



For Immediate Release

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**UFFIZI NAMED WORLD'S GREATEST GALLERY  
BY THE TIMES LONDON**

*South Florida organization has supported gallery since 2006*

PALM BEACH, FL (May 9, 2013) – This week, *The Times* of London named the Uffizi Gallery, located in Florence, Italy, the “world’s greatest gallery.” In South Florida, the restoration of artworks found at the Uffizi Gallery is supported by the Palm Beach-based Friends of the Uffizi Gallery. Since their inception in 2006, the organization has fully funded, or contributed to the restoration and conservation of, over 30 artworks found at the gallery. They’ve also contributed to structural improvements to the Uffizi Gallery, which was designed by Giorgio Vasari in 1560 with support of Cosimo I de’ Medici.

A team of 50 culture experts contributed to the *The Times* decision and differentiated a gallery from a museum stating that, “a gallery is considered to be a place where artworks alone are displayed; while museums house a wider variety of objects that relate to our past and the way we live now.” Citing the fact that the Uffizi Gallery is “packed” with “masterpieces,” *The Times* put it at the very top of a list that also included The Prado Museum in Spain, the Hermitage Museum in Russia and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Lisa Marie Browne, executive director of the Friends of the Uffizi Gallery, remarked, “We’re extremely pleased about this honor. The Uffizi Gallery is not simply a remote museum in Italy. It’s part of the birthplace of the Renaissance —a period in the history of art that changed the world.” Ms. Browne also serves as vice president of the Dreyfoos School of the Arts Foundation and on the advisory board for the Museum of Art | Fort Lauderdale.

In January, the Friends of the Uffizi Gallery and their founding and sister organization in Italy, Amici degli Uffizi, funded the restoration of the new Michelangelo Room at the Uffizi Gallery. 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, *Sleeping Ariadne*, that inspired him. The *Tondo Doni* is the Renaissance master's only surviving late-panel painting. The room was opened to the public on January 29, 2013.

In March, Amici degli Uffizi, led by Contessa Maria Vittoria Colonna Rimbotti, who serves as the president of both organizations' boards, funded the restoration of three of the oldest paintings found at the Uffizi Gallery. These included two large crosses that pre-date Giotto and are considered by art experts to be among the most important examples of early Italian painting and a diptych by Bonaventura Berlinghieri created in 1250.

Along with significant Roman and Greek sculptures and paintings by Il Vecchietta and Leandro Bassano, Friends of the Uffizi Gallery is currently working to fund the restorations of seven of the eight tapestries that comprise the famous *Valois Tapestry Series*. These tapestries derive from the court of Catherine de' Medici, queen of France, and her husband Henry II and date to 1575.

Also important to the mission for the Friends of the Uffizi Gallery is education and in 2011, Ms. Browne helped facilitate the US tour of "Offering of the Angels." The exhibit brought 45 restored masterpieces of Italian Renaissance art, featuring works by artists including Botticelli and Titian, to four US museums beginning at the Museum of Art | Fort Lauderdale. Future exhibitions of works from the Uffizi Gallery in the U.S. are in the planning stages.

As Browne explained, "We consider our mission a sacred one. We're helping educate the public about the Uffizi Gallery's impact on the history of art and we're safeguarding its treasures for generations to come."

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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>

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

