



ISTITUTO DI  
STORIA DELL'ARTE  
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*fondazione*  
GIORGIO CINI onlus

IN COLLABORATION WITH



International Symposium

## **“Venetian” enamels on copper from the Italian Renaissance. Artistic geography, collecting, technology**

16th-18th October 2014

Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini

In collaboration with the Louvre and the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF) in Paris, the Institute of the History of Art of the Giorgio Cini Foundation is organizing an international symposium to be attended by art historians, curators and conservators, together with experts in the field of scientific analysis, who will be asked to reflect upon the production of Renaissance enamels on copper defined “Venetian”.

Enamelled and gold flecked copperware are a rare and highly refined feature of the decorative arts of the Italian Renaissance, of which less than three hundred pieces survive, and which are traditionally referred to as Venetian. The metal which gives the object its shape supports a richly coloured decoration formed by white, blue, violet or green glass, added in layers onto a white or opaque glass base, or a mixture of white and translucent glass. This is then decorated by red and turquoise highlights, with additional decoration in gold playing an important part in the process.

Admired and sought after in the 19th century, when the main European collections were built up, these objects, whose origins date back to the end of the fifteenth century, were subsequently forgotten.

Most of the surviving pieces belong to dinner sets, and include mainly bowls, some of which with lids, dishes, plates, basins, salt cellars, ewers and pilgrim bottles. Other typologies include caskets, candlesticks and a mirror, while a few liturgical objects, paxes, altar cruets and reliquaries indicate that some had a religious function.

The cross-disciplinary conference will shed light on technical and manufacturing aspects, and the forms and decorations of these artistic masterworks, which can be found in major museums and collections throughout the world, and point to the socio-cultural context of

which they are a product. An attempt will be made to define a corpus of forms and decorations, to identify clients and patrons, thanks mainly to research into heraldry and symbols, and finally to trace their arrival on the European and American art markets in the 19th and 20th centuries respectively. The Venetian origins of enamelled copperware will be discussed and reconsidered in the wake of recent archival research, the study of recipes used by glassmakers, and the results of an experiments carried out by the C2RMF in Paris, the LAMA laboratory at the University of Architecture (IUAV) in Venice, and the Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence. During the three days of the conference it will be possible to see the enamelled copper mirror which belongs to the collection of the Galleria di Palazzo Cini – second in importance to that of the Louvre – specially restored for the occasion by the Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

The conference will also provide an opportunity to have a close look at the collection of enamelled copperware at the Galleria di Palazzo Cini, which was re-opened to the general public this spring on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Institute of the History of Art.

The re-opening offers scholars and visitors a museum which is unique in Venice and the Veneto, housing masterpieces of Renaissance painting from Tuscany and Ferrara along with rare furnishings and artefacts, in a historical *palazzo* just a short distance from the Accademia Gallery. This used to be the Venetian residence of Vittorio Cini, entrepreneur, manufacturer, and politician, and a well-known collector who created the Foundation on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore.

The museum is a result of the generosity of one of his daughters, Princess Yana Cini Alliata di Montereale, who left part of her father's immense collection and a part of his home to the Giorgio Cini Foundation, thereby guaranteeing the continued relationship between the collection and the building it was housed in. To Yana Cini's donation, which consists of Tuscan paintings from the 13th to 16th centuries, and which includes masterpieces by Giotto, Filippo Lippi, Piero della Francesca, Botticelli, Beato Angelico and Piero di Cosimo, the Guglielmi di Vulci branch of the family added in 1989 the extraordinary collection of Renaissance paintings of the Ferrara school, with masterpieces by Cosmè Tura, Ercole de' Roberti and Dosso Dossi.

### **Advisory committee**

Françoise Barbe, Curator, Département des objets d'art, Musée du Louvre, Paris

Rosa Barovier Mentasti, Expert in the history of glass, Venezia

Béatrice Beillard, Conservator, Paris

Serena Bidorini, Conservator, Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio storico, artistico ed etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Venezia e dei comuni della Gronda lagunare

Isabelle Biron, Research Engineer, Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France, Paris

Letizia Caselli, Expert in the history of goldsmithery, Istituto di Storia dell'Arte, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia

Claudia Cremonini, Art historian, Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio storico, artistico ed etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Venezia e dei comuni della Gronda lagunare

Marie-Elsa Dantan, Documentalist, Département des objets d'art, Musée du Louvre, Paris

Fiorella Spadavecchia, Art historian, Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio storico, artistico ed etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Venezia e dei comuni della Gronda lagunare

Marco Verità, Research Engineer, Laboratorio di Analisi dei Materiali Antichi LAMA, Università IUAV, Venezia

### **Co-ordinators**

Françoise Barbe and Letizia Caselli

#### *for Informations:*

Istituto di Storia dell'Arte

Fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus

Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore

30124, Venice

Tel.: +39 041 2710230 - Fax: +39 041 5205842

Rossella Patrizio, Secretariat

arte@cini.it

[www.cini.it](http://www.cini.it)

#### *for a contact with:*

Françoise Barbe, [francoise.barbe@louvre.fr](mailto:francoise.barbe@louvre.fr)

Isabelle Biron, [isabelle.biron@culture.gouv.fr](mailto:isabelle.biron@culture.gouv.fr)

Letizia Caselli, [caselli@iuav.it](mailto:caselli@iuav.it)

Free admission