



WORLD MONUMENTS FUND & ITS PARTNERS

ANNOUNCE PROJECT TO RESTORE

THE FAMOUS CARRACCI GALLERY IN ROME'S PALAZZO FARNESE

Rome, Italy—World Monuments Fund (WMF), The French Embassy in Italy, and the Fondation de l'Orangerie have announced the commencement of a project to restore the famous Carracci gallery in the Palazzo Farnese. Considered one of the most important Renaissance palaces in Rome, the Palazzo Farnese is the home of the French Embassy and the Ecole Française de Rome.

Jean-Marc de La Sablière, French Ambassador to Italy, remarked that in “1936 France committed itself both to open the palace and to assure its maintenance. Various restorations of different extents show that our country was faithful to the promise made. A major milestone was the restoration of the façade of the palace and of the *cortile* [courtyard] in the context of the restorations for the Jubilee 2000. Today, a new restoration project is needed, this time on the painted decorations of the palace and on its masterpiece, the Carracci gallery. I appreciate the remarkable and decisive support given to this ambitious project by the donors, especially World Monuments Fund and the Fondation de l'Orangerie.”

Bertrand du Vignaud, President of World Monuments Fund Europe, said: “The Carracci gallery, a masterpiece of the Renaissance, required urgent action, and it seemed natural to me that World Monuments Fund would prioritize this project. WMF is pleased to work with local partners on the conservation challenges and is grateful to its donors for supporting this effort. Since WMF's founding in 1965, the organization has restored many masterpieces of Italian heritage such as Verrocchio's Bartolomeo Colleoni equestrian statue in Venice and, more recently, the, the magnificent Romanesque abbey of San Clemente a Casauria, which was badly damaged in the 2009 earthquake in Abruzzo.”

History

The Palazzo Farnese, one of the most important Renaissance palaces in Rome, was commissioned by Alessandro Farnese (1468-1549), later Pope Paul III (r. 1534-1549), around 1513. Architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger was responsible for the initial design of the palace. After Alessandro Farnese became Pope Paul III in 1534, the structure was expanded significantly, and some of the most prestigious artists of the time—including Michelangelo, Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola, and Giacomo della Porta—worked to create a building that reflected the prestige of the Farnese family.

(more)

In 1597, his descendant, Cardinal Odoard Farnese, commissioned Annibale Carracci to paint a cycle of frescoes on the theme of the “Loves of the Gods” to celebrate the sumptuous wedding of his brother Rannucio Farnese, Duke of Parma, Piacenza, and Castro, to Margherita Aldobrandini, grandniece of pope Clement VIII. This famous gallery is characterized by an innovative organization of the space based on tight and expert imbrications of the compartments. Over the centuries, art connoisseurs have noted the elegant forms and lively colors of the gallery. This masterpiece, to which contributed not only the Carracci family (Annibale, Agostino, Ludovico, and Antonio), but also Giovanni Lanfranco, Giovanni Antonio Solari, Sisto Badalocchio, and Domenico Zampieri (Domenichino), has served as a model for many great painters who studied in Rome and was also an inspiration later for both for Baroque and neoclassical art. The Carracci gallery was also a model for a large number of galleries in European palaces for three centuries.

Conservation Project

The first consolidation of the vault was directed by Carlo Maratta in the seventeenth century; later conservation interventions to protect and stabilize the ceiling were carried out in 1923, 1936, and 1994.

Today conservation is necessary to ensure that the paintings in the gallery do not deteriorate or become harmed by structural problems in the ceiling. The campaign of 1994, realized under the direction of the French *Service des Monuments historiques*, assembled information on the condition of the vault that led to some proposed solutions to conservation issues, but it was not possible at the time to secure sufficient funding to carry out the proposed treatments. The previous analysis will be helpful in developing the conservation program for the painted decorations, stucco, and gilding that adorn the room. Work is scheduled to begin this year and will be coordinated by WMF in collaboration with local heritage authorities and international experts.

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