely wrought antiquarian ornament, botanical and architectural, remind us of Verrocchio’s goldsmith training and point the way toward the fantastic bronze work on the tomb of Piero and Giovanni de’ Medici.

4. This is a traveling exhibition that was on view at the Palazzo Strozzi and Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence earlier this year. How is the presentation in Washington DC different than what was on view there?
GH: The Washington venue is quite different from that seen at the Strozzi. Most obvious is the number of works presented in Washington—close to fifty, consisting of a core of Verrocchio’s work—about half the number presented in Florence. We have 22 sculptures (including a stone vase with gilded silver mounts), 11 paintings and 17 drawings.

AB: While our show is half the size of the Florence show, it has more works by Verrocchio in it; this points to the key divide in organizing principle: their show was about Verrocchio and his followers (as even their "maestro di" title indicates), principally Leonardo, but also Francesco di Simone and anonymous artists in Umbria and Rome, whereas our show is almost exclusively centered on Verrocchio himself. By percentage, their show was about 50% by Verrocchio whereas ours is about 90% by Verrocchio. This concentration means that Verrocchio will come into focus as never before.

The catalogs also differ greatly. Their catalog and exhibition design were based on themes/subject matter while ours are organized around media. This is a crucial difference, and a huge plus in the organization of the National Gallery of Art’s show.

Our catalog has 7 essays, rather than 2, and is generously illustrated with NEW GREAT photography. Furthermore, our catalog is about the artist in toto, whereas theirs was essentially only about the objects in their show (as demonstrated for example by their illustrations of Verrocchio’s works not in the show, which are only in black and white).

We have a different curatorial team and came to different conclusions about many topics. Another important contribution that distinguishes our catalog is a large technical/scientific component that carried out cutting-edge research and produced very important and stimulating results.

LM: The whole drawings section is completely different. In Florence the drawings were selected to illustrate the precursors of Verrocchio, the functions of the workshop and the role of collaborators, in particular Leonardo, with the complex series of drapery studies on linen. In Washington, we concentrated on autograph drawings by Verrocchio, including unpublished sheets and new attributions.

5. What else should IAS members know about the exhibit "Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence" as they make their plans to visit?

AL: Certain major works will not be here. The Christ and Saint Thomas (The Incredulity of Saint Thomas) is going to the Leonardo da Vinci exhibition at the Louvre in October 2019. The Baptism of Christ doesn’t leave the Uffizi, and the Pistoia Madonna di Piazza altarpiece doesn’t leave Tuscany. And of course, the Medici tombs at San Lorenzo, the Forteguerri cenotaph in Pistoia and the Colleoni in Venice are fixed at their sites. That said, the many masterpieces that have come will offer a powerful experience of Verrocchio’s genius. The exhibition is in just four galleries, so it’s rich and intense but not exhausting. The NGA department of Installation and design has worked brilliantly with the curators to group the objects in ways that show connections and set up dialogues between them. In a fifth room visitors can watch a new film on Verrocchio, produced at the National Gallery of Art and narrated by Glenn Close. A longer, half-hour version of the film will be on view in the West Building auditorium.

Two works will have to leave early, around December 2 – the painting of Tobias and the Angel from the National Gallery, London, and the related drawing of the head of an angel from the Uffizi. So people who particularly count on seeing those should come before December.

The National Gallery of Art’s portrait of Ginevra de’ Benci, the only certain painting by Leonardo da Vinci in the Americas, made when he was still in Verrocchio’s workshop, will move into the exhibition space and appear for the first time in the midst of a group of related paintings and sculptures by Verrocchio.

There will also be several web features touching on works in the show and elsewhere, expanding the art historical and technical information beyond what’s possible in the exhibition space. It is accessible through our on-line exhibition page at [www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2019/andrea-del-verrocchio-renaissance-florence.html](http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2019/andrea-del-verrocchio-renaissance-florence.html). Those include a series of beautiful images of Verrocchio’s major work of public marble sculpture, the Forteguerri monument in the Cathedral of Pistoia, taken in 1930/1931 by the great sculpture photographer Clarence Kennedy. There is a separate web feature on this project: [www.nga.gov/verrocchiokennedy](http://www.nga.gov/verrocchiokennedy). A selection of the Pistoia photos will be on view in the library in the National Gallery’s East Building, in an exhibition organized by Melissa Beck Lemke, a specialist for Italian art in the National Gallery of Art Library’s department of image collections, to supplement the Verrocchio show in the West Building.

The film is available online at [www.nga.gov/audio-video/video/exhibition.html](http://www.nga.gov/audio-video/video/exhibition.html) as well as on a free-loan basis through the department of education at [www.nga.gov/education/teachers/loan-video.html](http://www.nga.gov/education/teachers/loan-video.html). The film
is made possible by the Embassy of Italy and the HRH Foundation.

EXHIBITION REVIEW

Ambiente spaziale in Documenta 4, a Kassel, 1968.
El Museo del Barrio, New York
January 23 – April 14, 2019
Reviewed by Aja Martin, Rice University

One, then a pair of narrow portals organize a false proposition on the white façade of Spatial Environment for the Fourth Documenta by Lucio Fontana. Originally mounted in 1968, the year of his death, the work has been reconstructed at El Museo del Barrio in New York now half a century later. Perhaps the most recognizable Italian modernist, Fontana has experienced a revival in interest as the subject of numerous international exhibitions—most notably at the Hangar Bicocca in Milan, the Nahmad Projects in London, and a handful of small and large exhibitions in New York City this past Spring. El Museo, for example, mounted this singular environment work just blocks away from a major retrospective running at the Met Breuer concurrently.

El Museo’s focus on art of Latin America reminds us that despite having gained international recognition in Milan, the Argentine-born artist spent fruitful periods of his adult life in his native country. And it was there, along with students and colleagues, that he formalized the potential for space as a medium in the “Manifsto Blanco” (1946) and in other treatises he would write throughout his career. Taken together, these exhibitions argue for a reassessment. They ask that that we move beyond rehearsals of his declaration of “the end of painting” pronounced by his monochrome paintings, and instead pay critical attention to his sculptural and installation ‘research.’ For it is work in these mediums that form the base upon which the celebrated painting practice rests.

Spatial Environment for the 4th Documenta is distinct among Fontana’s other installations and easily qualifies as a culmination of his interests in the thresholds of surface, space, and light. Significantly, and contrary to the tone of his claims, he does not deny traditional mediums outright, a less-discussed fact about his practice, but documented in the early manifestoes and in this environment.

Located in a small gallery within El Museo, the environment takes up much of the space in that room, and is positioned frontally where its flat white exterior and entryways can be seen from outside the glass doors that open onto the room. Beyond the ‘first’ portal an irregular corridor cinched on its left and pressing into the space conducts the viewer into the all-white work where abruptly interrupted and angled walls, or spatial planes, on our right open up paths into the larger space of the installation. Its arranged sections all beaming in fluorescent white light. A series of starts, stops and reversals find additional spatial planes that form inverted corners, short paths and dead-ends frustrating any pre-ordained route. Eventually arriving at the work’s center, the viewer locates the artist’s signature painting motif—the cut—which, curiously, is also glimpsed through the middle portal from outside the work and so available for immediate contemplation should the viewer choose such a non-route. Having explored the work’s interior, the viewer understands now that much had been revealed from the outset, from outside the work.

But from within the installation itself we move from instant recognition of the form to contemplation of the cut excised from the surface of this interior wall. With a piercing silence, this negative form stands, temporarily, as the only true focal point within. Simple and symmetrical, the few feet long cut begins at a point, slowly expands toward its center, then tapers off to make an attenuated ellipse. This cut is far from destructive or expressively gestural, yet possesses violent undertones. It is surgical in its precision and therefore illusionistic—perhaps suggestive of a snake eye and other forms encountered in nature. This spatial environment, unlike most the others he created, repeats those same incisions from the celebrated monochrome canvases exhibited elsewhere around New York. Encapsulated as it is within architecture rather than within the taught field of a stretched canvas, this instance affords the viewer a certain freedom to engage the form and to accept the opportunity for a prolonged visual and bodily encounter.

Compelled toward the caesura, I stood too close. Looking into an impossible dark, I perceived the subtle sway of my body and each breath drawn. These were absorbed by the forceful stasis of the form. Centered perfectly on a spatial plane some four feet wide, with shorter lengths flanking it, Fontana encourages the viewer to center themselves within the niche, and on the cut as if they were in front of his monochrome paintings. Having stepped back, the viewer is prompted by the architecture-as-frame and the placement of the cut into a purely visual analysis gauging the cut as if it were a framed object. Exiting the second of the three portals, the viewer reassesses the façade and reconsiders those narrow
exterior access points as cuts themselves, the surface yet another picture. Finally, moving more quickly along this last path, via the third entry, the viewer encounters nothing new. The cut is revealed as the ultimate destination despite the route chosen. Yet, that was apparent from the outset, glimpsed inside the second opening of the Spatial Environment. The next logical question arises: Why then, the labyrinthine manoeuvres surrounding the form?

Indeed, the work as a whole offers more than a meandering delay of its core. Pacing the work again, non-vistas call for yet another kind of perception, based not on what we can see, but what we cannot. For example, just inside the first portal and to our right, two thin white planes angle toward one another where they should converge to organize a closed triangle. Rather, however, each plane stops short leaving the triangle incomplete and partially open to view—a view of little visual interest, but rewarding still. The planes in fact work together to bend and shape space itself. In this poignant instance, we access a ‘view’ of the invisible, a wedge that Fontana allows to spill from the incomplete form and into the ethereal space of the installation as a whole. Now the viewer can perceive the work in all its forms and comes to accept their own position within a sculptural form that takes an architectural scale. Space itself is sculpted by the white spatial planes, light and slight shadows as in the monochromes, and sculptural works on display elsewhere.

Fontana elaborates a spatial range that telescopes through the various spatial moves the artist made in disparate media throughout his practice. From the picture first encountered as the face of the environment, to the simple interruptions in space offered by the arrangement of planes, to the cut that offers up both a bodily and visual modes of experience, Spatial Environment for the Fourth Documenta reveals partially the vitality and complexity of Fontana’s oeuvre within a single compact structure.

MORE NEWS IN ITALIAN ART

Congratulations to Mike Widener and Christopher Platts, winners of this year’s American Association of Law Libraries ALL-SIS Publication Award! Mike Widener is the Rare Book Librarian and Lecturer in Legal Research at the Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. IAS member Christopher Platts is Visiting Assistant Professor, Art & Art History, and Curator & Director, Alexey von Schlippe Gallery at the University of Connecticut Avery Point.

The Publication Award recognizes a significant non-periodical contribution to scholarly legal literature in a variety of publication types e.g., books, book chapters, bibliographies, blogs, periodical columns, etc. Mike Widener and Christopher Platt’s exhibition catalogue "Representing the Law in the Most Serene Republic: Images of Authority from Renaissance Venice" explores how the Venetian Republic—a prosperous and powerful state in early modern Europe—cultivated a mythical image of stability, liberty, and beauty. Focusing primarily on the outstanding holdings of Italian law books in the Yale Law Library’s Rare Book Collection, the catalogue presents 25 objects of remarkable splendor and historical significance. These include illuminated manuscripts, illustrated books, prints, drawings, coins, and medals, nearly a dozen of which were culled from other Yale art and library collections.

The catalogue introduces the most significant offices and symbols of the Venetian state, and explains how laws were crafted, debated, publicized, and flouted. The protagonists of the stories recounted herein are the doge (duke) and highest magistrates of Venice, the governors appointed to rule the Republic’s far-flung territories, the lawmakers in the Senate, and the lawbreakers consigned to prison or to the galleys—all of them illustrated in finely executed representations in various media.

FALL 2019 EXHIBITIONS

Fra Angelico and the Rise of the Florentine Renaissance Museo del Prado, Madrid
May 28 – September 15, 2019

This exhibition investigates the beginnings of Florentine Renaissance art in the 1420s and 1430s by focusing on several key works by Fra Angelico. Around forty works will be on display by Fra Angelico and his contemporaries, including a terracotta Virgin and Child by Donatello. The exhibition, timed to coincide with the Prado’s bicentenary year, will be centered around the Annunciation (which will be newly cleaned and restored in time for the opening) as well as two other recently acquired paintings by Fra Angelico: the Alba Madonna and the Funeral of Saint Anthony Abbot.

[See exhibition review above]
Marcello Guasti, Giovanni Michelucci e il Monumento ai Tre Carabinieri
Sala Costantini, Fiesole
February 17 – September 30, 2019

Marcello Guasti’s bronze Monument to the Three Carabinieri, commemorating the sacrifice of Italian military heroes Alberto La Rocca, Vittorio Marandola, and Fulvio Sbarretti, who lost their lives on August 12, 1944 in order to protect ten civilians taken hostage by the German troops in Fiesole, is the focus of this exhibition. Marking the 75th anniversary of Fiesole’s liberation from the German occupation during World War II, the exhibition is curated by IAS member Jonathan K. Nelson and Mirella Branca.

Leonardo: A Life in Drawing
The Queen’s Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London
May 24 – October 13, 2019

Marking the 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), this exhibition brings together more than 200 of the artist’s drawings from the Royal Collection, following several smaller exhibitions featured across the United Kingdom in the spring and summer of 2019. Arranged by subject in rough chronological order, this exhibition aims to present an encyclopedic and comprehensive view of Leonardo’s drawing practice throughout his career. The current installation will be followed by the largest group of Leonardo’s works ever shown in Scotland at The Queen’s Gallery in Edinburgh from November 22 to March 15, 2020.

Omaggio a Cosimo I: Una biografia tessuta
Palazzo Pitti, Florence
June 5 – September 29, 2019

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Cosimo I de’ Medici (1519-1574) a series of tapestries originally designed for the Hall of Saturn in the Palazzo Pitti will be on display in the White Room and the Hall of Niches. The monumental tapestries, which range from five to over eight meters in length, tell the story of Cosimo I’s public life and major achievements in chronological order, from his rise to power through the consolidation of his Tuscan rule and the development of his relationship with the papacy. The cycle was commissioned by Grand Duke Ferdinando II to highlight the deeds of his ancestor Cosimo, who was the founder of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

Solo: Gino Severini
Museo Novecento, Florence
July 12 – October 10, 2019

Gino Severini (1886-1966), painter and leading member of Futurism, is the subject of an exhibition at the Museo Novecento in Florence. “Solo” focuses on Severini’s fascination with the Commedia dell’arte, especially the masked figures of Pulcinella and Arlecchino. In the 1920’s, Severini was commissioned to decorate rooms for two private clients, allowing him to experiment with themes related to the commedia. The first was the Castle of Montegufoni, near Florence, owned by Sir George Sitwell, and represented by a series of gouaches related to the castle’s “Sala delle maschere,” which was decorated in 1921-1922. The second theater-themed project was for the Maison di Léonce Rosenberg, in Paris (1928-1929), for which four of the six panels painted by Severini will be on display.

Fili d’oro di seta: velluti e ricami tra gotico e rinascimento
Castello di Buonconsiglio, Trent
July 13 – November 3, 2019

The exhibition “Fili d’oro di seta” tells the story of sacred fabrics through paintings and precious velvets and embroideries between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The exhibition places precious Florentine and Venetian textiles alongside paintings by Altobello Melone, Michele Giambono, Francesco Torbido, Rocco Marconi, and the Master of Hoogstraeten. Lenders to the exhibition include Castello Sforzesco in Milan, the Uffizi Gallery and the National Bargello Museum in Florence, the Carrara Academy in Bergamo, and the Textile Museum of Prato.

Leonardo da Vinci’s Saint Jerome
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
July 15 – October 6, 2019
In honor of the 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the Metropolitan Museum of Art presents the artist’s Saint Jerome Praying in the Wilderness (c. 1483), on loan from the Vatican Museums. The painting depicts Saint Jerome during his retreat to the Syrian desert, where he lived as a hermit. One of the few Leonardo paintings of solid and unquestioned attribution, Saint Jerome Praying in the Wilderness also contains physical traces of the artist, including a preserved fingerprint in the upper left area of the painting.

Luca Signorelli a Roma: Oblio e riscoperte
Musei Capitolini, Rome
July 19 – November 3, 2019

Through a selection of about sixty works from both Italian and international collections, the Musei Capitolini host an exhibition dedicated to the work of Renaissance painter, Luca Signorelli (c. 1450-1523). Born in Cortona, Signorelli was active in Rome for several years during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. His legacy often obscured by the arrival of Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Raphael (1483-1520) in the following generation, this exhibition aims to rediscover and uncover Signorelli’s contributions to Italian Renaissance art, especially during his Roman period.

La luce e i silenzi: Orazio Gentileschi e la pittura Caravaggesca nelle Marche del Seicento
Pinacoteca Civica Bruno Molajoli, Fabriano
August 2 – December 8, 2019

Baroque painter Orazio Gentileschi (1563-1639) lived and worked in the Marche region from 1613 to 1619, working for patrons in the cities of Ancona and Fabriano. The current exhibition focuses a spotlight on Orazio’s activity in the region and aims to deepen the viewer’s understanding of the relationship between Orazio and Caravaggio, as well as the regional characteristics of Caravaggism in the Marche region. La luce e i silenzi brings together works such as a Circumcision, Madonna of the Rosary, The Vision of Saint Francesca Romana, and a Mary Magdalene, all painted by Orazio in either Ancona or Fabriano. Included in the exhibition are works by other artists whose works have been described as Caravaggesque, such as Alessandro Turchi (1578-1649), Valentin de Boulogne (c. 1591-1632), and Simon Vouet (1590-1649).

I cieli in una stanza: soffitti lignei a Firenze e a Roma nel Rinascimento
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
August 30 – December 1, 2019

Renaissance ceilings in Florence and Rome are the focus of a fall exhibition at the Uffizi, which includes paintings, drawings, engravings, models, and original lacunars (lacunari). The technical, stylistic, and symbolic aspects of decorative ceilings in palaces and churches will be explored in various works largely drawn from the permanent collection. Drawings will include examples of ancient prototypes, such as the Domus Aurea and the Temple of Bacchus in Rome, as well as projects by the Sangallo, Giorgio Vasari, Michelangelo, and Carlo Maderno.

L'arte di governo e la battaglia di Anghiari
Museo della Battaglia e di Anghiari, Anghiari
September 1, 2019 – January 12, 2020

Organized for the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci’s death, this exhibition focuses on the political, social, and historical context for the battle that would inspire the subject of Da Vinci’s famous Battle of Anghiari fresco for the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. L’arte di governo highlights the political and military dynamics and the relationships between the protagonists and the governing bodies in late fifteenth-century Italy that would culminate in the famous battle between the Republic of Florence and the Duchy of Milan. Portraits of Cosimo il Vecchio, Pope Eugenio IV, Neri Capponi, Niccolò Piccinino, Filippo Maria Visconti and Francesco Sforza provide an historical introduction to Battle of Anghiari.

Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
September 15, 2019 – January 12, 2020
This fall, the National Gallery of Art will host the first-ever monographic exhibition in the United States on Florentine artist Andrea del Verrocchio (c. 1435-1488), whose pupils included Leonardo da Vinci, Pietro Perugino, and possibly Sandro Botticelli. Fifty of Verrocchio’s works in drawing, sculpture, and painting will be on display, including several new attributions. Organized in collaboration with the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi and the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, the National Gallery of Art will be the sole American venue for this landmark exhibition, which will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalog.

Bertoldo di Giovanni: The Renaissance of Sculpture in Medici Florence
The Frick Collection, New York
September 18, 2019 – January 12, 2020

The Frick Collection is presenting a fall exhibition on Florentine sculptor Bertoldo di Giovanni (ca. 1440-1491). Bertoldo was a student of Donatello and a teacher of Michelangelo who enjoyed the patronage of Lorenzo “il Magnifico” de’ Medici. More than twenty of his works, including statues, reliefs and medals—almost his entire surviving oeuvre—will be on display. The Museo Nazionale del Bargello of Florence is a major lender to the exhibition, which will be accompanied by a catalogue featuring contributions from an international group of scholars.

Guercino: Virtuoso Draftsman
The Morgan Library & Museum, New York
October 4, 2019 – February 2, 2020

The Morgan Library & Museum owns more than twenty-five works by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, known as Guercino (1591-1666), the Baroque painter and draftsman. Never before displayed as a group, they will be the subject of a fall exhibition organized as part of a series focused on highlights from the Morgan’s permanent collection. Guercino: Virtuoso Draftsman will also include a handful of loans from public and private New York collections, with pieces covering the span of Guercino’s entire career. The exhibition will be accompanied by catalogue written by curator John Marciari.

Flesh and Blood: Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum
Seattle Art Museum, Seattle
October 17, 2019 – January 26, 2020

“Flesh and Blood” offers American audiences a rare opportunity to view works from the Capodimonte Museum in Naples, one of the largest museums in Italy. The show will feature works by Titian, Guido Reni, El Greco, Parmigianino, Raphael, as well as several Renaissance and Baroque painters who were active in Naples, including Artemisia Gentileschi, Jusepe de Ribera, and Bernardo Cavallino. The body is a particular focus of the show, with physical labor, suffering, and the body’s expressive abilities emphasized in the forty works that will be included. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue with contributions from the Director and members of the curatorial staff at the Capodimonte Museum.

Leonardo da Vinci
Musée de Louvre, Paris
October 24, 2019 – February 24, 2020

An exceptional exhibition on Leonardo da Vinci will be presented at the Musée du Louvre in the fall of 2019. The fifth centenary of the Italian master’s death is a unique opportunity for the Louvre to bring as many as possible of the fourteen to seventeen paintings now attributed to Leonardo, according to specialists, to join the five large paintings in the Paris museum. The exhibition will include a large selection of drawings and a small but significant group of paintings and sculptures that will provide some tangible context. This international retrospective will present the latest research findings, critical editions of key documents and the results of the latest analysis carried out in laboratories or during recent conservation treatment by the Louvre.

Leonardo: Experience a Masterpiece
National Gallery UK, London
November 9, 2019 – January 12, 2020
The National Gallery has commissioned the production team behind the 2012 Olympic Games opening ceremony to create an immersive exhibition on Leonardo da Vinci’s Virgin of the Rocks. The multi-layered, multi-sensory aspects of the exhibition aim to highlight scientific and technical discoveries related to the painting’s composition, execution, and original setting. The exhibition also aims to demonstrate the various imaging techniques that have been used by scientists, conservators, and curators since the discovery (using infrared reflectography) of a preliminary drawing in 2005 that had been significantly altered for the final version.

For regional exhibitions in Italy, see the “Mostre in Evidenza” section of the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo (MiBACT) website.

**NEWS AND NOTES**

Lightning struck Palazzo Vecchio in Florence during a summer storm in July, an unusual event captured by pictures. The palace is protected by a storm protection installed in 2015, and damage appears to have been limited to the electrical and the video surveillance systems.

A replica of Andrea Pisano’s south door for the Baptistery in Florence was installed in June. The replica, made using the same techniques Pisano would have used, was realised to replace the original whilst it undergoes restoration at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

Donatello’s St Mark statue for Orsanmichele in Florence is undergoing restoration at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure. The statue was restored thirty years ago, but it now presents brownish stains.

New rooms open at the Uffizi dedicated to 16th- and 17th-century artworks. The fourteen rooms will highlight Florentine and Venetian painters, including Titian’s Venus of Urbino and Federico Barocci’s Virgin of the People.

A stolen painting by Pinturicchio has been recovered by the Carabinieri. The work, representing a Virgin and Child, was stolen in 1990 and was about to be put on sale through a London-based auction house. It is now in the Galleria Nazionale dell’Umbria.

An accomplished copy of Caravaggio’s Taking of Christ has been restored and is now exhibited at Palazzo Pitti. The anonymous copy, contemporary to Caravaggio, arrived in Florence from the castle of Commercy in the Lorraine.

The south wing of Palazzo Barberini, restored in 2018, has been integrated within the Palazzo’s museum. It now hosts seventy-eight paintings, exhibited according to an innovative project that included new lighting, graphics and explicative labels, and ranging from Neapolitan seventeenth-century works to eighteenth-century portraits and landscapes related to the Grand Tour.

The Italian Ministry of Culture acquired a drawing by Caspar van Wittel for the Uffizi. The drawing was a preparatory study for van Wittel’s View of the Convent of San Paolo at Albano, now at the Galleria Palatina at Palazzo Pitti. Caspar van Wittel, also known as Gaspare Vanvitelli, was Luigi Vanvitelli’s father, and his work is considered instrumental in bringing together Italian artistic practice and the Northern European tradition of landscape painting.

Recent restoration at the basilica of Sant’Antonio in Padua brought to light fourteenth-century frescoes under seventeenth-century decoration. The frescoes that have emerged include traces of a Crucifixion that may be by Giotto.

Botticelli’s Madonna of the Loggia will be exhibited for the first time in Russia. The painting, which represents the Virgin Glikophilousa, an iconography of the Byzantine tradition, will be shown in Vladivostok and then St Petersburg.

**MEMBER PUBLICATIONS 2019**

Congratulations to IAS members who have recently published books: You can purchase these books through the Amazon link on the Member Publications page, which earns IAS a small percentage return.


Wisch also wrote the introduction to this volume (1-25) with the other two co-authors, and contributed an essay: “Building Brotherhood: Confraternal Piety, Patronage, and Place,” 214-231.

Congratulations to IAS members who have recently published articles, essays, and catalog entries:


Italian Art Society Membership and Donations

Please join or renew your IAS membership today. Members are encouraged to pay on-line through our user-friendly website. If you wish to send a check, contact Janna Israel. There are now four levels of membership. The IAS will continue to offer Student membership at $20.00 and Regular membership at $30.00. Our Patron membership at $60.00 allows generous members to support programming, awards, charitable activities, and additional endeavors. A Benefactor/Institutional membership at $100.00 has been added as well. Institutional members include programs, institutions, or universities that want to promote the study of Italian art and architecture through support of the IAS. Thank you for your continued membership. Please encourage students, colleagues and institutions to join.

As a non-profit organization, the IAS seeks donations from individuals and organizations wishing to promote the study of the visual arts and architecture of Italy, from prehistory to the present. Funds will help support the IAS’s annual operations, including travel grants for graduate students and emerging scholars who are presenting their work at conferences in the USA and abroad, as well as research and publication grants. The IAS seeks general operating contributions, and is also happy to work with donors to direct contributions toward specific purposes, including travel grant support and the establishment of research or publication funds. If you have questions, please e-mail Janna Israel, treasurer@italianartsociety.org.
Newsletter Contributions and Notices

IAS members are warmly encouraged to write for upcoming issues of the IAS Newsletter. For the winter issue, we are looking for reviews of fall shows listed in the exhibition section, news of recent conservation campaigns in Italy, and articles on research topics or new methodologies. If you are interested in writing a feature (approximately 800-1200 words), please contact the editor at any time, or by December 1 for the next issue. Deadlines for IAS newsletters are: Fall Newsletter: news deadline August 15/publication date September 15; Winter Newsletter: news deadline January 15/publication date February 15; Spring Newsletter: news deadline April 1/publication date May 1.

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