



New York University
Villa La Pietra

New York University Institute of Fine Arts Research Colloquium

In January of 2012, New York University's Institute of Fine Arts brought eight students to Villa La Pietra to study art works in the Acton Collection. This collaboration between the Institute and Villa La Pietra was developed in order to provide graduate students of art history and art conservation with the unique opportunity to study up-close paintings and sculpture from the collection. The results of their research will contribute to the base of knowledge that exists for the selected works, and will provide the students with essential training in the interaction between art historical and conservation research.

The colloquium, under the leadership of Patricia Rubin, Judy and Michael Steinhardt Director, Institute of Fine Arts, and Michele Marincola, Sherman Fairchild Chairman and Professor of Conservation, guides eight students, four from the program in art history and four from the Conservation Center, through the



visual and non-invasive technical analysis of two paintings and two sculptures located in the Sala da Pranzo of Villa La Pietra. The artworks, some well-known and others less studied, pose fundamental questions for the students: What are the materials and technologies used to produce these works and how do we identify them through visual and technical analysis? Once these questions have been answered, what does this information tell us about the artist or school that produced them? How are attributions assigned in the field of art history?



The works being examined include Giorgio Vasari's Holy Family (16th century, oil on canvas), a Polyptych by Giovanni di Bartolomeo Cristiani (14th century, tempera on panel), an Umbrian polychrome Madonna and Child sculpture (14th century, wood) and a polychrome bust of a Madonna and Child attributed to the workshop of Lorenzo Ghiberti (14th century, material under discussion). The works have been moved from their original locations and installed in the center of the room on special scaffolding, allowing the students to examine the front and backs of the works. Based on their observations, the students continue their research in libraries and archives in Florence, including the Kunsthistorisches Institut and Villa I Tatti.

Additional contributors to the colloquium include Dianne Dwyer Modestini, Conservator, Kress Program in Paintings Conservation, Jean Dommermuth, Institute Lecturer for the Conservation Center, and Helen Spande, paintings conservator, bringing their expertise in panel painting conservation to the examination of the works.

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