



PRESS RELEASE

from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

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MEDIA ALERT: FRICK TO PRESENT THE FIRST EXHIBITION ON FLORENTINE SCULPTOR BERTOLDO DI GIOVANNI

LONG IDENTIFIED AS A STUDENT OF DONATELLO AND INSTRUCTOR OF
MICHELANGELO, BERTOLDO IS REDEFINED IN TERMS OF HIS
DISTINCT STYLE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

September 18, 2019, through January 12, 2020



Bertoldo di Giovanni (ca. 1435–1491), *Shield Bearer*, early 1470s, gilded bronze, The Frick Collection

Next fall The Frick Collection will present the first exhibition to focus on the Florentine sculptor Bertoldo di Giovanni (ca. 1440–1491). This monographic display of more than twenty statues, reliefs, medals, and statuettes will bring together the artist's entire extant oeuvre and is exclusive to the New York City institution, which owns the only sculptural figure by the artist outside of Europe. This comprehensive exhibition will offer the first chance to fully explore longstanding questions of attribution, function, groupings, and intended display. The exhibition of Bertoldo's artistic production in bronze, wood, and terracotta will highlight the ingenuity of the sculptor's design across media. A number of objects that share common iconography will be included, displayed in a way that will shed light on his creative process, which has puzzled scholars for the past century. *Bertoldo di Giovanni: The Renaissance of Sculpture in Medici Florence*, follows a series of acclaimed Frick shows on

Renaissance sculptors and is organized by Aimee Ng, Associate Curator; Alexander J. Noelle, Anne L. Poulet Curatorial Fellow; and Xavier F. Salomon, Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator; with the assistance of Julia Day, Associate Conservator, who has been coordinating and conducting an extensive scientific analysis of the objects. This important project is the result of a creative partnership with a major lender to the exhibition, the renowned Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.



Lorenzo & Giuliano de' Medici: *The Pazzi Conspiracy*, 1478, bronze, 65.3 mm diameter, Scher Collection, promised gift to The Frick Collection, New York



Hercules on Horseback, early 1470s, bronze, 27.2 cm high; Gallerie Estensi, Modena, Su concessione del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali - Archivio fotografico delle Gallerie Estensi, photo: Carlo Vannini.

Bertoldo is little known today, often seen merely as a student of Donatello, an instructor of Michelangelo, or a confidant of Lorenzo de' Medici (called il Magnifico) without deeper consideration of his own talents. The details of his life and artistic output, however, indicate a figure worthy of public attention. Rising from obscure origins as a child of a German immigrant family living in Florence, Bertoldo developed his technical skills under Donatello, eventually inheriting the master's models and completing the pulpits in the Basilica of San Lorenzo following Donatello's death. Bertoldo went on to gain the patronage of the most important political figure in Renaissance Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici. Their relationship developed over decades, with Bertoldo becoming a "famiare" of the city's de-facto ruler, eventually moving into the Medici palace, and creating numerous statuettes, reliefs, and medals for the Medici family. Bertoldo was responsible for much more than producing works of art, however; in addition to designing decorations for festivals, organizing architectural projects, and devising

entertainment for the Medici entourage, he was also the curator of Lorenzo's famed garden of antiquities near the church and convent of San Marco and instructed the city's most gifted pupils who studied the sculptures. One such student was Michelangelo, whose creative genius, according to Giorgio Vasari, flourished under Bertoldo's guidance. While his connections to Donatello, Michelangelo, and Lorenzo de' Medici are central to his narrative, Bertoldo and the crucial role he played in the development of Florentine sculpture in the second half of the fifteenth century warrant serious attention in their own right.

Historically one of the most elusive aspects of Bertoldo's practice is the process he followed between design and production. While there are certainly "Bertoldian" stylistic elements that unify his statues, medals, reliefs, and statuettes, the works are at times markedly dissimilar in their execution. Having no known workshop of his own, it seems that the sculptor enlisted other Florentine artists to realize his designs. This theory is supported through documents and inscriptions on the objects themselves. Adriano Fiorentino, for example, cast *Bellerophon Taming Pegasus*, a statuette after Bertoldo's design, and his concept for the frieze on the facade of the Medici Villa in Poggio a Caiano was rendered in terracotta by the della Robbia workshop. In addition, Andrea Guacialoti cast the medals commemorating the Pazzi Conspiracy for Lorenzo de' Medici from Bertoldo's model. By displaying these objects together for the first time at the Frick, the exhibition will elucidate the dynamic role of Bertoldo as a designer and collaborator. Extensive technical analysis has been conducted on almost every work included in the display, the first comprehensive campaign ever undertaken on the sculptor's artistic output.

Major support for the exhibition is provided by the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation, Mrs. Daniel Cowin in honor of Ian Wardropper, The Melanie and Matthew McLennan Foundation, and Margot and Jerry Bogert. Additional funding is generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Dr. Stephen K. Scher and Janie Woo Scher, and the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation.

PUBLICATION

A major scholarly catalogue, published with D Giles Ltd, will accompany the exhibition. This is the first book on Bertoldo in more than twenty-five years and only the third ever to focus on the artist, following James David Draper's *Bertoldo di Giovanni, Sculptor of the Medici Household: Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné* (1992) and Wilhelm von Bode's *Bertoldo und Lorenzo dei Medici: die Kunstpolitik des Lorenzo Il Magnifico im Spiegel der Werke seines Lieblingskünstlers Bertoldo di Giovanni* (1925). After a general essay that will examine Bertoldo's life, artistic development, and creative process, the thirteen essays in the Frick's catalogue will be divided into four sections: thematic, object-based, technical, and document-based. Full catalogue entries will be provided for every object in the show and a complete documentary appendix will reproduce all the known archival materials related to Bertoldo's life and artwork (more than 100 documents, many published for the first time). In addition to the exhibition curators, such esteemed scholars as Peter Bell (Cincinnati Art Museum), Francesco Caglioti (University of Naples Federico II), James David Draper (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Caroline Elam (Warburg Institute, London), Scott Nethersole (The Courtauld Institute of Art, London), Neville Rowley (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), and Ilaria Ciseri (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence), among others, will contribute to the catalogue. The fully illustrated publication will be by far the most substantial text on the artist ever produced.

INTERACT

Social:    /FrickCollection

BertoldoattheFrick

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BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: 212.288.0700

Web site: www.frick.org

Building project: www.frickfuture.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

App: frick.org/app

Museum address: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue

Hours: Open six days a week: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day

Admission: \$22; senior citizens \$17; students \$12; Pay-what-you-wish hours on Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. **PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS:** Children under ten are not admitted to the museum

First Fridays: Museum admission and gallery programs are free from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the first Friday evening of the month (except January and September)

Subway: #6 local to 68th Street station; #Q to 72nd Street station; Bus: M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

Tour Information: Included in the price of museum admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

Shop: The shop is open the same days as the museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

Group Museum Visits: Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

Public Programs: A calendar of events is available online

Library address: 10 East 71st Street, near Fifth Avenue

Hours: www.frick.org/visit/library/hours

Admission: Open to the public free of charge

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For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Associate Director of Media Relations & Marketing; Phone: 212.547.6866; E-mail: rosenau@frick.org