

ADOPT A WORK OF ART

of the Museo degli Innocenti

please see the catalogue of the artworks in need of restoration:
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1. Leopoldo Martellini
Portrait of Roberto Antinori, 1844

oil on canvas, 89 x 109 cm

ESTIMATED COST OF RESTORATION
4,500.00 Euros

The portrait of Roberto Antinori, prior of the Innocenti at the beginning of the seventeenth century, is one of a series of paintings of Priors and Benefactors commissioned in the mid-nineteenth century. The fresco painted by Poccetti also portrays the prior in the girls' refectory as he accompanies Grand Duke Cosimo II on a visit to the foundling hospital. He did not descend from the noble Antinori family, but was a "gittatello", a foundling, who grew up and was educated in the hospital, until he became a canon in the cathedral and a teacher of theology. To him we owe the creation of the cycle of decorations in the loggia which exalted the relations between the Innocenti and the city. The problems for the conservation of the painting are due to slackening of the canvas on its stretcher which has caused a wide, raised 'craquelure' all over the surface, with some loss of the preparatory layer and the colour in the lower part of the painting.



2. Florentine Manufacture

Coat of arms of the Guild of Por Santa Maria (or Silk Guild), 1336

stone, 76 x 46 cm

ESTIMATED COST OF RESTORATION

7,800.00 Euros

The *Por Santa Maria Guild's coat of arms* suggests the Guild's position of control and jurisdiction over the Innocenti and refers to the civic practice of "entrusting" the city's principal buildings to the major Guilds. In the early fifteenth century the guilds were made responsible for the artistic choices and cultural guidelines of Florence. The Silk Guild commissioned Brunelleschi, who as a goldsmith was a member of the guild, to design the Innocenti foundling hospital and he supervised the work for almost eight years.

The fourteenth century coat of arms precedes the founding of the Innocenti, but refers to the Guild's key role in its construction and then in its management. The work is not available for public viewing at present but because of its documentary importance it will be on exhibited in the new historical section of the museum, symbolizing the indivisible link between the Por Santa Maria Guild and the Institute. The dismantlement will be a particularly delicate operation since the coat of arms is composed of two original parts and one restored part; the necessary structural consolidation will be followed by the cleaning and reassembling of the various fragments.



3. Anonymous

Portrait of Vincenzo Borghini, end of the 16th century

mixed technique on wood, 95 X 77 cm

ESTIMATED COST OF RESTORATION

8,400.00 Euros

The painting, at present in storage in the Institute, is part of the series of portraits of Priors and Benefactors, commissioned from the end of the 16th century to perpetuate their memory. In charge of the complex organism of the Innocenti were the so-called "Spedalinghi" or priors of the foundling hospital, often able merchants appointed because of their administrative skills, but also learned men of the church, coming from the city's most influential families. Despite the rather modest value of this work it is very important as a visual testimonial of one of the Innocenti's most illustrious rectors, Vincenzo Borghini.

Prior of the foundling hospital from 1552 to 1580 he was a close friend of Vasari's and together with him, founder of the Florence Academy of the Arts of Drawing. A lover of the figurative arts, he commissioned important works of art for the Institute and developed children's education. A fine vertical fissure is clearly visible in the centre of the panel, crossing the whole figure; layers of paint have been raised and there are colour detachments. The photo shows that the frame is also in a precarious state of conservation with various raised parts and the loss of fragments of paint.



VINCENZIO BORGHINI
PRIORE
DAL 1552 AL 1580.

4. Giovanni di Francesco Toscani (1372-1430)
Madonna with Child and saints, verso Pietà of Christ flanked by angels, ca 1410-1420

panel painting, 142 x 163 cm

ESTIMATED COST OF RESTORATION
13,000.00 Euros

This splendid triptych, painted on both sides, documents the function of assisting women in the ancient hospital, which developed over the centuries. The work comes from the church of SS. Annunziata di Orbatello (now Via della Pergola) in Florence, originally a hospice for poor, elderly women and then a shelter for "hidden pregnant women", unmarried mothers. From 1775 to 1877 the whole conservatory was under the administrative management of the Institute and this explains the arrival of the work in the Innocenti shortly after the mid-nineteenth century.

The work reveals problems of conservation due mainly to the wood support, whose battens are blocked by a metal base supporting the panel, preventing the normal movement of the wood. The panel shows some worrying fissures in the wood and also various raised blistering of the glaze in the cusps.



5. Monumental façade

ESTIMATED COST OF RESTORATION

Decorations on the arches 14,400.00 Euros

External façade and staircase 19,100.00 Euros

Plaster 26,400.00 Euros

Fresco 88,800.00 Euros

Columns and other stone features 162,600.00 Euros

Total 311,300.00 Euros

The façade of the Istituto degli Innocenti is one of the most important features of the building designed by Filippo Brunelleschi. It has a portico where there are nine Roman arches supported by Corinthian columns, with the two colours of the load-bearing grey sandstone columns and the light coloured plaster over the brickwork.

The idea of the portico originated from the ancient squares and mediaeval loggias but is used for the first time here in a founding hospital complex and gains value in urban planning terms by acting as a link between the children's hospital and the city.

Over the years the portico was adorned with new decorations. First, the Silk Guild, the hospital's patron, placed its coat of arms on the façade. In 1487 the glazed earthenware roundels made by the della Robbia School depicting putti wrapped in swaddling clothes, the institute's symbol, were added. Between the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century the Medici family had allegorical scenes painted under the portico and had marble busts of themselves placed there. The façade is in need of major restoration work: first of all the restoration of the fresco dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici by Bernardino Poccetti and of the sculptures at the entrance portal. The plasterwork of the whole colonnade is in a serious state of deterioration and the series of putti in swaddling clothes by Andrea della Robbia also urgently need to be made secure and the dust removed.



6. Men's Courtyard

ESTIMATED COST OF RESTORATION

First floor 33,480.00 Euros

Ground floor 100,260.00 Euros

Total 133,740.00 Euros

The men's courtyard belongs to Brunelleschi's original project that was begun in 1419. The portico leads to the square courtyard flanked by two rectangular buildings of identical size, one intended to house the church and the other the so-called "abituro dei fanciulli", foundlings' lodging, where the little children lived.

The courtyard is decorated with painted graffiti representing the symbols of the hospitals which provided accommodation for children before the Innocenti Hospital was founded; a rooster for the San Gallo Hospital, a ladder for Santa Maria della Scala, and a door as the coat of arms of the Silk Guild, the patron of the Institute. The men's cloister requires the urgent restoration of all its architectural parts: two mobile scaffolds will be used for the removal of all the surface dust deposited, the treatment of the iron hoops and for chemically cleaning the surfaces. Surface consolidation of the areas where there are signs of exfoliation will be followed by gluing of the cracks and protective treatment of the whole surface.



7. *Women's Courtyard*

ESTIMATED COST OF RESTORATION

First floor 33,900.00 Euros

Plaster work 40,950.00 Euros

Ground floor 57,050.00 Euros

Total 131,900.00 Euros

The women's courtyard derives its name from the fact that it was in the area reserved for the hospital's female community, comprising wet nurses, small children and founding girls. It was built by one Francesco della Luna, who in 1427 replaced Filippo Brunelleschi in the management of the architectural work.

It has an oblong shape and slim columns with Ionic capitals supporting the loggia, probably built with smaller dimensions in consideration of its small guests; at the top is a drying room, a large open loggia used for hanging and drying the laundry.

The women's cloister is in urgent need of restoration, of both the stone parts and the plaster work. For the plaster work, the surfaces will be cleaned and the old plaster removed, then all the original parts will be consolidated and the missing parts reintegrated. Restoration of the stone work will involve cleaning the surfaces, consolidation of the surfaces which are flaking, gluing the cracks and finally, the aesthetic presentation of the surfaces.

