

Rosso Fiorentino's Deposition to be restored in September to mark the 500th anniversary of its creation

An initial working meeting was recently held in Volterra's Pinacoteca Civica to plan the next phases in the **restoration of Rosso Fiorentino's *Deposition***, a painting owned by the parish of the Basilica Cathedral of Volterra. The restoration project, which has been made possible **by funding generously provided by the Friends of Florence Foundation** (<https://www.friendsofflorence.org>), was first set in motion by former Soprintendente Archeologia, Belle e Arti Paesaggio di Pisa e Livorno Dr. Andrea Muzzi, and pursued under the expert supervision of the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le province di Pisa e Livorno headed by **Esmeralda Valente** with the supervision of resident art historian Dr. **Amedeo Mercurio** and of restorer Dr. **Elena Salotti**.

In addition to restorer **Daniele Rossi** and to wooden support expert **Roberto Buda**, the meeting was also attended the Mayor of Volterra by **Giacomo Santi**, the city's Councillor for Cultural Affairs **Dario Danti**, Dr. **Amedeo Mercurio**, an officer with the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio di Pisa e Livorno, Dr. **Andrea Falorni** who is in charge of the Diocese of Volterra's Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Assets and Places of Worship, architect **Alessandro Bonsignori** who runs the Comune di Volterra's cultural sector and the Director of Volterra's Pinacoteca Civica Dr. **Alessandro Furiesi**.

The meeting gave the green light to what is going to be one of the most important and interesting restoration projects in Italy.

The work in question – well-known, abundantly discussed and illustrated in every art history manual and which had the good fortune to be appreciated by Gabriele D'Annunzio and to be physically reconstructed in film by Pier Paolo Pasolini – still manages today to trigger and develop formal and informal solutions, ideas and stories with which contemporary artists build or contaminate new forms of artistic expression.

Under the supervision of the Soprintendenza, the restorers will begin operations with a preliminary investigation of the *Deposition* using the tools that cutting-edge science places at their disposal. Their diagnostic inspections and their chemical and physical analyses will allow them to virtually penetrate the layers of paint with machines that will reveal the secrets concealed beneath Rosso's pure or mixed colours, thus permitting them to make out the drawings and any changes he may have made while painting the altarpiece. This will give them firm answers regarding the composition of Rosso's palette and the binding agents supporting the *Deposition's* painted surface. At the same time, they will be gaining in-depth knowledge of the wood and of any movements occurring within the support structure, because the wood is, in effect, still alive and suffering from compression and from earlier restoration attempts performed over the centuries.

The preliminary inspection and its results are due to be presented and publicised this autumn, to mark the 500th anniversary of the painting's creation, and will be visible both on panels and on line. The restoration proper will only get under way thereafter.

The Rosso Fiorentino room where the painting is housed will be turned into an open restoration site visible through glass walling where visitors will be able to watch live as the restorers go about their various tasks, while a video-diary on a screen outside the room will tell the story of the painting and illustrate the various phases of the operation being conducted by Daniele Rossi and his assistants.

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