



For Immediate Release

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FRIENDS OF THE UFFIZI GALLERY FUND NEW MICHELANGELO ROOM

PALM BEACH, FL (February 11, 2013) – The Palm Beach-based nonprofit, Friends of the Uffizi Gallery, along with their sister organization in Italy, *Amici degli Uffizi*, have fully funded the new Michelangelo Room on the second floor of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy. The project included re-construction of the room, as well as the re-installation of a significant work by Michelangelo, “Tondo Doni,” and works by his contemporaries, as well as a sculpture that inspired him. The room was presented to the Italian press on January 28 and opened to the public on January 29, 2013.

“Tondo Doni,” an oil and tempera on panel painting, is the room’s focal point and hangs across from the entryway. The painting dates from between 1503 and 1507 and depicts the Holy Family. It’s Michelangelo’s only surviving late panel painting and was commissioned for a patron’s marriage. Giorgio Vasari said the work introduced the “modern manner” to Florentine painting.

The painting has been enclosed in protective glass to guard against acts of vandalism like what happened in 1993, when a visitor to St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City attacked Michelangelo’s sculpture, “La Pietà,” 1499, with a hammer. That same year *Amici degli Uffizi* was created to raise funds for restoration after a terrorist bombing at the Uffizi Gallery caused structural damage to the building and damaged priceless artworks.

In the center of the Michelangelo Room is the fully-restored and cleaned “Ariadne” statue, a third-century B.C.E. Roman copy of a Greek sculpture, which influenced the depiction of Mary’s arms in the “Tondo Doni.”

The restoration of the Michelangelo Room was undertaken as part of the Friends’ commitment to the “2013: Year of Italian Culture in the U.S.,” as officially designated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

the Embassy of Italy in Washington, D.C. and with the collaboration of Italian embassies and cultural organizations throughout the U.S. As part of this, the Friends have also organized U.S. lectures with their president Contessa Maria Vittoria Colonna Rimbotti. Michelangelo's muse, who he wrote poetry about, was Vittoria Colonna from the same Colonna family.

Significant works by Michelangelo have recently traveled to the U.S. as part of special exhibitions. His intricate allegorical drawing "The Dream (Il Sogno)," 1533, is currently on view at the Frick Collection in New York. His unfinished sculpture "David-Apollo," 1534, is now on view at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Lisa Marie Browne, executive director of the Friends of the Uffizi Gallery, remarked, "Michelangelo and his work encapsulate the beauty and ideals of the Renaissance. He excelled at his every undertaking and left an inspiring artistic legacy. We're honored the Uffizi Gallery chose us for this restoration."

Other works that were re-installed into the Michelangelo Room include, "Joseph Led to Prison," 1515, and "The Risen Christ Appearing to Saint Mary Magdalen," 1509-1510 by Francesco Granacci, a friend of Michelangelo's. Structural improvements included the cleaning and re-installation of the original marble floor and the plastering and repainting of the walls to a red color that matches the color used in the Uffizi's first floor galleries that also house works from early-sixteenth century Florence.

Michelangelo (1475-1564) was the most significant artist of the Italian Renaissance. He was a painter, sculptor, architect, poet and engineer. He's most well-known for his frescoes of Biblical scenes painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, 1508-1512, in Vatican City in Rome, Italy and his statue of "David," 1501-1504, that now resides at the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, Italy.

A video of the re-installation is available to the press upon request: <http://bit.ly/X30XDK>

These photos are also available to the press, upon request, at no charge: <http://bit.ly/VbvJg9>

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Friends of the Uffizi Gallery was founded in Palm Beach, Florida in 2006 as the sister organization to Italy's *Amici degli Uffizi*. That organization was created in 1993 in Florence, Italy to raise funds to aid the museum after a terrorist bombing caused significant structural damage, as well as damage to a number of irreplaceable artworks. Today, under the direction of president Contessa Maria Vittoria Colonna Rimbotti, the two organizations together raise awareness about the Uffizi's historical significance and funds for restorations through educational outreach and special events. The design for the Uffizi Gallery was created in 1560 by Giorgio Vasari at the request of Cosimo I de' Medici to house his government's administrative offices. The buildings were completed in 1581 after both their deaths. The Uffizi Gallery is among the world's top 10 museums according to National Geographic. For more information, visit: <http://www.friendsoftheuffizigallery.org>