

FROM  
DONATELLO  
TO  
ALESSANDRO  
VITTORIA  
1450-1600

150 YEARS OF SCULPTURE  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE

Galleria Giorgio Franchetti  
alla Ca' d'Oro, Venezia  
22.04.2022  
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***FROM DONATELLO TO ALESSANDRO VITTORIA, 1450 - 1600***  
***150 years of sculpture in the Republic of Venice***

***curated by Toto Bergamo Rossi and Claudia Cremonini***

***Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro, Venice***  
***April 22 - October 30, 2022***

The Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro presents ***From Donatello to Alessandro Vittoria, 1450 - 1600. 150 Years of Sculpture in the Republic of Venice***, the first major exhibition dedicated to Venetian sculpture curated by **Toto Bergamo Rossi, director of Venetian Heritage and Claudia Cremonini, director of Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro**. Organized and financed by the **Venetian Heritage Foundation**, in collaboration with the **Veneto Regional Directorate for Museums**, the exhibition will take place from **April 22 to October 30, 2022**.

The show, installed at the museum's *piano nobile*, focuses on the dialogue between several works of masters operating in Venice and in the territories of the Republic between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as **Donatello, Antonio Rizzo, Pietro, Tullio and Antonio Lombardo and also Jacopo Sansovino and Alessandro Vittoria, displaying, in addition to pieces already known to the general public, some sculptures never seen in museum contexts**. The exhibition aims to **give back to the visitors the interpretative variety of the sculptural technique**, underlining its value and the richness of aesthetic declinations and materials within a historical-artistic context that too often prefers painting in the artistic discourse on Venice.

Thanks to **important loans from national and international institutions and private collections**, the exhibition centers on the most significant moments of a much broader and far-reaching event, that of **sculptural production in the Veneto region from the early Renaissance to the late Mannerist period**, highlighting the complexity and richness of the stylistic and iconographic contributions that converged to Venice in years of great renewal for local figurative culture.

The **Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro**, with one of the most important collections in the city in terms of the quality of its works from different periods and types, has always been one of the cornerstones of the merging of private and public collections in Venice, and the place of excellence for the concentration of **sculptural masterpieces from dispersed monumental contexts**, largely conceived for dismembered or no longer existing ecclesiastical complexes in the lagoon area. The presence of a **prestigious collection of bronzes and sculptures from the Veneto region** – mainly from the Renaissance, but with valuable examples dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – is the result of the original intention to allocate to Ca' d'Oro important testimonies of the vanished Venice that enriched the nucleus originating from Baron Franchetti's bequest.

*"This exhibition marks the full return of Ca' d'Oro to the great Venetian exhibition circuit and we are very pleased that this is happening with an initiative, scheduled to coincide with the Art Biennale, that ties its conception to the peculiarity of the collections and offers the opportunity to enhance an important sector of the museum's heritage, which is closely linked to collectionism and dispersions from the territory",* says **Claudia Cremonini, co-curator of the exhibition and director of the Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca'**

**d'Oro.** "The venue - it seemed to us - could not be more appropriate for an exhibition on sculpture, which, together with marble, plays a key role in the ideal connection between inside and outside, between the extraordinary ornamental apparatus of the Palace and the art collections housed in it".

"Venetian Heritage is proud to support and promote, once again, the cultural heritage of the Serenissima," said **Toto Bergamo Rossi**, co-curator of the exhibition and director of the **Venetian Heritage** foundation. "This exhibition project aims to enhance the too-underrated Venetian sculpture and at the same time the prestigious Ca' d'Oro museum, which at the end of this exhibition will undergo a general restyling and exhibition update funded by Venetian Heritage."

In **1450** Venice was at the height of its power, thanks to its role as a hinge between the Levant and Northern Europe which would soon disappear due to the discovery of new routes across the Atlantic. In this complex political and economic scenario, the **Gothic style is gradually abandoned to make room for a new and, at the same time, eternal style** that starts from the return to the Antique to give life to the Renaissance. It is **in this period that Donatello arrives in Padua**, where he will stay for ten years - **from 1443 to 1453**. His arrival marks the appearance of **influences from outside the Venetian art scene**, still late Gothic, and contributes to the formation of a new generation of artists who specialized in bronze casting and terracotta sculptures. The symbol of this new plasticity is the **San Lorenzo**, a terracotta bust from 1440 which ideally opens the exhibition. Originally in the lunette of the portal of the Pieve di San Lorenzo (Borgo San Lorenzo, Florence) it was purchased by John II, Prince of Liechtenstein in 1889 and until 1938 exhibited in the family's summer residence in Vienna. Only recent studies by Francesco Caglioti have proven its autography. In dialogue with the bust, an **Enthroned Madonna** also in terracotta by **Andrea Briosco detto il Riccio** (late 15th century) and the marble relief of **San Sebastiano** from the Lombardo workshop from the sacristy of the Venetian church of Santi Apostoli exhibited next to the painting of the same subject by **Andrea Mantegna**, one of the symbols of the Giorgio Franchetti collection exhibited at the Ca' d'Oro.

As evidence of how the Italian Renaissance and classicism were inextricably linked, the exhibition presents a room dedicated to the theme of "*Return to the Antique*". The **fall of Constantinople** first (1453) and the **discovery of the Laocoon sculptural group** later (1506) stimulated the sculptors of the time a new way of understanding aesthetics, strongly inspired by antiquity and at the same time open to new ideas and techniques. To fully represent this new course in the history of sculpture, the marble relief **Death of Lucretia**, recently attributed to **Antonio Lombardo** and never exhibited in a museum context until now. Probably made during his stay in Ferrara, in which he also executed the marbles for Duke Alfonso I d'Este's Camerino d'Alabastro, this work is an example of the desire of the time to represent examples of patrician morality and virtue. Also exhibited in this second room **Apollo** by **Antonio Minello** and **Cleopatra** by **Giammaria Mosca**, showcased together in the collection of the Marquis Costanzo Patrizi in Rome until 1624 and reunited for the first time after almost four centuries. The references to classicism can also be seen in the representation of sacred subjects: the two statues of the **Risen Christ** by **Giovanni Battista Bregno** refer respectively to the Polykleitos' *Doryphoros* and the *Apollo Belvedere*, while the **Christ** by **Lorenzo Bregno** from the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice is inspired by Roman portraits both in the format and in the dress of the subject, similar to a toga. And it is often the clothes of the portrayed subjects that indicate a clear classical inspiration, such as the **Allegorical figure** by **Antonio Rizzo** from the Ca' d'Oro wearing a peplum with a diploidion tied at the waist by a belt like a Hellenistic Nike.

The last room on the *piano nobile* is dedicated to the "*Renovatio Urbis*", that moment when Venice became a refuge for artists and architects fleeing Papal court after the **sack of Rome of 1527**. Among them **Jacopo Sansovino**, architect and sculptor who arrived in Venice preceded by his fame and supported by the great collector and patron Domenico Grimani. It was Grimani who introduced him to Doge Andrea Gritti, ensuring him a rapid rise in the cultural context of the *Serenissima*. His style influenced the taste of the city by combining sculpture and architecture, as it can be seen in his **Madonna del Bacio** or in the **bronze reliefs with episodes from the life of St. Mark** made for the pulpit of the Basilica, exceptionally on display in this exhibition.

The itinerary of the show ends with a series of **patrician busts**, examples of a new way of approaching the commemorative portrait in a deeply oligarchic and republican society, the Venetian one, in which the exaltation of the individual was not well received. The definitive clearance of this representation, expressly inspired by the Roman ideals of the patriciate in the Republican Age, is due to **Alessandro Vittoria**. Blending antiquarian fantasy and verisimilitude - as can be seen from the busts on display portraying Marino Grimani, Tommaso Rangone and Francesco Duodo - these works exalted and immortalized a ruling class dedicated to projecting the image of a wise and serene government, animated by the lifeblood of the Serenissima.

The exhibition, which sees the collaboration of **Marsilio Arte** for the **general organization and coordination of communication**, as well as for the publication of the **catalog** that documents the show through an important photographic campaign created for the occasion, is **financed by Venetian Heritage** in collaboration with **Colnaghi** and with the support of **Banca Ifis**, **Venice Real Estate Knight Frank** and the **Swedish Committee for the Safeguarding of Venice (Pro Venezia Sweden)**.

#### GALLERIA GIORGIO FRANCHETTI ALLA CA' D'ORO

The genesis of the museum, inaugurated in 1927 and now part of the Veneto Regional Directorate for Museums (Direzione regionale Musei Veneto), is linked to the name of the Gallery's founder – Baron Giorgio Franchetti (Turin 1865 - Venice 1922) - who, after years of passionate commitment as a patron and collector, donated the building, which he purchased in 1894 and restored to display his collection, to the Italian State in 1916. From the time of the donation until his death in 1922, Baron Franchetti worked with Gino Fogolari, then director of the Gallerie dell'Accademia, to increase his collection with a series of state-owned works that were already part of vanished Venetian ecclesiastical complexes with the ultimate goal of creating a public museum for the city that would tell its complex and composite artistic and cultural history. Giorgio Franchetti was also responsible for the monumental reorganization of the courtyard and the atrium on the ground floor with the surprising "installation" of the mosaic floor in *opus sectile*, conceived and for the most part created by the Baron himself to evoke the Paleochristian basilicas and the examples of St. Mark's, with the fifteenth-century wellhead sculpted by Bartolomeo Bon (1427), returned to its original location after being repurchased on the antiques market.

[www.cadoro.org](http://www.cadoro.org)

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/galleria-giorgio-franchetti-alla-ca-doro>

#### VENETIAN HERITAGE

Venetian Heritage, an international non-profit organization with offices in Venice and New York, supports cultural projects through conservation, exhibitions, publications, conferences, academic study and research. It aims to increase awareness of the immense legacy of Venetian art in Italy and in those areas that were once part of the Republic of Venice.

[www.venetianheritage.eu](http://www.venetianheritage.eu)

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**Calle Ca' d'Oro, 3934**

**Venezia**

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#### **Press Office**

Giovanni Maria Sgrignuoli

e. [giovanni@gmspress.com](mailto:giovanni@gmspress.com) / t. +39 328 9686390