President’s Message from Mark Rosen

February 28, 2020

Dear Members of the Italian Art Society,

Our organization is in the midst of a busy, exciting spring filled with many sponsored sessions, programs, and lectures. I should mention up front that (as many of our members have noticed) the IAS website has experienced some major issues in recent months. As we transitioned off old servers, some of the interior architecture linking our member database to the site has been jostled, and we’ve spent a great amount of time trying to correct course. One of the results has been to postpone our annual officer elections until mid-March. We have a terrific slate of candidates, but we want to make sure that all of our current members are able to vote, something that will still take some patches to achieve. Thank you for your patience. You can always write to me at president@italianartsociety.org if you have questions about the site or the status of your membership. Hopefully our site troubles will soon be past.

The website overhaul is one of the major priorities of the upcoming year. Our Membership, Outreach, and Development Committee Co-Chairs, Nicola Camerlenghi and Katherine T. Brown, are beginning a major new Membership Campaign that will help raise funds needed to improve the site. Other goals of the campaign are the establishment of an annual book award and the creation of a vast online databank of professional-grade photographs of Italian art and architecture that would be free for members to use in publications. As part of this plan, the IAS will begin offering institutional-level memberships for foundations, departments, colleges, and museums. Anyone wishing to help out with the campaign, or with other ideas for IAS development, should write to us at outreach@italianartsociety.org.

As I write, I’ve just recently returned from CAA in arctic Chicago. Beyond our annual business meeting, we hosted a lovely evening reception at Half Sour, a bar a few blocks away from the conference hotel. Thanks to all the members old and new who turned out, as well as to Tiffany Hunt for arranging the event. On Friday afternoon, our Emerging Scholars Committee hosted a curator’s session with Rebecca J. Long, the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Associate Curator of European Painting and Sculpture before 1750 at the Art Institute of Chicago. Over a lunchtime Q&A at the museum, Dr. Long discussed the rewards and challenges of curatorial work and shared with the group her experience in putting together the current blockbuster show “El Greco: Ambition and Defiance.” Thanks to ESC Chair Tenley Bick and committee member Chrissy Zappella for helping arrange the event. The ESC theme for 2020–21 will be “Art and Object Photography and Copyright,” with a related event planned for the 2021 CAA in New York. The ESC also is arranging a Scholar Meet and Greet in Florence in Fall 2020. The committee can be reached at esc@italianartsociety.org.

Our sponsored session at this year’s CAA was the delightfully scatological “From Cloaca Maxima to America: Italy’s ‘History of Shit,’” organized by Sasha Goldman and Danielle Abdon. Turnout was excellent for this centuries-spanning session featuring interventi by Danielle Abdon (on how Renaissance hospitals managed waste), Alan C. Braddock (on Ludovico Carracci’s St. Sebastian Thrown in the Cloaca Maxima, now in the Getty), and Ana-Maria Milcic (on artist-pilot Guido Keller’s defecation-obsessed Futurist activities). Congratulations to the organizers and presenters on a terrific set of papers.

On the immediate horizon is the Renaissance Society of America, where the IAS is sponsoring eight panels overall, so many that some will unfortunately overlap. All day on Thursday, April 1, four sessions of “New Perspectives on Italian Art” (organized by Kelley Helmsutler Di Dio and Ilaria Andreoli) will take over Franklin Hall 3, while late that afternoon we’ll host “Visual Networks of Healing in Renaissance Italy” (organized by Sandra Cardarelli and Valentina Živković) in Marriott 408. Two sessions on “Women and Gender in Italian Trecento Art and Architecture” organized by Judith Steinhoff will be held on the morning of Saturday, April 4 in Franklin Hall 13, as will a single session organized by Kelly Whitford called “Lively Things: Material Culture in Early Modern Italy,” in Marriott 301.
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ITALIAN ART SOCIETY NEWS

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM: CALLING MENTORS AND MENTEES (New application process):
Due to now-resolved technical issues, the IAS Emerging Scholars Committee (ESC) has revamped the application process for the IAS mentorship program. Instead of filling out the form online, there is now a form (available in both pdf and Word doc formats) that prospective mentors and mentees can fill out and email to the IAS ESC chair directly. The forms are available on the website; the mentorship program information is currently located on the home page under "Become a Mentor or Mentee."

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Call for Session Proposals
Italian Art Society-Sponsored sessions at the Sixteenth Century Society & Conference to be held October 29 - November 1, 2020, Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel, Baltimore, MD.

IAS Deadline: March 10, 2020

The Italian Art Society (IAS) is seeking complete session proposals that address any issue relevant to Italian art and architecture during the long sixteenth century. The Sixteenth Century Society & Conference (SCSC) was founded to promote scholarship on the early modern era (c.1450-1600), and actively encourages the participation of international scholars as well as the integration of younger colleagues into the academic community. IAS members interested in putting together a panel or linked panels should send a brief abstract (250 words max.); session title; a list of speakers with their affiliations and paper titles; and the name of the chair(s) with email address(es), affiliation(s), and one-page CV(s) by March 10, 2020 to the IAS Program Committee Chair (programs@italianartsociety.org).

Please note that the SCSC welcomes graduate student speakers who are within one or two years of defending their dissertations. However, all sessions must include at least one speaker who has received the PhD or other terminal degree, and predoctoral speakers should present dissertation research, not term papers.

Completed panels are due to SCSC by April 6, 2020.

Please also see the IAS Submission Guidelines at http://italianartsociety.org/conferences-lectures/ias-conference-submission-guidelines/

IAS Events Coordinator Tiffany Hunt has organized a terrific RSA reception at Temple University’s SERC (Science Education Research Center) on the night of Thursday, April 2, from 6 to 8 pm. We will be jointly cohosting with the Historians of Netherlandish Art. A more detailed announcement shortly with RSVP information will be sent to members soon.

Also upcoming in the spring is the American Association for Italian Studies’ (AAIS) Annual Meeting in Tucson. Marica Antonucci, Maria Bremer and Giorgia Gastaldon have organized a session on “Collectivity and Individuality in Modern Italian Art and Cultural Production (1860–Present),” held on Thursday, March 26, 2:45–4:15 pm. At the 55th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo in May, the IAS is sponsoring three sessions on Italian sculpture in honor of our distinguished colleague Dorothy F. Glass and her incomparable contributions to the history of Romanesque sculpture. Alison Locke Perchuk and Francesco Gangemi graciously organized the sessions, all three of which will be on Friday, May 8 in Bernhard 204. A reception toasting Dr. Glass will be in the same room after the conclusion of the last session at 5pm.

Finally, I’m pleased to announce the date and venue for our annual IAS/Kress Lecture in Italy. It will be held on Thursday, June 18, at the Centro Convegni Sant’Agostino in the beautiful Tuscan hill town of Cortona. We will soon place the call for applications for our speaker. With the assistance of IAS Membership, Outreach, and Development co-chair Katie Brown, we are also arranging sightseeing activities and a lunch in Cortona for the day of the talk (which will be held at 4pm, followed by an aperitivo). Thanks to the support of the Kress Foundation, the lecture and reception are free and open to members; there will be a fee for the lunch and additional visits, for whomever wants to join. At this time, we don’t anticipate that the coronavirus situation will impact our holding the event, but we are, of course, keeping an eye on it in the meantime.

Thank you to all of our outgoing committee members and volunteers, and to those who have been nominated and have yet to begin your terms. I’ve been fortunate to be surrounded by such reliable, kind, and thoughtful people throughout my time with the IAS. As always, Vice President Sarah Wilkins deserves special mention for helping with and organizing nearly every facet of the IAS.

I look forward to seeing everyone at one of our upcoming sessions or events.

Cordiali saluti,

Mark
CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Session Sponsored by the Italian Art Society at the American Association for Italian Studies (AAIS) annual conference, to be held March 26-28, 2020, at the University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

Collectivity and Individuality in Modern Italian Art and Cultural Production (1860 – Present)

Organizers: Marica Antonucci, Ph.D candidate in the History of Art, Johns Hopkins University
Maria Bremer, Minerva Fast Track Fellow at the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome
Giorgia Gastaldon, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome

Chair: Maria Bremer, Minerva Fast Track Fellow at the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome

This panel seeks to understand how modern Italy’s cultural production addressed notions of collectivity and individuality during an epoch that witnessed efforts of national cohesion (Risorgimento, Fascism, Resistance) and increasing social isolation and fracture (1968, the Years of Lead, the rise of globalization). Alongside the emergence of various artistic groups (art-historical avant-garde, neo-avant-garde and other postwar collectives), individual practitioners addressed the subjective impact of these socio-historical developments. Employing a capacious perspective, we ask how artists, critics, photographers, curators, and filmmakers have parsed the mutable, historically contingent relations between the singular and the potential collective subject throughout this period.

Nicole Coffineau, University of Pittsburgh, “Viewing and Collecting Ruins: the role of photography in othering archaeology, Italy 1858-62.”

Sophia Maxine Farmer, Getty Research Institute, “Futurist. Fascist. Female.”

Katie Larson, Baylor University, “Alberto Burri and the Generation of Art Visive.”


CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Session 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
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.

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, University of Lisbon, “Healing Saints and Disease: Images and Texts.”

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Session II: Lively Things: Material Culture in Early Modern Italy

Organizer and Chair: Kelly Whitford, Wheaton College

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, Nino 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.

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

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

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Session III: New Perspectives on Italian Art I

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

These sessions create a space for emerging scholars (recent Ph.D.s or Ph.D. candidates) to present their work on any area of early modern Italian art (1300-1600). These scholars work with new methodologies, new areas of study, or innovative approaches to more traditional areas of Renaissance studies. The sessions 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. *Note – IAS is sponsoring two of the four sessions.

Respondent: William Wallace, Washington University, St. Louis

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

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


New Perspectives on Italian Art II

Respondent: Sarah McHam, Rutgers University


Lindsay Sheedy, Washington University, St. Louis, “A Feast for Worms: The Rise and Fall of the Presepe in Early Modern Naples.”

New Perspectives on Italian Art III

Respondent: Stephen J. Campbell, Johns Hopkins University
Amanda Hilliam, Oxford Brookes University, UK, “Against Naturalism: Carlo Crivelli’s Artifice.”


New Perspectives on Italian Art IV

Respondent: Cristelle Baskins, Tufts University

Bar Leshem, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, “‘Warning’ Imagery on Sixteenth-Century Italian Cassoni.”

Negar Rokhgar, Rutgers University, “Between Imperial Self-Fashioning and Anti-Ottoman Alliance: Persian Gifts and Embassies in Venetian Visual Culture.”

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

Organizer and Chair: Judith Steinhoff, University of Houston

These sessions examine 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.


Angelica Federici, Cambridge University, “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.”

Session II: Gendering Images and Architectural Space

Judith Steinhoff, University of Houston, “Up Close and Personal: Gendering Small Devotional Ensembles.”

Sarah Wilkins, Pratt Institute, “A Tale of Two Vita Panels: Mary Magdalen as a Gendered Model of Penitence.”

Erik Gustafson, George Mason University, “In the Footsteps of Women: Gender Segregation or Inclusion in Mendicant Churches.”

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.

Quo vadis? Medieval Italian Sculpture Studies in the New Millennium In Honor of Dorothy F. Glass

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

Session I: Liturgical Furnishings
1. Introduction: Francesco Gangemi and Alison Locke Perchuk
2. Testimonial: Elizabeth Teviotdale, Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University
5. Paper 3: Karl Whittington, The Ohio State University. Lucignano’s Reliquary Tree

Session II: Pavements and Microhistories
1. Welcome: Alison Locke Perchuk
2. Testimonial: Libby Parker
3. Paper 1: Katerina Harris, Institute of Fine Arts (NYU) and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Microarthistory?
6. Discussant: Peter Scott Brown, University of North Florida

Session III: The Afterlives of Italian Romanesque Sculpture
1. Welcome: Francesco Gangemi
5. Concluding Discussion: Francesco Gangemi

SPECIAL FEATURES

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

By Bradley Cavallo, Independent Scholar

One of the most acute problems faced by historians of the Italian Renaissance—within the classroom and the museum—is how to overcome the matrix of expectations that obfuscates the historical and aesthetic value of artists and aesthetics not promulgated by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) or emphasized by the modern tourist industry. Understandably, exhibitions and art history publishers and departments promote the most widely recognized artists because they are known (to be popular), and this in turn leads students and vacationing visitors to assume that those same artists form the fundamental core of all that should be known.

The case of the painter from Cortona Luca Signorelli (ca. 1450–1523) exemplifies the broader consequences of this tautological trend. An examination of English-language, Italian Renaissance Art survey texts published 2000–2018 by Adams, Joost-Gaugier, Paoletti-Radke, Hartt-Wilkins, and Welch treated Signorelli’s artistic life and contributions with four artworks in less than four full pages. Given this, how
could the name Signorelli carry little significance in the minds of but few, non-specialists?

As the title suggests, *Luca Signorelli and Rome. Oblivion and Rediscovery* sought to redress this situation for our contemporary appreciation of Signorelli, and in so doing recuperate his reputation as an Italian Renaissance artist whose own artistic merits deserved attention and reconsideration. On display in Rome at the Capitoline Museum from 19 July – 3 November 2019, the exhibition featured some of the most precious of the painter’s movable artworks in concert with other related artefacts. While Federica Maria Papi and Claudio Parisi Presicce avowedly focused on “the exceptional relationship between Luca Signorelli and Rome,” their curation succeeded in creating something of deeper significance: the exhibition enriched both the casual visitor and the art historian by providing extensive didactics that did not visually inhibit an un-academic experience.

*Luca Signorelli and Rome* consisted of eight rooms that organized materials both chronologically and thematically. The panel paintings presented an exquisite encounter with compositions demonstrating Signorelli’s rich polychromy, the anatomical naturalism for which he was and is best recognized, and Christian iconography of an underestimated, emotive force.

In order to introduce the life and afterlife of Signorelli against the backdrop of Rome, room one displayed an extensive biography of the artist, two nineteenth-century portrait busts of him, an edition of Vasari’s 1568 *Le Vite*, images of Rome, and coins minted by Sixtus IV della Rovere (r. 1471–1484) as Luca’s most important, early-career patron and the one who solidified his reputation by inviting him to Rome in 1481. Indeed, Sixtus and not Signorelli remained central to room two because of its display of a scale model of the *Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia* as an example of the Pontiff’s efforts, prior to the jubilee year of 1475, to support renovation projects in Rome.

Leading from room one, room three continued the Sistine theme by featuring in the round the first-century BCE bronze *Spinario* donated in 1471 by Sixtus to the people of Rome. In a confusing but also arresting choice, enlarged reproductions of drawings of the Campidoglio made by Maarten van Heemskerck (ca. 1532–1537) covered the walls alongside descriptions and a print of Signorelli’s work (*Testament and Death of Moses*, dated 1482) as a member of the group of artists contracted by Sixtus to create the epoch-making side-wall frescos for the, then, refurbished Sistine Chapel.

Only in room four do Signorelli’s own artworks appear, albeit sharing the space with the first-century BCE marble, Medici *Spinario* acting as a pendant to its bronze twin. Each of Luca’s four paintings here physically and thematically revolve around the statue by including it as a minor or major motif, and so reveal one manner that he demonstrated his cognizance of Renaissance Classicism in terms of Roman monuments and classicizing figuration. The room’s *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (ca. 1498) justifiably adorned the promotional materials for this exhibition. It compositionally assembles a brilliant ensemble of warmly living figures dramatizing Christian martyrial history against a backdrop of Roman architectural fragments. And because it was displayed at ground level allowing for raking-light conditions without mediating glass, scrutiny of the surface revealed board seams and brushstrokes and *pentimenti*.

While Signorelli’s portrayal of masculine nudes (*ignudi*) lacks for nothing in their idealized *scorticato* (flayed) idealization of virility and illustrated musculature, it is in his empathic characterization of subtle psychology that he proved the brilliant potential of humanizing sacral imagery. For across the room from the heroically athletic physiognomies seen in the *Martyrdom*, in the *Christ Crucified with Mary Magdalen* (ca. 1496–1498) Luca eschewed histrionic gestures and instead endowed the Magdalen with a deeply affective, dramatic grace. It cannot be overstated how finely Signorelli emotionally modeled this figure in contrast to the vapidly blank faces of those physically modeled with his all-too-rigid stony chiaroscuro, e.g. in the *Baptism of Christ* (1508).

In the short and narrow hall-like room five that followed, the curators replicated backlit excerpts from Signorelli’s cycle of *Last Judgment* frescos (1499–1504) and in so doing transported viewers *in situ* to the San Brizio Chapel in Orvieto’s cathedral. The experience provided close-up views impossible other than in reproduction, maintained the exhibition’s quasi-chronological formulation, highlighted Signorelli’s mastery of the musculature of the nude male, and alerted visitors to the need to visit Orvieto.

Not to be unduly critical, the latter half of *Luca Signorelli and Rome* presented more artefacts about (or contemporaneous with) Signorelli than artworks actually by the artist himself: only 17 of 63 objects on display overall came from his hand or *bottega*. The curatorial choice (or limitation) seems to have been for quality over quantity. Rooms six, seven, and eight included only three autograph paintings by Luca—all in room six. Dating from ca. 1487–1507, each of these *Madonna and Child* revealed Signorelli’s consistently delicate treatement of the female form in the Madonnas’ faces and gently gesturing hands; the technical fineness of illuminating individual strands of her golden hair; the sensitivity of her emotional reserve hinting at a profundity of contemplative feeling. In contrast to the palpable compassion projected by Signorelli’s *Madonna and Childs*, rooms seven and eight dryly recounted his life after the turn of the sixteenth century, including his return trips to Rome in 1507 and 1512 at which time he was denied further Pontifical patronage due to the arrival of the younger, avant-garde, i.e., Michelangelo and Raphael. Despite this reversal, room nine clarifies how Signorelli enjoyed a modest *Fortuna Critica* after his death in 1523.
Following Vasari’s panegyrics, eighteenth- and especially nineteenth-century scholarly publications in Italian, French, English, and German all favorably judged Signorelli, a consensus promoted to the general public with the first solo exhibitions of his oeuvre in London in 1893 and then finally in Cortona-Florence in 1953. The greater access to and popularization of Signorelli that these academic media provided—in print and museum—coincided/generated a positive reception of his style by neo-Classical artists and an increased market value for collection of his artworks. While Antonio Canova (1757–1822)—as the head of the Roman Academy of Saint Luke—did commission a 1816 portrait bust of Signorelli for inclusion in the Pantheon, the curators fail to convince that the “protagonists of European painting [including the] illustrious, Italian masters of the twentieth century” “lay their eyes on Signorelli” for emulation. Other than that Franco Gentilini’s Giovani in riva al mare and Corrado Cagli’s I Neofiti (both, 1934) included nude males, neither example exhibited characteristics demonstrably particular to Signorelli. Not in question, however, is that the abolishment of ecclesiastical orders following the Unità d’Italia in the 1860s resulted in the dispersal of Italian Renaissance art onto the international antiquities market or the disappearance of Italian cultural heritage into private collections. The consequent external and internal diaspora included many paintings by Signorelli, e.g., the Madonna and Child with Four Saints and Angels (ca. 1515–1517). Owned first by the Tommasi family of Cortona, the Italian Government expropriated the huge altarpiece as “artistic patrimony of Rome” and placed it into the National Museum of Castel Sant’Angelo. While positioning this monumental artwork in the final room, and immediately adjacent to the exit of the exhibition coheres chronologically, viewers consequently see it as if a coda to Signorelli’s career. Whereas, closer consideration argues for it as his magnum opus of emotional, devotional, and compositional power, manifesting a sacre conversazione of carefully individuated, monumental figures no longer stiffly stylized but warmly pulsating in a subtle, conical mass of effortless grace against the blue-gray sfumato of an Umbrian twilight.

Overall, the exhibition’s good visual and spatial design stretched a limited number of graffiti artworks to tantalize visitors with the possibility that Signorelli’s underappreciated status deserved reconsideration. In this, Luca Signorelli and Rome. Oblivion and Rediscovery authenticated Signorelli’s craft and imagination as paradigmatic of the Renaissance, Christian Humanist pictorial tradition a cavallo tra the Quattro- and Cinquecento not just in Rome but in the whole of the central Italian peninsula.

MORE NEWS IN ITALIAN ART

Monumental Spalliere for the 1468 Venetian Wedding of Caterina Corner Newly Identified

By Joaneath Spicer, Walters Art Museum

It has been widely supposed that while a sizable corpus of large-scale history painting for religious institutions in 15th-century Venice has long been identified and to which much scholarship has been devoted, that there was no evidence for immense commissions for the great domestic palaces for which the city is so famous. The publication of six essays in the Journal of the Walters Art Museum 74 (2019, now opensource) will serve to introduce a commission of at least five extant monumental panel paintings that in the opening essay I connect to Marco Corner, head of one of the wealthiest patrician (self-styled nobility) houses of Venice, in celebration of the wedding of his daughter Caterina to the King of Cyprus in 1468. The five paintings consist of a series of three representing The Abduction of Helen Queen of Sparta by Paris Prince of Troy (Walters Art Museum, fig. 1-4, newly conserved and installed) and two panels making up a Garden of Love (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and private collection) for a different room. While the paintings reflect a collaboration of multiple hands, the lead painter can be identified as Dario di Giovanni, known as Dario da Treviso by Vasari who refers to him as Mantegna’s rival among the young painters training in Francesco Squarcione’s Paduan workshop in the 1440s. Indeed, the paintings include references to Padua that had long been recognized even if what tied them together had not.

While the existence of a group of secular paintings of such proportions opens a new page in the understanding of
history painting for the domestic palace in Venice, there are other reasons to incorporate these paintings into the general consideration of fifteenth-century Italian art.

The Walters Abduction of Helen series

- is the only monumental Italian spalliera series from the 1400s that is visible together, given that the Battle of San Romano is split among three museums.
- includes the earliest known classical nude in Venetian art (the cult statue of Venus)
- highlights the Trojan war as a founding myth in Venice
- offers a rare insight into a theatrical based on the abduction of Helen of the kind traditionally performed at grand Venetian weddings by a compagnie della calza
- highlights the importance of blond hair for female beauty.
- demonstrates how important technical research can be in constructing the profile of a commission. For example, the flamboyant use of the luxurious Pressbrokat, a technique permitting a remarkable imitation of brocades woven with gold or silver thread and not known to have been used in Italy south of the Veneto. The magnificence that lent to the initial display indicates a wedding of the highest importance.

The essays with their individual links:

Joaneath Spicer, “The Abduction of Helen, a Monumental Series Celebrating the Wedding of Caterina Corner and the King of Cyprus in 1468”


Pamela Betts, Karen French, and Glenn Gates, “The Painting Technique of Dario di Giovanni’s Abduction of Helen Series”


Glenn Gates et al. “Resolving the Mystery of the Paint Binding Media in The Abduction of Helen from Cythera”

Janet Stephens, “Becoming a Blond in Renaissance Italy”

Winter/Spring 2020 Exhibitions

Marisa Merz
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
On view through Summer 2020

This exhibition celebrates the work of Marisa Merz (1926-2019), the only female protagonist of the Arte povera movement who was often overshadowed by the male members, including her husband Mario Merz. A selection of sculptures and drawings focusing on some of her major themes and visual motifs will be on display. Works such as Fontana (2007) are indicative of her unique approach to everyday materials, including aluminum, clay, and industrial paint. Organized in collaboration with the Fondazione Merz in Torino, Marisa Merz will be on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art until the summer of 2020.

Marino Marini: Arcadian Nudes
Center for Italian Modern Art, New York
October 17, 2019 – June 13, 2020

This year’s installation at the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) in New York is an exhibition of the work of the twentieth-century sculptor Marino Marini (1901-1980). Titled Arcadian Nudes, this exhibition focuses particularly on his exploration and interpretation of the classical female nude (nudi femminili) during and after World War II. CIMA’s exhibition will bring together some of Marini’s greatest large- and small-scale nude sculptures, to be displayed alongside pieces by his contemporaries Alberto Giacometti and Willem de Kooning, both of whom also took on the female nude as a major subject of their work.
Andrea Mantegna: Rivivere l’antico, costruire il moderno
Palazzo Madama, Torino
December 12, 2019 – May 4, 2020

This exhibition is devoted to Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), one of the leading artists of the Renaissance. Divided into six sections highlighting specific moments in his career, the exhibition focuses particularly on Mantegna’s role as a court artist in Mantua, where he developed a dense network of artists, writers, and scholars. In order to emphasize Mantegna’s impact on the broader cultural landscape, the exhibition includes over 100 works by Mantegna and his contemporaries, including Donatello, Antonello da Messina, Pisanello, Paolo Uccello, Giovanni Bellini, Cosmé Tura, Ercole de’ Roberti, Pier Jacopo Alari Bonacolsi (known as l’Antico), and Correggio, as well as medals, handwritten letters, and printed and illuminated books. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue.

Raphael in Berlin: The Madonnas of the Gemäldegalerie
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin
December 13, 2019 – August 26, 2020

In celebration of the 500th anniversary of the death of Raphael, the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin will be staging a one-gallery exhibition which brings together all five of Raphael’s Madonnas owned by the museum, to be displayed alongside loans from the National Gallery in London and the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett. For the first time, the Terranuova Madonna tondo (ca. 1505) will be on display together with Raphael’s preliminary drawing for the head of the Terranuova Madonna from the Kupferstichkabinett. The National Gallery will be lending The Madonna of the Pinks (c. 1506-1508), which will be leaving the United Kingdom for the first time since its acquisition.

Caravaggio-Bernini, Baroque in Rome
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
February 14 – June 7, 2020

Caravaggio-Bernini, a wide-ranging exhibition that includes more than seventy works, focuses on painter Caravaggio and sculptor Bernini as the two leading protagonists of the Baroque in Rome. Several notable works from international collections will be on view, including Caravaggio’s Narcissus, Boy Bitten by a Lizard, and Bernini’s Saint Sebastian and early work Bacchus. The exhibition will include works by other Baroque painters including Ludovico and Annibale Carracci, Guido Reni, Giovanni Baglione, Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi, Nicolas Poussin, Simon Vouet, and sculptors such as Alessandro Algardi and Francesco Mochi. The exhibition is a collaboration with the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, where it ran from October 15, 2019 to January 19, 2020.

Raphael and His Circle
National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
February 16 – June 14, 2020

The National Gallery presents 25 prints and drawings in an intimate installation celebrating the life and work of Raphael. Highlights of the exhibition include four of Raphael’s drawings: the sheet from which the design of his painting Saint George and the Dragon was transferred; the cartoon for the so-called Belle Jardinière, a detailed representation of the prophets Hosea and Jonah; and a well-known study for part of the frescoes in the church of Santa Maria della Pace in Rome. Nine drawings by his closest collaborators and followers—Giulio Romano, Polidoro da Caravaggio, and Perino del Vaga—will also be on view.

Michelangelo: Mind of the Master
Getty Center, Los Angeles
February 25 – June 7, 2020

This exhibition dedicated to painter, sculptor, and architect Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) provides an opportunity to experience the artist’s achievements on an intimate scale through viewing more than two dozen original drawings. These drawings include Michelangelo’s preparatory work for some of his most famous commissions,
including the Sistine Chapel ceiling fresco, sculptures for the tomb of Giuliano de’ Medici, and the dome of Saint Peter’s Basilica. Michelangelo: Mind of the Master brings to the United States for the first time a group of Michelangelo’s drawings held at the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, the Netherlands. The exhibition previously traveled to the Cleveland Museum of Art (September 22, 2019-January 5, 2020) and is accompanied by a fully illustrated exhibition catalogue with contributions from curators at all three organizing institutions.

‘The Greatness of the Universe’ in the Art of Giovanna Garzoni

The Uffizi, Florence
March 3 – May 24, 2020

Giovanna Garzoni (1600-1670) is the subject of a new exhibition at the Uffizi, which houses many of her works that were collected by the Medici family. While she is well-known for her botanical paintings, the current exhibition focuses on her role in incorporating Baroque geographic fantasy in her work: Chinese porcelain, Mexican flowers, Pacific nautili, and other objects from various regions of the world are brought together in her compositions. The exhibition, curated by Sheila Barker, will also include a reconstruction of Vittoria della Rovere’s Wunderkammer, once held in the Sala dell’Aurora in the villa of Poggio Imperiale.

Raffaello

Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome
March 5 – June 2, 2020

Marking the 500th anniversary of the death of the painter Raphael (1483-1520), this monographic exhibition is slated to be the largest gathering of his works in history: more than 100 paintings and drawings will be on view. It will be the largest of several exhibitions planned to celebrate Raphael’s anniversary, with shows planned for the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the National Gallery in London, and two exhibitions of Raphael cartoons: one at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan and the other at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Raffaello, which represents a collaboration with the Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence, will be on display at the Scuderie del Quirinale in Rome through June 2, to coincide with the date of Raphael’s death (April 6, 1520). The Uffizi will be lending more than forty works to the exhibition, providing the backbone of this expansive look at Raphael’s body of work.

Titian: Love, Desire, Death

National Gallery, London
March 16 – June 14, 2020

In 1551, Prince Philip of Spain, the future King Philip II, commissioned Titian to produce a group of paintings showing Classical myths primarily taken from the Roman poet Ovid’s Metamorphoses. This exhibition reunites all six paintings in the series, from Boston, Madrid, and London, for the first time in over four centuries. Included are Diana and Actaeon and Diana and Callisto. Combining Titian’s remarkable talent as both artist and storyteller, the mythological scenes capture moments of high drama: a fatal encounter, the shameful discovery, a hasty abduction. Titian expertly manipulates paint and colour to dazzling effect; capturing luminous flesh, sumptuous fabrics, water, reflection, and atmospheric, almost enchanted, landscapes. Titian called these works his poesie because he considered them to be visual equivalents of poetry. Exhibition organised by the National Gallery, the National Galleries of Scotland, the Museo Nacional del Prado, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.

Body and Soul: Sculpture in Italy from Donatello to Michelangelo

Musée du Louvre, Paris
May 6 – August 17, 2020

As a follow-up to the Springtime of the Renaissance exhibition (September 26, 2013–January 6, 2014), Body and Soul is dedicated to Renaissance sculpture in the second half of the Quattrocento. This exhibition focuses particularly on the ability of Renaissance sculptors to depict bodies in motion or contorted to produce an emotional response in viewers. Although the exhibition will focus primarily on sculpture, it will explore several other fields, including painting, printmaking, and drawing. As a collaboration with Castello Sforzesco in Milan, the exhibition will travel to the Castello for the fall of 2020.
Giuseppe Bezzuoli: A Master Painter of the Romantic Era
The Uffizi, Florence
April 2 – July 31, 2020

This will be the first monographic exhibition dedicated to Florentine artist Giuseppe Bezzuoli (1784-1855), one of the most highly regarded Tuscan painters of the Restoration era. The exhibition was prompted by the Uffizi’s recent purchase of a Bezzuoli painting, Eve Tempted by the Snake, which had gone missing after its display at the World’s Fair in 1855. Giuseppe Bezzuoli will also allow visitors to compare Bezzuoli’s art with the work of Francesco Hayez and Massimo D’Azeglio. The exhibition will also include a special section devoted to young American artists who attended Bezzuoli’s courses at the Accademia di Belle Arti, including the sculptor of Horatio Greenough and Hiram Powers and the landscapes of Thomas Cole.

Artemisia
National Gallery, London
April 4 – July 20, 2020

Artemisia is the first major exhibition dedicated to the Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi to be organized in the United Kingdom. Many of her most famous works will be on view, including major loans from the Detroit Institute of Arts (Judith and Holofernes), the Wadsworth Atheneum (Self-Portrait as a Lute Player) and the Museo di Capodimonte (Judith Beheading Holofernes). The exhibition is and aims to follow Gentileschi’s career from Rome to Florence, Venice, Naples, and London, and will also include four letters (1618-1620) that were recently discovered in the archives of the Frescobaldi family. The letters, which are addressed to Artemisia’s lover Francesco Maringhi, have never before been displayed outside of Italy.

A Superb Baroque: Art in Genoa, 1600-1750
National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
May 3 – August 16, 2020

Known for its history as a wealthy banking center, Genoa became the site of beautiful and richly expressed Baroque art, illustrated in the work of Bernardo Strozzi, Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, and Alessandro Magnasco. A Superb Baroque will be the first exhibition in the United States dedicated to the Genoese Baroque. Among the more than 130 objects included in the exhibition will be painters from other schools who worked on important commissions in Genoa: Peter Paul Rubens, Giulio Cesare Procaccini, Anthony Van Dyck, Orazio Gentileschi, and Francesco Solimena. It will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

Michelangelo, Divino artista
Palazzo Ducale, Genoa
March 26 – July 19, 2020

This exhibition will be the first in Genoa dedicated to the life and work of Michelangelo. The exhibition will be organized into sections based on Michelangelo’s documented encounters with others that dot his lengthy biography: he served six popes and had direct relationships with patrons such as Lorenzo the Magnificent and Caterina de’ Medici. The exhibition also aims to explore Michelangelo’s artistic relationship with the region of Liguria. Paintings, portrait medals, and drawings by Michelangelo and several of his contemporaries will be on display, as well as letters, poems, and other archival material.

Sublime Ideas: Drawings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi
The Morgan Library and Museum, New York
May 29 – September 13, 2020

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of printmaker, designer, and architect Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), an occasion that will be celebrated in late spring and summer exhibition of his work at the Morgan Library at Museum. The Morgan holds one of the largest and most important collections of Piranesi’s drawings, many of which will be on view alongside seldom-exhibited loans from private collections. As a broad survey of his work, the exhibition will include various types of drawings including...
architectural caprices, figural drawings, studies for prints, and views of Rome and Pompeii.

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

**NEWS AND NOTES**

Raphael's tapestries for the Sistine Chapel have been **reinstalled** for a brief period to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the artist's death. It is the first time that all ten tapestries have been hung together in their original location since the sixteenth century.

Sharon Hecker’s 2018 book was recently reviewed. Co-edited with Marin R. Sullivan and entitled *Postwar Italian Art History Today: Untying 'the Knot'* (New York: Bloomsbury), it was reviewed by Rosalind McKeever in *Art History*, 42, n. 5 (2019): 985-991.

**Uffizi wins legal battle against owner of Uffizi.com domain owner.** The museum, whose official website is Uffizi.it, won the case against BoxNic Anstalt, a company that registered several domains containing the word ‘Uffizi’ in Arizona.

**The regional government of Tuscany has acquired the vast archive of photographs of the Alinari brothers.** The archive will form the focus of a new foundation aiming to preserve its more than 5 million items.

**Film producer Roberto Cicutto replaces Paolo Baratta as Venice Biennale president.** A native Venetian, Cicutto is an award-winning director and founder of three film companies.

**The restoration of Plautilla Nelli’s Last Supper has been completed.** The restoration, championed by the US-registered Advancing Women Artists Foundation, lasted four years. The large painting on canvas, arguably the only Renaissance *Last Supper* painted by a woman, is exhibited in the Museo di Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

**Leonardo’s drawing known as the Vitruvian Man** will feature in a Leonardo exhibition at the Musée du Louvre in Paris. The decision overturns a previous ruling based on a law that prevents fragile artworks from travelling.

**Marisa Merz, the only woman artist linked to the Arte Povera movement,** died aged 93. Famous for her suspended abstract sculptures made of aluminium, Merz was awarded the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement at the 2013 Venice Biennale.

**Eike Schmidt’s mandate as director of the Uffizi has been extended for a further four years.**

**MEMBER PUBLICATIONS 2020**

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.


Grossman also contributed an essay to this volume: “Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Gentil Virginio Orsini and the Defence of Bracciano”

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 fall issue, we are looking for reviews of spring/summer 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 April 1 for the next issue. Deadlines for IAS newsletters are: Fall Newsletter: news deadline August 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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