

**PONTORMO'S NEWLY RESTORED *VISITATION*
TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S. FOR THE FIRST TIME
AS FOCUS OF NEW EXHIBITION AT THE MORGAN**

Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters
September 7, 2018 to January 6, 2019

New York, NY, August 10, 2018 —

Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1557) was one of the most extraordinary painters and draftsmen of sixteenth-century Florence. By the end of the 1520s, he had created one of his most moving and groundbreaking works, the *Visitation*. For the first time, this masterpiece of Mannerist art is traveling to the United States as the focus of the exhibition *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters*.

Organized in collaboration with the Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the exhibition places the altarpiece in the context of a selection of other exceptional works by the artist and offers new insights into Pontormo's creative process and the *Visitation's* iconography, origin, interpretation and patronage.



Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1556), *Visitation*, 1528–1529, oil on panel, Pieve dei Santi Michele e Francesco, Carmignano. Photography by Antonio Quattrone.

The *Visitation* is the pride of the Pieve dei Santi Michele e Francesco, a small parish church located in Carmignano, a picturesque town west of Florence. Standing over six feet tall, it depicts the intense moment of encounter between the Virgin Mary, shown at left, and her cousin Elizabeth, who reveal to each other that both are pregnant. Mary is pregnant with Jesus and Elizabeth with John the Baptist. According to Catholic tradition, this visit, recorded in the Gospel of Luke, was believed to bring divine grace to both Elizabeth and her unborn child, who recognized the presence of Jesus.

Breaking with traditional iconography, Pontormo created a deeply personal version of the miraculous encounter. The event takes place on the streets of the town where Mary had gone to stay with her cousin. Pontormo eliminated most of the narrative details of the encounter and instead focused on the two sacred figures, accompanied by their female attendants, in fluttering garments and with their heels raised in motion. In the background is a cityscape that depicts the door to the house at the far right along with buildings on the left that frame the scene. Two tradesmen engaged in conversation linger in the bottom left corner, while a Florentine housekeeper hangs a cloth from the window of a once-abandoned palazzo. In this altarpiece, Pontormo captured both the human and spiritual elements of the encounter in a composition that has influenced artists from De Chirico to Bill Viola.

Until recently, the altarpiece was only accessible by visiting the church. Its restoration has created the unprecedented opportunity for the work to travel to the U.S and brought to light important discoveries about the artist's technique. During the restoration, the panel was carefully cleaned, and Pontormo's vivid palette was brought back to life. The removal of old layers of varnish and overpaint uncovered details that had become invisible over time, such as the two male figures and the donkey emerging on the left in the background. Technical analysis also revealed that Pontormo used a charcoal underdrawing to transfer the composition from the preparatory drawing on paper to the surface of the panel.

The exhibition will also feature the only known preparatory drawing for the *Visitation* as well as *Portrait of a Young Man in a Red Cap*, 1529-1530. The rarely seen *Portrait of a Young Man in a Red Cap* was known to scholars through documents and engravings but thought lost until it was rediscovered in a private collection in 2008. This show offers the public a first opportunity to see the painting, which belongs to a private collection, after its own recent restoration.

With his extravagant and refined style, Pontormo shaped the Mannerist movement that dominated Italian painting between 1520 and 1580. Michelangelo predicted that a nineteen-year-old Pontormo “will exalt this art to the heavens.”



Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1557), *Portrait of a Young Man in a Red Cap (Carlo Neroni?)*, ca. 1530, oil on panel. Private collection. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. J. Tomilson Hill. Photo courtesy of Shepherd Conservation, London.

Although the artist’s work was nurtured by the rich artistic culture of Florence, some of his most breathtaking paintings were created during a time of crisis. From October 1529 until August 1530, Florence was besieged by the armies of the Holy Roman Emperor, who sought to capture the city, vanquish the newly established republican government, and return the Medici family to power. It was precisely during this time that Pontormo painted the *Visitation*, which was most likely commissioned by the Pinadori family, supporters of the last Florentine Republic who opposed the House of Medici. They owned a villa in Carmignano and had an altar dedicated to the Visitation in the church. *Portrait of a Young Main in a Red Cap* was painted during the same dramatic months of the siege.

“Pontormo’s work as a painter of devotional images and his inventions as a portraitist solidified his status as one of the greatest painters active in Florence during the sixteenth century,” said director Colin B. Bailey. “I am delighted that visitors to the Morgan will soon have the extraordinary opportunity to experience this newly restored masterwork and am grateful to our collaborators at the Getty and the Uffizi as well as to the Pieve dei Santi Michele e Francesco for making this exhibition possible.”

Exhibition tour

The exhibition was first presented in Florence at the Galleria degli Uffizi from May 8 to July 29, 2018. It opens at the Morgan September 7 and runs through January 6, 2019. It will then travel

in an expanded version to the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, where it will be open from February 5 to April 28, 2019.

Publication

Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters from Drawing to Painting

Author: ed. Davide Gasparotto, Bruce Edelstein

Publisher: Getty Publications

160 pages.

Public Programs

LECTURE Pontormo from Drawing to Painting Davide Gasparotto

Join Davide Gasparotto, Senior Curator of Paintings, J. Paul Getty Museum, for a discussion on works by Jacopo da Pontormo (1494-1557), executed between 1528 and 1530. At that time Florence was kept under siege until the Medici returned to power bringing to an end the last Republic. The lecture considers Pontormo's creative process at a crucial stage in his career and offers new insights into the artist's distinctive contribution to the history of portraiture and devotional painting.

Wednesday, October 24, 6:30 pm*

Tickets: \$15; 10 for members; free for students with a valid ID.

*The exhibition *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters* will open at 5:30 pm for program attendees.

SEMINAR Pontormo and the Practice of Drawing in Sixteenth-Century Florence

Pontormo was an exceptional draftsman who shared with all Florentine artists the belief that drawing played a fundamental role in the creation of a work of art. For Pontormo, however, drawing was also a means of deeply personal expression. Tour the works in the exhibition *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters*, and then join Giada Damen, Research Assistant to the Director, for an up-close exploration of drawings by Pontormo and his contemporaries from the Morgan collection.

Tuesday, December 11, 6 pm

Tickets: \$100; \$75 for members.

CONCERTS BEMF Chamber Opera Francesca Caccini's *Alcina*

The Grammy award-winning BEMF Chamber Opera Series presents a new, semi-staged production of *Alcina* by Medici court composer and performer Francesca Caccini.

Paul O'Dette & Stephen Stubbs, Musical Directors

Gilbert Blin, Stage Director

Featuring **Shannon Mercer**, **Colin Balzer**, **Kelsey Lauritano**, and the **Boston Early Music Festival Vocal & Chamber Ensembles**

Monday, November 26, 7:30 pm*

Tuesday, November 27, 7:30 pm*

(7 PM pre-opera talks with directors O'Dette, Stubbs, Mealy, and Blin)

*The exhibitions *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters* and *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* will be open at 6:30 pm for concert attendees.

Vivaldi, Venice, and the Influence of Italy

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble

Celebrate the music of the Italian Baroque and Renaissance, presented in conjunction with the exhibitions *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters* and *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice*.

Monteverdi, Selections from L'Orfeo
Vivaldi, Sonata for Cello in B-flat Major, RV 46
Biber, Sonata in F Major
Vivaldi, Trio Sonata in B minor, RV 79
Merula, Ciaccona
Vivaldi, Concerto for Strings in C Major, RV 117
Corelli, La Follia
Vivaldi, Concerto for Strings in G minor, RV 157

Wednesday, December 5, 7:30 pm*

*The exhibitions *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters* and *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* will be open at 6:30 pm for concert attendees.

Organization and Sponsorship

Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters was organized by the Gallerie degli Uffizi, the Morgan Library & Museum and the J. Paul Getty Museum. The New York presentation is organized by Giada Damen, Research Assistant to the Director.

This exhibition is made possible with lead funding from an anonymous donor in memory of Melvin R. Seiden and generous support from Mr. and Mrs. J. Tomilson Hill and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence R. Ricciardi.



Additional support towards the restoration of the parish church of Santi Michele e Francesco and former Franciscan friary of Carmignano is provided by the Foundation for Italian Art and Culture (FIAC).

The exhibition has been organized to raise support for the conservation of the church and convent of Santi Michele e Francesco in Carmignano. For information about these restoration efforts and the creation of the new Museo della Visitazione to house Pontormo's painting, please visit <http://pontormo.it>.

The programs of the Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



The Morgan Library & Museum

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, music venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. A century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, and the 2010 refurbishment of the original library, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

The Morgan Library & Museum

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