

## **Michael Wolgemut**

German (Nuremberg), 1434–1519

## **Wilhelm Pleydenwurff**

German (Nuremberg), c. 1460–1494

## **View of Florence, 1493**

From Hartmann Schedel's *Nuremberg Chronicle*  
(*Liber Chronicarum*) (Nuremberg, 1493)

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of Olive and Benton Case B.98.7.3

This view of Florence was published in the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, an illustrated history of the Christian world, beginning with the biblical account of creation to the year 1491. The book's 1,809 illustrations were printed from 645 woodblocks, resulting in many repeated images, especially in the book's nearly 100 cityscapes. But the Florence view is among the 32 more accurate city portraits that span two pages, likely a reflection of its importance in the eyes of the publisher and others at the time. The major landmarks are included, like Florence's cathedral, baptistry, and Palazzo Vecchio, as well as the River Arno and the sprawling city walls.

## **Claes Jansz. Visscher II**

Dutch (Amsterdam), 1587–1652

## **After Hieronymus Cock**

Flemish (Antwerp), 1517/18–1570

## **View of Florence, 1643**

Etching on four sheets

Gift of Mrs. C. C. Bovey P.12,835

Conservation was generously funded by the Blackman-Helseth Foundation and Dena and Al Naylor.

This panoramic view features more precise descriptions of Florence's important sites than the *Nuremberg Chronicle* view (1493) displayed nearby. The cathedral and its belltower are more accurately depicted, as is the tall fortress of Palazzo Vecchio. Careful attention is given to the surrounding Tuscan hills, and buildings erected after the *Chronicle's* publication, like the Medici's Palazzo Pitti, have been added. If the rest of the city's fabric looks generic, it is because the artist never set foot in Florence. Claes Jansz. Visscher, a leading Dutch publisher of maps in the 1600s, made this etching after a 1557 view by Hieronymus Cock, doubling the size of the original print. Note the coats of arms of the Medici (upper left) and city of Florence (upper right).

## Francesco Maestosi

Italian (Florence), 1822–1883

### **The Iliad Room, Pitti Palace, Florence, c. 1870**

Oil on canvas

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of funds from the Regis Corporation 85.7

The Pitti Palace, now part of the Uffizi, was the primary residence of the Medici from the late 1500s until 1737, when the last Medici grand duke died without an heir. Much of the Medici art collection formed in this period remains in the palace and is displayed as it has been for centuries. This is evident in Francesco Maestosi's painting of the Iliad Room—so named for the ceiling paintings depicting scenes from *The Iliad*, the Greek epic poem by Homer. This canvas records many of the specific paintings and furnishings still found in this grand gallery today. In 1870, the palace was the official residence of Victor Emmanuel II, king of Italy, and Florence was briefly the capital of the newly united Italian State. In 1919, his grandson, Victor Emmanuel III, donated the Pitti Palace to the nation.

## **Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Pallas and the Centaur**, c. 1482

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on canvas

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This enigmatic painting was probably commissioned by Lorenzo the Magnificent to celebrate the wedding of his cousin Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco and Semiramide d'Appiano in 1482. Botticelli's depiction of a young maiden taming a centaur (half man, half horse) was meant to be read on different levels. The woman's effortless subjugation of the wild and lustful creature can be viewed as a proto-feminist image of female power, both physical and moral. She is traditionally identified as Pallas Athena/Minerva, goddess of wisdom and war, but Botticelli inserts contemporary references specific to his own times. Her dress is adorned with interlocking diamond rings, a Medici emblem, suggesting she is an allegory for the Medici. Perhaps Botticelli was encouraging them to tame uncivilized nature and disorder and foster peace, wisdom, and the arts—virtues nurtured by Pallas. Another theory is that the painting depicts the virgin warrior princess Camilla from Virgil's *Aeneid*, who was celebrated in Florence in the 1400s as a role model for brides and the embodiment of female virtue, chastity, and love.



## Sandro Botticelli

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Pallas**, early 1480s

Black chalk, pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash, heightened with lead white, on paper partially tinted pink with red chalk, squared in black chalk or leadpoint (underneath figure), outer contours of figure or drapery pin-pricked

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Few drawings by Botticelli survive, even though they were celebrated and collected in his day. This precious study captures his invention of a new feminine ideal—the graceful, celestial, all-knowing beauties who appears in his pagan mythologies. The helmet identifies her as Pallas Athena/Minerva, goddess of war, wisdom, and art. Instead of her other traditional war attributes (armor, spear, and shield with Medusa’s head), she holds an olive branch, casting her as the bearer of wisdom, peace, and abundance.



(Athena brought olive trees to Athens, making her patroness of the city.) Botticelli experimented with the position of her head and facial expressions, resulting in two options that, remarkably, share an eye. He depicted Pallas many times—including in *Pallas and the Centaur*—but this study resonates most directly with his depiction of Venus in the *Primavera*. They share the same pose, dreamy gaze, and details like the bodice and sandals.

Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*,  
detail of Venus, c. 1482, Le Gallerie  
degli Uffizi, Florence

Ancient Roman

**Centaur**, c. 150 CE

Italian marble

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

The centaur, part man, part horse, is both human and beast, wild and wise, and has been interpreted through the ages as an ambiguous figure. For the ancients, he could be learned, like Chiron, a teacher of the famous warrior prince Achilles, and also violent—the brutish, drunken wedding crasher and abductor of wives who appears in the stories of Ovid and elsewhere. The Renaissance promoted the image of the brutal centaur as the embodiment of irrational, uncivilized nature who could be tamed only through culture and art.

Ancient art also served as a source for less refined subject matter. It often broke rules of decorum in exciting and creative ways, inspiring “fantasia” and introducing a world of lustful beasts and hybrid creatures—a welcome challenge for many Renaissance artists seeking to test their imagination and skill.

Ancient Roman

**Torso of a Dancing Faun with *Kroupezion***, 1st century CE  
Greek marble

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Putnam Dana McMillan Fund 70.39

Renaissance artists were inspired by the sensual vitality of ancient fauns represented in frenzied states of music making and dance. These lustful woodland creatures, followers of Dionysus, the god of wine, lived freely in wild inebriation. Botticelli may have taken inspiration for his centaur's chiseled six-pack and rotating movement from models such as this remnant of a dancing faun. The statue type is known from around 40 surviving ancient Roman copies of a Greek prototype and from ancient coins depicting the sculpture, which help us understand the work's original appearance. This faun, with its small tail, would have had tiny horns above his forehead. He was depicted with a *kroupezion*, or clapper, worn on his foot. His raised right hand and lowered left probably held cymbals, although variants also show him holding hands with dancing figures or tugging at nymphs' drapery.



Ancient Roman

**Spinario**, late 1st century BCE–early 1st century CE (?)  
Greek marble with Carrara additions

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

The *Spinario*, or “thorn puller,” shows a handsome youth engaged in the everyday activity of foot care. Known from eight ancient copies, the sculpture has charmed audiences through the ages. A bronze version in Rome (c. 50 BCE, Capitoline Museums) has been publicly displayed since the 1100s, and no classical work has been copied more.

The sculpture depicts a shepherd boy. The rocky base suggests a rustic setting, and one copy includes a shepherd’s staff, panpipes, and dog. The *Spinario* continued to enthrall artists in the Renaissance. Botticelli adapted the figure’s pose for Moses and the burning bush for a fresco in the Sistine Chapel.



Sandro Botticelli,  
*The Trials of Moses*,  
detail, 1481–82, fresco,  
Sistine Chapel, Vatican



## **Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Two Male Nude Figures, c. 1475–82**

Metalpoint, heightened with white, on buff prepared paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Botticelli drew two nude models; the one seated and examining his foot assumes the unmistakable pose of the ancient sculpture *Spinario*, or “thorn puller.” Botticelli’s interest was more artistic than antiquarian. He did not try to capture details like the boy’s trim locks and soft adolescent body, or his rocky seat. Instead, his interest lay in exploring the sculpture’s unusual pose with a live model. The figure conveys movement despite being sedentary, with his foot thrust in his lap, shoulders rotated, and hands occupied. Botticelli chose an older, stronger model than the sculpted adolescent, focusing on the contours of his muscles, particularly his arms and shoulders, and concisely outlining his knees, ankles, and chin. Close attention to the model’s disheveled hair and prominent turned-up nose makes him live and breathe on the page.

For reasons of conservation, this drawing will be replaced with a reproduction shortly after November 26.

## Sandro Botticelli

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Study of Three Draped Male Figures Standing**, c. 1470–85

Metalpoint heightened with lead white, and a few passages of pen and ink, on reddish-plum prepared paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

While only a tiny proportion of drawings produced in Renaissance Florence survive today, figure studies are the most prevalent among them, and they demonstrate the widespread practice of life drawing. Artists had to master anatomy and depict the body in motion, because movement and gesture express emotion and narrate stories.

On the right of this sheet Botticelli drew one model twice, both times in a “contrapposto” stance—that is, with body parts balanced against each other to add movement. Small differences in gesture, clothing, and facial expressions necessitated countless adjustments. The youth at left stands with his feet firmly apart, head turned right, eyes raised, and right arm elevated with the aid of a tall stick. Such studies served Botticelli and his studio as a repertory of stock figures to be adapted and shared.



Sandro Botticelli, *Study of Three Draped Male Figures, One Seated and Covering His Face, Two Standing*, verso

## Filippino Lippi

Italian (Florence, born Prato), c. 1457–1504

### Three Figure Studies (Standing Men), mid-1480s

Metalpoint heightened with lead white on gray prepared paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Life drawing was a fundamental workshop practice of painters, sculptors, and goldsmiths in Renaissance Florence. Artists drew models in a variety of poses, nude and draped, often with two to four unrelated figure studies on a sheet. The exercise helped them hone their draftsmanship and expand their figural repertoire.

Some 300 such studies are attributed to Filippino Lippi and his followers, a larger number than for any other 15th-century artist before Leonardo da Vinci. Filippino (little Filippo) trained with his father, Filippo Lippi, and then with Botticelli, his father's star student. His studies convey impressive dynamism, as with the man at right, who holds a stool with one hand and raises the other.



The artist's use of metalpoint squiggles and zigzag highlights almost gives the impression that the man moves before our eyes.

Filippino Lippi, *Two Figure Studies (Seated Youth and Man)*, verso

Ancient Roman

**Crouching Aphrodite**, 2nd century CE (?)

Italian marble

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

The goddess of love is shown preparing for the bath. Crouched, she turns her head toward the viewer, as if she knows she is being watched, and attempts to cover herself with her arms. The composition, which originated in ancient Greece, was admired in antiquity, as demonstrated by its many Roman copies. It inspired Renaissance artists as well. The goddess's natural pose offered an ingenious way to reveal the physical beauty of the female form, while implying modesty, a virtue celebrated in the 1400s.

This example, formerly at the Villa Medici in Rome, was restored in the 1500s, when the head, arms, hands, and left leg and foot were added. The Renaissance sculptor carefully studied a more complete version, so that the arms and hair (with a topknot and locks falling on the shoulder) closely followed the revered prototype.



## Lorenzo di Credi

Italian (Florence), 1456–1537

### Venus, c. 1490

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on canvas

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Lorenzo di Credi depicts Venus as a heroic female nude standing on a parapet against a dark background. It replicates a painting by Botticelli (which his own workshop replicated at least twice) down to the tight framing, hand covering the breasts, and absence of any attribute to identify her as a goddess. For his bold composition, Botticelli adapted the nude figure from his *Birth of Venus* (c. 1485). Credi introduced some variation, reversing her pose and giving her



heftier proportions, a simpler hairstyle, and light drapery to cover herself.

Lost for centuries, Credi's painting was found in a Medici villa in 1869, suggesting it was made for a member of the Medici family or circle (like most of Botticelli's paintings of Venus). The humanist patrons commissioning these works would have appreciated the classical inspiration for the figure, a celebrated ancient Greek sculpture known as *Venus pudica* (Venus of Modesty).

Sandro Botticelli,  
*Venus*, c. 1485–90,  
Gemäldegalerie,  
Berlin

## Possibly Baccio Baldini

Italian (Florence), c. 1436–1487

### The King of Goats: A Satire on Cuckolds, c. 1460–64

Engraving

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of funds from Charles A. Cleveland and Janet and Winton Jones in memory of Thirza Jones Cleveland P.99.15.1

In this stage play, a riff on antique mythology, the king presides over his court, proclaiming, “I am the King of Goats [*becci* = he-goats or bucks], . . . I am crowned in honor of the Goats.” To the goat sawing the horn from a kneeling man’s head, he says, “Saw gently, my comrade, whoever escapes it is a child of God.” So, what is “it”? “It” is cuckoldom—the state of having a wife who has sexual affairs with other men. *Becco* means both “he-goat” and “cuckold” in Italian. Others in the court express the complex feelings around cuckoldom: distrust of a wife, willingness to give up distrust, and, in the case of the youth with the scroll, an unconvincing assertion that he is less a cuckold than others—unconvincing because the triple *E* in “*beeceh*” suggests his voice is bleating.

## Unknown engraver

Florence, 15th century

### **Virgil the Sorcerer**, c. 1460s

Engraving

Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Richard Lewis Hillstrom Fund P.99.14.1

In the 1400s, artists frequently used classical and biblical stories to comment on or question—sometimes playfully, sometimes sharply—the balance of power between men and women. Legends were told of the Roman poet Virgil (70–19 BCE) and his magic powers. In this story of deception, humiliation, and retribution, Virgil is smitten with a young princess, but she wearies of his attention. To make a point, she invites him to her chambers, saying that she will raise him to her window in a basket by night. He eagerly agrees to the plan, but once he is partway up, she leaves him hanging until daybreak, subjecting him to public humiliation.

Virgil gets his revenge. He magically extinguishes all the fires of Rome, except for one smoldering coal placed in the princess's vagina. To restore the fire, Virgil demands that the princess stand naked and elevated in public, where torches are thrust at her to be rekindled.



Ancient Greek (neo-Attic, Roman period)

## Relief with Dancing Maenads, late 1st century BCE

Pentelic marble

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Drapery amplifies these dancing women's movements, with crisply carved folds fluttering around them and clinging to their bodies. The women are maenads, followers and priestesses of Dionysus, the god of wine. The scraps of a dismembered goat and a large knife allude to the violent aspects of the ancient cult. The earliest maenad reliefs were probably inspired by Euripides's tragedy *The Bacchae*, first performed in Athens in 406–405 BCE. In this grisly story, King Pentheus was ripped apart by his mother and her fellow revelers in a frenzied state of ecstasy. Renaissance artists adapted these dancing nymphs to a variety of subjects, usually



removing any traces of violence. Botticelli's transcendent, serene beauties in the *Primavera*, for instance, reflect his studies of these works.

This Uffizi marble, a Roman-period copy of an ancient relief made three centuries earlier, was produced in Greece for the Roman art market. It is one of 50 extant Roman-period replicas.

Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*, detail, c. 1482, Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence



## Domenico Ghirlandaio

Italian (Florence), 1448–1494

### Young Woman Pouring Water from a Pitcher, 1485–90

Pen and brown ink on paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Ghirlandaio's figure study is for a maidservant in his monumental fresco *Birth of the Virgin*. The young servant girl animates the rather still scene with her sense of purpose, fleeting movement, and swirling dress. Ghirlandaio's fluttering maiden is inspired by a repertoire of ancient reliefs like the Uffizi's *Dancing Maenads*. He transposes the pagan source so that the flowing drapery and



enchancing movement become expressions of feminine grace, innocence, and virtue, here in a figure bringing water to the infant mother of Christ.

Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Birth of the Virgin*, detail, c. 1485–90, fresco, Tornabuoni Chapel, church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence

## Workshop of Sandro Botticelli

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **The Flagellation**, c. 1505–10

### **The Way to Calvary**, c. 1505–10

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on canvas, transferred from panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

The religious and political upheaval of the 1490s dramatically altered Florence's art market. The serious times called for sober, less costly devotional paintings, a category Botticelli handed over to assistants. Though they relate to Botticelli's later style, the execution falls short of the master's brilliance, indicating they were produced in his workshop from his designs. These paintings probably decorated the headquarters of a Florentine confraternity, lay associations dedicated to prayer and charitable activities.

In this later period, even with the Medici antiquities collection in the garden of San Marco dispersed, Botticelli continued to study ancient sculptures and adapt them to Christian subjects. Christ's body in *The Flagellation* displays the influence of classical sculptures like the monumental *Male Torso* exhibited nearby, which represents the kind of idealized model that Renaissance artists deemed worthy of depictions of Christ's divine body.

Ancient Roman

**Male Torso**, 200 BCE–200 CE

Greek marble

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of the Sweatt Foundation in Memory of William R. Sweatt II and Lucien S. Strong, Jr. 57.40

This larger-than-life torso, with its sensitively modeled anatomy, is an exquisite example of the kind of idealized male nude sculptures from antiquity that Renaissance artists admired. Subtle movement introduced to the sculpture, with the slight inclination of the left shoulder and right hip, makes the work lifelike. The torso is a copy of an illustrious Greek sculpture from around 450 BCE, possibly related to celebrated—but lost—works like the *Apollo of the Omphalos* or Pheidias's sculptures dedicated to the fallen warriors in the Battle of Marathon, which are only known from variants, literary descriptions, and coins.

Ancient Roman

**Three Satyrs Wrestling a Serpent**, 1st century BCE  
Marble

Private collection, Chicago

In 1489, Lorenzo the Magnificent received a letter from Rome about a newly unearthed sculpture, described as “three beautiful small fauns . . . encircled by a large serpent, which in my judgment are most beautiful . . . it seems they breathe, cry out, and lash out with certain wondrous gestures; the one in the middle seems almost to sink down and breathe out his last breath.” The work had been clandestinely dug up one night near the monastery of San Lorenzo. The huge price of 50 ducats reflected the cost of keeping the finders silent. Another letter, with dimensions and a more precise description, suggests that the present marble can be identified as this work. Lorenzo seems to have purchased and displayed the satyr group in his garden of San Marco, as echoes of it are seen in Florentine art after 1490.

On loan from an American private collection, it is reunited here with works from the Medici collections for the first time in centuries.



## **Luca Signorelli**

Italian (Cortona), c. 1450–1523

### **Allegory of Fertility and Abundance, c. 1512–15**

Oil on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

The meaning of this obscure allegory relates to fertility. The female figure at left may be Abundance or Ceres, the goddess of fertility. She holds one naked baby boy, while a toddler nearby looks toward her and reaches for the kneeling male figure. He might be Bacchus or Dionysus, the god of wine, shown nude, apart from a belt of vine leaves and grapes, about to crown the maternal figure. Another woman seated behind him contemplates a basket of fruit.

The secular tone of the painting indicates it was produced for a domestic setting. It may have been a headboard of a bed, a suitable location for the fertility theme. Luca Signorelli painted the scene in monochrome, which gives the illusion of an ancient sculpted relief.

**Workshop of Filippino Lippi (Master of Memphis,  
probably Bernardo di Leonardo)**

Italian (Florence), active late 15th century–16th century

**Two Muses (Erato and Melpomene)**, early 16th century

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund 67.28

This painting represents two of the nine muses from ancient Greek and Roman mythology, who inspired the liberal arts and sciences. Erato, the muse of music, plays an enormous lyre, although the instrument never reached this size in antiquity or the Renaissance. A melancholy Melpomene, the muse of tragedy, holds the mask that identifies her. She leans on the small altar dedicated to *DEO MAX[IMO]*, Latin for “the greatest god,” a clever way to translate the pagan muses into a Christian monotheistic context. This work is in fact a copy of a fresco by Filippino Lippi in the church of Santa Maria Novella. Bernardo di Leonardo, a member of Filippino’s workshop, may have executed this miniature copy on panel, which exhibits his signature bright palette and simplified drapery folds.

Ancient Roman

## **Cinerary Urn, 50–100 CE**

Marble

Minneapolis Institute of Art, The John R. Van Derlip Fund 62.20a–b

Ancient urns, altars, and sarcophagi supplied Renaissance artists with an endless source of decorative motifs that they incorporated into works both religious and secular. The frontal relief includes a range of ornamentation and emblems. The Gorgon head and sphinxes are symbols of protection. The garlands of laurel, an evergreen, allude to immortality, while the pecking birds evoke an idyllic natural setting. Rams' heads were a popular funerary motif; they referred to the practice of sacrificing the animal to the gods of the underworld and were also connected to ancient ancestor cults.

This urn once contained the ashes of Decimus Aemilius Chius and Hortensia Phoebe, who are named in the dedicatory inscription. Their relationship is not described, but it is thought that they were husband and wife, and their Greek surnames suggest they once had been enslaved but later gained their freedom.

## Filippino Lippi

Italian (Florence, born Prato), c. 1457–1504

### Two Studies of Ancient Motifs (*Grotteschi*), 1489–93

Pen and brown ink with brown wash over black chalk

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

During an extended sojourn in Rome (1489–93), Filippino had the extraordinary opportunity to study the recently discovered wall paintings in Emperor Nero's Golden House (Domus Aurea). This palace remained buried under the Roman baths later erected by Emperor Trajan, so the excavated area resembled a grotto or cave; as a result, the murals were known as *grotteschi*. The term applies to fanciful *all'antica* decorations, or "grotesques" more generally, which mix animal, human, and plant forms, as seen in this study. Filippino incorporated these motifs into the decorative frameworks of his church frescoes.



## **Filippino Lippi**

Italian (Florence, born Prato), c. 1457–1504

### **Saint Martin Dividing His Cloak**, 1490–94

Pen and brown ink with brown wash over black chalk

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

In this rare study for a stained glass window, Filippino depicts Saint Martin, a Roman soldier who clothed a poor man on a winter day by cutting his own cloak in half. Filippino deftly tells the story in a space not three inches wide. Within a compressed niche he fits the saint dividing his cloak, the scantily dressed beggar, and Martin's richly attired horse. The coat of arms at the bottom of the sheet belongs to the Nerli family, indicating that the drawing relates to Filippino's commission to decorate their chapel in Florence's church of Santo Spirito. Stained glass, now lost, once decorated the chapel, and the drawing's shape corresponds to the windows there. The centaurs, winged putti, garlands, and strapwork reflect Filippino's study of ancient paintings and reliefs in Rome and his practice of incorporating those motifs into Christian contexts.

## **Raffaellino del Garbo**

Italian (Florence, born Barberino Val d'Elsa), 1466–1527

### **Allegory**, mid-1490s

Oil on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

An adolescent boy entangled with a snake appears twice in Raffaellino del Garbo's enigmatic painting. The scene unfolds before the city of Florence and is watched by an elderly man with a lightning bolt—perhaps the god Jupiter. The key to the hidden meaning must be in the inscription: “No plague is worse than an enemy in the family.”

One theory is that the painting is a warning to Piero the Unfortunate, Lorenzo the Magnificent's son, in response to the strained intra-family Medici relations before the French invaded Florence in 1494. Piero, only 22, found his power threatened by a conspiracy fomented by his cousin, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, whose symbol is the snake. The ermine, the emblem of King Ferrante of Naples, may allude to Piero's close ties with him. The laurel tree above Jupiter could represent the symbolic protection of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

## Filippo Lippi

Italian (Florence, died Spoleto), c. 1406–1469

### **Madonna and Child with Two Angels**, c. 1465

Metalpoint heightened with lead white on ocher prepared paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

With delicate lines and deft highlights that model the forms, Filippo Lippi draws the Virgin with her hands folded, absorbed in prayer. The infant Christ, held up by two angels, leans toward his mother with tender affection. One angel stands behind the group, his face barely visible below Jesus's arms; the other, in the foreground, turns toward the onlooker and smiles. This is one of only a few surviving drawings by Lippi and an exceptional example of his skillful draftsmanship. It relates to his celebrated painting



*Madonna and Child with Angels*. The painting and drawing were iconographic models for a generation of Florentine artists, especially young Botticelli, a member of Lippi's workshop for six or seven years.

Filippo Lippi, *Madonna and Child with Angels*, c. 1465, tempera on panel, Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

## **Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Madonna and Child in Glory with Angels, c. 1467–69**

Tempera on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This celestial vision of Mary, portrayed as queen of heaven, seated on a throne of cloudlike angels and holding a chubby Christ child, is Botticelli's earliest work in the exhibition. The figure types and delicate symphony of grays are indebted to Botticelli's master, Filippo Lippi. Gilded rays emanate from the figures, and angels surround them in the shape of a mandorla (almond), an emblem of glory. The supernatural character of the composition contrasts with the very human depiction of Mary and Jesus. She regards her son with a preoccupied look, appearing to foresee his destiny; he rests in his mother's arm, turning his dreamy gaze to the spectator and raising his right hand.

This sacred image is thought to come from the headquarters of Florence's bankers' guild (Arte del Cambio), judging from the gold coins that decorate the 19th-century frame, which presumably copies the original.



## **Filippo Lippi**

Italian (Florence, died Spoleto), c. 1406–1469

### **Virgin of the Annunciation and Saint Anthony Abbot**

### **The Angel of the Annunciation and Saint John the Baptist**

c. 1455–59

Tempera on poplar panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Executed by Botticelli's teacher, these vertical panels were probably doors for a cupboard in a church sacristy or shutters of an altar or organ. They show the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she will bear the son of God. She draws back in surprise, watching a small dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, approach. Mary stands in front of a *lettuccio*, or daybed, a typical Florentine furnishing in well-appointed homes of the period, which provided storage and seating in addition to a place to nap. Saint John the Baptist raises his hand in a blessing gesture opposite the elderly Saint Anthony Abbot.

Lippi's refined execution subtly builds volume with glazes and thin highlights. The range of colors includes costly pigments like azurite with touches of lapis lazuli for the blues, transparent red lake, and gold for the haloes and embroidered hems.

## **Filippino Lippi in the workshop of Botticelli**

Italian (Florence, born Prato), c. 1457–1504

### **Head of a Young Woman in a Cap**, early 1470s

Metalpoint heightened with lead white on paper tinted reddish pink

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Filippino Lippi's large-scale head study was probably drawn when he was a student in Botticelli's workshop. It may have played a minor role more than 300 years later in a resurgence of appreciation for Botticelli. In the 1800s, the Uffizi attributed the drawing to Botticelli, who was a figure of interest in this era, in part because he was championed by the Pre-Raphaelites, a group of British painters and poets inspired by Italian art before Raphael (1483–1520). This sheet was singled out in 1868 by Pre-Raphaelite poet Algernon Charles Swinburne, who described it as "among the gracefulest and purest of Botticelli's many studies in that kind." Even if the drawing played a role in Botticelli's "rediscovery," the heavy-handed highlights and uncertainty in such details as the lips and dress folds indicate that it is not by the master. The drawing, instead, finds parallels with the early drawings of Botticelli's prolific student Filippino.

## Filippino Lippi

Italian (Florence, born Prato), c. 1457–1504

### **Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist (Feroni Madonna)**, early 1480s

Oil and tempera (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Botticelli's assistant Filippino Lippi was faithful to his master's style in his early years. This type of devotional painting, called a *colmo da camera*, probably decorated a bedroom of a patrician home. The subject, Christ adored by Mary and a young John the Baptist—patron saint of Florence—was one of the most popular in Florentine art. Christ's pose, nestled on the ground in his mother's drapery, likely derives from ancient marbles like *Sleeping Cupid* displayed nearby. In a nod to the growing appreciation for the realism and precision of Netherlandish art in the period, Filippino incorporated delightful details. The three Magi appear twice in miniature in the landscape, kneeling on a distant hill and on the road, accompanied by camels. Jesus holds a cardinal, a symbol of his death and resurrection, and rests on ears of wheat, a reference to the wafer of the Eucharist.

## **Sandro Botticelli and workshop**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Adoration of the Child with Angels (Madonna of the Roses), 1490–1500**

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Botticelli presents elevated symbolism in this accessible, tender scene of the Virgin adoring the Christ child in the presence of four angels. Two distinct layers of fabric separate the child from the flowering meadow: folds of the Virgin's mantle and the red drapery of one of the angels. The two layers subtly but clearly symbolize the dual nature of Christ, being both fully God and fully man—of pure spirit, like the angels, with a human body, born of Mary. Rosebushes seem to sprout from the angels themselves, creating a shelter from the outside world. This protective circle enfolds the Madonna and child as well as the beholder, who completes the circle echoed in the tondo (roundel) format.

The hand of the workshop collaborator is difficult to distinguish, as Botticelli's anonymous assistant so convincingly conformed to the design and style of the master himself.



## Francesco Botticini

Italian (Florence), 1446–1497

### **Madonna and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist and Angels, 1490–95**

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Francesco Botticini assimilated Botticelli's style with great success in the 1490s. This sumptuous tondo, or circular painting, likely decorated a bedroom in a wealthy Florentine family's house, the usual destination for works of this format. The Virgin and Saint John the Baptist appear kneeling with six angels in adoration of the holy child. The enclosed garden, surrounded by an elegant balustrade decorated with *all'antica* motifs, alludes to the purity of the Virgin, as do the white roses. Botticini sprinkles other symbols throughout the happy scene. The red roses refer to Christ's passion, as do the goldfinches, with their red plumed faces and thorny habitats. The lizards, who wriggle out of hibernation to bask in the sun, may symbolize the search for salvation. In deference to the growing taste for Flemish art, Botticini includes a distant mountain landscape dotted with northern European architecture.

Ancient Roman

**Sleeping Cupid**, 2nd century CE

Luni marble

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This nude boy with wings is Cupid or Eros, the god of Love, shown in a peaceful state of slumber. A torch lies on the ground nearby, and he rests on the head of a sleeping lion. (This seems to represent that dangerous animals are subdued by love's power, even when Cupid sleeps.) Sleeping Cupids were a common subject in antiquity—180 Roman copies are known today. Some decorated ancient fountains; many were made for funerary contexts, often to commemorate children. The king of Naples gave Lorenzo the Magnificent a version similar to the present work in 1488, which Lorenzo displayed in the Medici sculpture garden of San Marco. (It remains in the Uffizi today.)

Renaissance artists frequently adapted this idealized model for depictions of the infant Christ. They recognized the classical source's allusion to death and applied the pose to powerful effect to foreshadow Christ's death.

## **Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Madonna and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist,**

c. 1500

Tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on canvas

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

The meeting of young Christ and John the Baptist became a popular subject of paintings intended for domestic settings in Florence in the 1400s. (John was the patron saint of the city.) Botticelli depicts Christ, eyes half closed, body half naked, held by the Baptist in a pose that foreshadows Christ's deposition from the cross. This allusion is underscored by the placement of John's cross.

Botticelli's poignant work proved a popular design; at least two known replicas were produced with the assistance of his workshop. The spare composition and somber tone appealed to the taste of patrons influenced by Friar Savonarola and his sermons against luxury and excess. Botticelli also experienced a personal spiritual awakening stirred by the preacher and his followers, called the *piagnoni* (weepers), who included his brother Simone.

## **Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Saint Augustine in His Study**, c. 1494

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Botticelli depicts the celebrated Christian theologian Saint Augustine engrossed in work in an idealized Renaissance *studiolo* (study) represented in a monastic cell. A fictive curtain opens to a small but grand classicized space, with a barrel-vaulted ceiling and carved reliefs with garlands, medallions with emperor portraits, and a tondo depicting the Virgin and Child. Books line the shelves at left, and an elevated wooden desk distances the scholar from the cold floor. Scattered beneath the saint are torn pages and used pen quills, testimony to his intellectual labors and perhaps specifically referencing Augustine's *Retractions*, the comprehensive review of his own writings that the saint produced at the end of his life.

Intended for private devotion, this small painting could be transported and taken on trips for the ritual of prayer—fundamental to life at the time—to pray for protection and salvation of the soul.



## **Antonio del Pollaiuolo**

Italian (Florence, died Rome), 1431/32–1498

### **Battle of the Nudes**, c. 1470

Engraving

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Bequest of Herschel V. Jones P.68.246

The *Battle of the Nudes* is the first signed copperplate engraving of the Italian Renaissance. Ten powerful men fight on barren ground, while the background shows bountiful grain, grapes, and olive trees. Some seem to fight their mirror images. The enigmatic scene has spawned many interpretations rooted in mythology, Roman history, allegory, and art theory.

Whether the work has a textual basis or not, the composition is a product of the Renaissance imagination, of Antonio del Pollaiuolo and his systematic, pioneering study of human anatomy and its movement. This print exemplifies the prominence of the nude in Renaissance art and the power of engraving—a new technology capable of disseminating countless images printed from a single plate—to promote an artist's reputation and ideas. The artist who decorated the gilded wedding chest, nearby, may have looked to this engraving for inspiration.

## **Francesco Rosselli**

Italian (Florence), 1448–before 1513

### **The Samian Sibyl, c. 1480–90**

Engraving

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Bequest of Herschel V. Jones P.68.94

Long a part of ancient Greek culture, sibyls (prophetesses) were folded into Christian lore as heralds of the coming of Christ. This engraving of the Samian Sibyl belongs to a set of 12 sibyls that is closely related to a set of 24 prophets, also by the prolific engraver Francesco Rosselli. Rosselli based his work on a slightly earlier series attributed to the mysterious Baccio Baldini. Rosselli must have been eager to capitalize on the popularity of a bestseller. The verses beneath the image come from a mystery play (a theatrical presentation of religious stories) performed in 1471 at San Felice in Piazza, a Florentine church on the south side of the Arno River. The sibyl sings of a new dawn that will bring a living and palpable king from the womb of a true virgin.

## **Attributed to Baccio Baldini**

Italian (Florence), c. 1436–1487

## **Possibly after Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

## **Dante and Virgil with the Vision of Beatrice, 1481–83**

Engraving

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Bequest of Herschel V. Jones P.68.103

This engraving comes from an unrealized project to publish a fully illustrated, deluxe edition of Dante Alighieri's then-150-year-old masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*, an exploration of the damnation of hell, the purification of purgatory, and the heavenly rewards of paradise. Although Dante had been banished from Florence in 1302, he came to be a hero of Florentine culture in Botticelli's lifetime. The artist made 100 elaborate drawings illustrating the *Comedy*, one for each canto, or stanza. The design of this engraving is inspired by Botticelli, but since his drawing for this canto is lost, we do not know the extent to which the engraver took liberties with his design.

At left, we see the bearded Virgil reproaching Dante for deeming himself unworthy to enter the afterlife. At center, Virgil then recounts that he had been resting in limbo when a beautiful woman named Beatrice came to him and bade him to guide Dante on his journey. With renewed courage, Dante begins his voyage. The book was published in 1483 but with only a small fraction of the cantos illustrated.

## Filippo Lippi

Italian (Florence), c. 1406–1469

### **Barbadori Predella with *Miracle of Saint Frediano* *Diverting the River Serchio, Announcement of the Death* *of the Virgin, Saint Augustine in His Study*, c. 1437–39**

Tempera on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

These panels formed the predella (decorated base) of an important altarpiece by Filippo Lippi formerly in Florence's church of Santo Spirito and now in the Louvre Museum, Paris. Lippi is responsible for the novel iconography but probably relied on workshop assistants for some of the execution.

At center, Mary's death is announced by an angel, and the apostles arrive to bid her farewell. The candle Mary receives alludes to the charitable work of the patron of the painting, Gherardo di Bartolomeo Barbadori. His confraternity served the dying, which included presenting them with a lit candle in their last hours. At right, Augustine is transfixed by a vision of the Trinity, represented as three floating faces of Jesus, which the saint experiences as three arrows piercing his heart. Lippi shows the early Christian saint in a well-appointed Florentine study; such elaborate elevated desks with wooden paneling reduced contact with cold stone surfaces.



## **Bartolomeo di Giovanni**

Italian (Florence), documented 1488–1501

### **Saint Benedict and the Miracle of the Poisoned Wine, 1485**

### **Saint Maurus Saves Saint Placidus, 1485**

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Bartolomeo, who worked in the studios of Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio, was a specialist in small-scale painting, particularly predellas (painted altarpiece bases), chests, and panels for domestic settings.

These two panels, representing scenes from the life of Saint Benedict, are fragments of uncertain origin. While usually identified as predella panels, their format suggests they decorated a reliquary or ecclesiastical chest. In one scene, Benedict thwarts an attempted poisoning by monks resisting his monastic rule. When Benedict blessed the wine, the glass shattered. The other panel shows Placidus rescued by Maurus, who was warned by Benedict that his friend was drowning in a lake. Maurus was able to walk on water to save him.

## Biagio d'Antonio

Italian (Florence), c. 1445–1516

### **Allegory of Justice**, c. 1472

Tempera on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Public buildings in Renaissance Florence were often decorated with the seven virtues: Justice, Temperance, Prudence, Fortitude, Faith, Hope, and Charity. These moral exemplars were represented as idealized women with identifying attributes. Here Justice holds a sword, the emblem of her power, and a scale, a symbol of her impartiality and equity in applying the law. The globe beneath her foot represents her rule over earthly justice.

Biagio d'Antonio executed this monumental work for the wine merchants' guild: its coat of arms, at bottom left and right, was a chalice flanked by a red cross and fleur-de-lis, the arms of the Florentine *popolo* (people) and city of Florence. This panel was probably installed with other painted virtues in the guild's meeting hall, where important matters were decided. They would have been installed high on the paneled wall, crowning the stalls where the consuls sat.

## Unknown artist

Italian (Lucca), late 15th century

### Wedding chest (*cassone*), 1475–85

Poplar wood with gilt and painted gesso decoration

Minneapolis Institute of Art, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund 16.747

This Renaissance wedding chest is among the best preserved in the world, with its lock intact and fragments of the original lining inside. These luxury objects were commissioned to celebrate marriages and decorate couples' bedrooms.

Gilded and stamped reliefs adorn the front of this chest. The coats of arms belong to two prominent families from the Tuscan town of Lucca, the Cenami (groom, left) and Balbani (bride, right). The four women represent the cardinal virtues: Temperance, Justice, Fortitude, and Prudence. They are flanked by two fantastical scenes—a combat between hybrid creatures at left and a lustful centaur galloping with a maiden on his back. She probably represents Demeter, goddess of the harvest, who was celebrated in the Renaissance for bringing prosperity and civilization to humankind. With her lit torch and calm reason, she is depicted dominating the centaur's bestial nature.

## **Lorenzo di Credi**

Italian (Florence), 1456–1537

### **Astronomy, 1480s**

Metalpoint, brush and brown wash, heightened with lead white, pen and brown ink

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Lorenzo di Credi's drapery studies have long been admired, with some having even been mistaken for the work of Leonardo da Vinci. The two artists worked side by side in the shop of their master, Andrea del Verrocchio.

Credi's meticulous, layered drawing technique describes the fall of light on a topography of drapery folds—hills, valleys, shallow ripples, and light-catching plains. The figure is Astronomy, identified by a lightly sketched armillary sphere, an astronomical instrument. The faint rendering of the figure's upper half heightens the impact of the drapery's dazzling finish. It also made it easy for Credi to adapt this allegory to other subjects, deploying the figure in at least two paintings of the Virgin Mary.



## Lorenzo di Credi

Italian (Florence), 1456–1537

### **Six Figure Studies**, c. 1515

Metalpoint, pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash, heightened with lead white, on white paper tinted ocher in selected passages

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This drawing captures Credi generating and refining ideas for a standing female figure, along with a few other rapid thoughts. The small nude at lower right, partially obscured by the larger figure above, vaguely resembles Credi's heroic *Venus*, painted two decades before and displayed earlier in the exhibition. Her pose is flipped here, a common drawing strategy of the period to stimulate new ideas. Credi drew the figure anew three more times, each time sketching it first nude, then clothed, with variations in pose and dress. The abbreviated sketch of a kneeling, bearded man and standing figure must have preceded the two more finished studies that dominate the sheet. The halo on the smaller clothed figure and palm frond (a symbol of martyrdom) in the hand of the figure at right suggest they are studies for saints.

## Jacopo del Sellaio

Italian (Florence), c. 1442–1493

### **The Banquet of Queen Vashti**, c. 1485

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

These two panels by Jacopo del Sellaio once decorated a pair of wedding chests, along with three other painted scenes, which are now divided into three other fragmentary panels. They illustrate the Bible story of Esther and King Ahasuerus. Here Queen Vashti, Ahasuerus's first wife, is depicted hosting her own banquet rather than attending the banquet of her husband. Vashti appears again in the painting, in the hectic scene at left, being stripped of her royal robes and crown for her act of disrespect. Ahasuerus repudiated her and married Esther, a model of a virtuous wife, who is depicted in the other panels.

Marriage chests were often decorated with Bible stories, myths, and allegories, with the most popular subjects celebrating qualities prized in a bride, such as fidelity, chastity, and purity.



Hypothetical reconstruction of the wedding chest showing *The Banquet of Ahasuerus* (left) and *The Banquet of Queen Vashti* (Dóra Sallay, 2019)

## Jacopo del Sellaio

Italian (Florence), c. 1442–1493

### **Triumph of Mordecai**, c. 1485

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This panel illustrates in three miniature scenes the events after Esther interceded with her husband, King Ahasuerus, to save the Jewish people from a massacre planned by his court minister Haman. Esther and Ahasuerus are depicted approaching Haman, who sleeps in a doorway. Next, at left, Haman is forced to walk in disgrace next to Mordecai, Esther's cousin, who discovered Haman's wicked plot. Mordecai is depicted riding triumphantly on horseback through the streets, and, again at right, kneeling to receive the ring of Haman, who is hanging from the gallows in the background.

Sellaio specialized in paintings for domestic furnishings. He set these biblical scenes in Renaissance palaces with elegant courtyards and loggias and sumptuous dining rooms. Sideboards are shown laden with gold objects, and interior spaces are decorated with textiles, gilded decorations, and sculptures, like the terra-cotta bust nearby.

## **Benedetto da Rovezzano**

Italian (born Canapale, near Pistoia; died Vallombrosa),  
c. 1474–c. 1552

### **Saint John the Baptist, c. 1505**

Terra-cotta

Minneapolis Institute of Art, The John R. Van Derlip Fund 2013.1

John the Baptist, patron saint of Florence, was a popular subject in Florentine Renaissance art. Busts of the saint as a boy were widespread, but almost unheard of elsewhere. Benedetto da Rovezzano, a pupil and collaborator of Michelangelo's, produced a number of terra-cotta sculptures of the saint. This adolescent's idealized face, with a narrow, straight nose and lively, layered hair, embodies the ideal of male youths also found in Botticelli's works.

Sculptures of the young Baptist and Christ child were common features in Florentine homes, offering models of virtue for children of the household. Jacopo del Sellaio's paintings displayed nearby depict Bible stories unfolding in magnificent Florentine palaces. In his *Triumph of Mordecai* and *Banquet of Queen Vashti* we see similar busts of a young girl and young child decorating the pediments of a doorway, suggesting how such works may have been displayed.



# **Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

## **Adoration of the Magi**, 1470–75

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

## **Cosimo Rosselli**

Italian (Florence), 1440–1507

### **Adoration of the Magi**, c. 1475

Tempera on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Cosimo Rosselli's painting depicts both a biblical scene and an elaborate civic procession—the feast day of the Magi, a major festival in Florence. Members of the Confraternity of the Magi—a lay association dedicated to prayer and charitable activities—participated in the parades, including the Medici, who took on the role of the Magi. The horse's saddle is decorated with the Medici emblem, diamond rings with two feathers, and Cosimo and Piero de' Medici are likely the two men in the red caps above the horse. Evidence suggests the painting came from the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence's seat of government. Crowded with portraits, many that no longer can be identified, it represented Florence's political elite, and possibly diplomatic ties as well.

King Balthasar, depicted at center in blue and gold and wearing a jeweled cap, may be North African, perhaps from Egypt, where Florence annually sent ambassadors. This would be the first known Florentine portrayal of King Balthasar as African, a depiction that became more common in Florence two decades later.

## Filippino Lippi

Italian (Florence, born Prato), c. 1457–1504

### **Adoration of the Magi**, 1478–80

Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, heightened with lead white, on ocher paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Filippino sets the scene of Christ's nativity in a simple rural setting. Three kings form a semicircle around the holy family, with the eldest king kneeling, ready to kiss the foot of the infant—the king of kings. The second king is on bended knee with gift in hand at right; the third, a youth, moves spryly at left, ready to kneel and remove his hat. Filippino undoubtedly studied Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*, nearby, before designing this scene; yet, characteristically, Filippino favored a less structured composition than his teacher. The drawing includes poetic pauses—an open landscape at left, a prominent space for the ox and donkey at center, and a moment from everyday life at right. Here an exhausted groom rests on his horse, alluding to the great distance traveled by the kings and their entourage.

## **Sandro Botticelli**

Italian (Florence), 1445–1510

### **Portrait of a Young Man, 1470**

Probably tempera and oil (*tempera grassa*) on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

The face of this elegant young man is framed by thick chestnut hair and a dark violet *mazzocchio*, a pleated cap with a *becchetto*, a long strip of cloth that trails from the cap and is worn over the shoulders. This hat, fashionable in the 1470s, indicates high social rank. The sitter may have been a member of the government “famiglia,” part of the staff of attendants, musicians, and heralds, who are documented wearing red robes similar to the one depicted here.

Botticelli was one of the great masters of portraiture in Renaissance Florence, and this might be his earliest surviving portrait. The young man’s direct, brazen gaze marks a critical shift in Florentine portraiture, when artists moved away from the profile view that prevailed earlier in the century, to show sitters more personally, in three-quarter view.



## **Domenico Ghirlandaio**

Italian (Florence), 1448–1494

### **Portrait of an Old Man**, c. 1485–90

Fresco on tile

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This frescoed portrait, applied to a roof tile, is a format and technique unique to Florence in this period. Painted from life, this portrait of a monk in plain white robes and cap, praying or listening to prayers, looks deceptively simple. The vivid likeness and exceptional character study are by Domenico Ghirlandaio, a celebrated fresco painter and portraitist, who encapsulated Florentine high society and the fashions of his day in his church murals. He presents a more modest sitter here, but the realist style is characteristic of Ghirlandaio's approach to portraiture and reflects the influence of Flemish painting on the artist. Ghirlandaio is unsparing in his description of the sitter's deep wrinkles, veined temple, drooping ear, and stooped posture, characteristics that mark the monk's many years but also sensitively capture his wisdom and tranquil spirit.

## **Domenico Ghirlandaio**

Italian (Florence), 1448–1494

### **Portrait of a Young Woman, c. 1490**

Silverpoint heightened with lead white on prepared gray paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This commanding woman's direct gaze is noteworthy given the era's strict rules of decorum, which rarely permitted such candor from women. The virtue of modesty was celebrated, so portraits often presented women in profile, or, if in three-quarter view, with eyes downcast. Ghirlandaio used this bold pose for several women featured in group portraits in his fresco cycles, like the Tornabuoni Chapel (1485–90, Santa Maria Novella). But he never adapted it for independent portrait paintings of women. The physical distance between the women depicted in a wall fresco and the viewer permitted such directness and perhaps encouraged Ghirlandaio to explore this more intimate approach in portrait drawings.

This accomplished sheet demonstrates Ghirlandaio's masterful metalpoint technique combined with white highlights, which skillfully document the details of the face and model the forms.

## **Piero del Pollaiuolo**

Italian (Florence, died Rome), 1441–before 1496

## **Antonio del Pollaiuolo**

Italian (Florence, died Rome), 1431/32–1498

## **Portrait of a Young Woman, c. 1480**

Tempera on poplar panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This elegant woman's hairstyle and dress reveal many hidden meanings. Her hair is intricately gathered in a finely woven snood, suggesting she is married (loose hair was unacceptable for wedded women). An exquisite pearl headband with a lavish ruby brooch holds the gauzy veil in place and covers her ears—a fashion meant to protect her from impregnation (worries that women could be impregnated through their ears might be traced to the Annunciation). Pomegranates, a symbol of fertility, decorate her brocade sleeve. Her velvet dress, edged with tiny beads, fastens at her bosom with an ornate angel formed by a ruby, sapphire, black chalcedony, and pearls. Another jewel hangs from her pearl necklace. These luxurious gems, a testament to the sitter's wealth, carried protective powers and were also frequently depicted adorning the Madonna in Florentine paintings.

The portrait is a collaboration of the Pollaiuolo brothers. Antonio worked primarily as a goldsmith, jeweler, and sculptor, whereas Piero focused on painting.

## Attributed to an unknown artist

Italian (Florence), c. 1490s

## Benedetto Ghirlandaio (?)

Italian (Florence), 1458–1497

## Portrait of a Woman, c. 1495

Oil on panel

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Bequest of Miss Tessie Jones in memory of Herschel V. Jones  
68.41.9

This portrait of a prim, blond lady is a mystery. It seems Italian, but the sitter possesses some northern European qualities. The headdress is inspired by northern fashions, and the jewel is likely Flemish, although it is worn—suspended from a pearl necklace—in a Florentine manner. Her winter dress—a golden surcoat over a red *gamurra* (gown) with green sleeves—is also decidedly Italian, as is the choice of silk (rather than velvet or fur). And the lace decoration, an eagle with open wings and a cross, can be traced to Italian embroidery models. The gems in her pendant are symbolic: diamond for strength, ruby for love, and pearl for fertile chastity. Perhaps the jewel was a nuptial gift, and she is a bride (although the low veil may signify widowhood).

In the end, her personal style leaves no doubt that she is Italian and that the portrait was painted in Florence. The northern flavor has led scholars to attribute it to Benedetto Ghirlandaio, the youngest brother in the Ghirlandaio shop, whose style acquired a French accent after he worked in France for seven years.

## **Pietro Vannucci, called Il Perugino**

Italian (born Città della Pieve, died Fontignano di Perugia),  
c. 1450–1523

### **Portrait of a Young Man, c. 1495–97**

Oil on panel

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Perugino portrayed this teenage boy with a beauty and serenity comparable to his paintings of young saints and angels. The youth wears a white shirt, visible at the neck and below the shoulders, under a brown jacket, or jerkin, which is fastened with metal-tipped ties and has detachable sleeves. The jacket harmoniously complements the boy's dark brown eyes and hair. The only accents of color are his pinkish lips and muted blue cap.

The name Alessandro Braccesi, a notary connected with the Medici, was inscribed on the verso of the canvas in the 1600s. He lived on Perugino's street in Florence but was too old to have sat for a childhood portrait with the artist. Perugino more likely portrayed Braccesi's son Cornelio, who would have been 12 or 14 when this was painted.



## Unknown artist

Italian (Florence), late 15th–early 16th century

(Formerly attributed to Perugino, c. 1450–1523)

### **Head Study of a Youth**, c. 1480–1500

Brush and brown wash and lead white heightening, pen and brown ink, over traces of metalpoint and black chalk, on tinted beige paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

Smaller than a postcard, this charming portrait captures an adolescent as he looked 500 years ago. The boy's fixed, contemplative gaze and the natural, slightly sleepy tilt of his head infuse the work with remarkable vitality, echoed in the lively brushwork describing the curly locks escaping from his felt *berretto*. Drawn from life, the sitter could have been a workshop *garzone* (boy), a family member, or the subject of a portrait commission.

Long attributed to Perugino, the portrait drawing, with its painterly handling and informal directness, is difficult to reconcile with Perugino's meticulous, linear draftsmanship and elegant, idealized head studies. It seems more likely to be by the hand of a talented artist in the next generation.

## **Luca Signorelli**

Italian (Cortona), c. 1450–1523

### **Head of an Elderly Man (self-portrait?), c. 1515–20**

Black chalk and charcoal on coarse cream-colored paper

Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

This penetrating study of the head (and neck) of an elderly man shows every sign of being drawn from life. The lighting is strong, and there is some indecision, hesitancy, and experimentation in the marks on the page, with lines reinforced to give them prominence. Intense eye contact is made and held, and the sensation of being in the presence of a recognizable individual is palpable. The nature of the pose and comparison with an earlier likeness of Signorelli suggest it might be a late self-portrait. By 1515, he was an old man, at least in contemporary terms. After a successful career working for the Medici and the popes, he had returned to his hometown of Cortona. This drawing testifies to his enduring talents and innovative use of black chalk, a medium he embraced in the 1400s, well before it became predominant in the following century.