

2nd Century AD

DIONYSUS WITH PANTHER



The *Dionysus with Panther* restoration is available for Leonardo members of Friends of the Uffizi Gallery. The restored statue will bear a plaque in the donor's honor.

Dionysus, lover of Ariadne, was the Greek god of the grape harvest and wine. He was also known by the name Bacchus by the Romans and he was frequently used to represent liberation, and the free, ecstatic feeling wine produces. He often has exotic animals with him, in this case, a panther, to further emphasize his wild, carefree nature.



This sculpture was created from Pentellic marble, a type of Greek marble that was also used to build the Acropolis in Athens. It is believed *Dionysus with Panther* was sculpted in the 2nd century AD at a time when copying Greek originals was an established practice in Rome. The first available records of Dionysus indicate it was once part of the prestigious Della Valle Roman art collection and was purchased by the Medici family in 1584. In 1780, under the direction of Leopold of Lorraine, the sculpture was moved from the Villa Medici to its current home in the Uffizi Gallery.

The restoration of this sculpture is fairly urgent because unfortunately, the frescoed plaster from the ceiling immediately above the sculpture gave way recently. This only added to thick deposits of dust and dirt on the entire surface, and these deposits will need to be cleaned away. The restoration will also involve remaking or retouching the putty to ensure sculpture stability. Extensive photography would fully document the restoration and allow for petrographic analysis to determine if there is any ancient olichromy on the marble surface. Ancient Roman statues were frequently painted, so finding any residual paint would allow for a better understanding of what this magnificent statue looked like in its original glory.

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