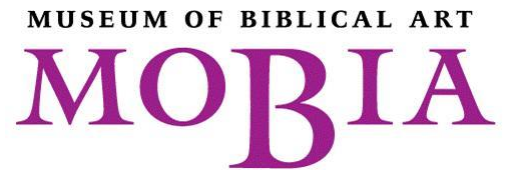


Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Museum of Biblical Art
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MOBIA TO BRING MONUMENTAL SCULPTURES BY DONATELLO FROM DUOMO IN FLORENCE TO U.S. FOR FIRST TIME AS CENTERPIECE OF MOBIA'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

**Anniversary Celebration Includes a Wide Range of Exhibitions, Among Them:
Six New Works Commissioned by MOBIA from Mark Dion and Other Artists
Patricia Phelps de Cisneros to loan 17th- through 19th-Century New World Ecclesiastical Art
from her Collection for First Ever Exhibition**

**Celebration is Spearheaded by Recently Appointed Museum Director Richard P. Townsend
And New Co-Chairs of the MOBIA Board, Elaine Hirschl Ellis and John Fossum**

New York, NY, April 28, 2014 – The Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA), an independent museum exploring the Bible's profound impact on the arts through history to the present day, announced it is organizing an unprecedented exhibition of monumental sculptures by Donatello—along with works by Filippo Brunelleschi, Luca della Robbia, Nanni di Banco, and other artists—all of which were created for the Duomo in Florence. ***Sculpture in the Age of Donatello: Renaissance Masterpieces from Florence Cathedral*** will mark the only time these works have been seen in the United States and an unparalleled opportunity for audiences in this country to see the sculptures in an intimate setting. Created by artists who were mentors and rivals, and who significantly influenced one another, the works in *Sculpture in the Age of Donatello* reveal a moment of creative ferment that came to define the Italian Renaissance and changed the course of Western culture. The exhibition is organized in partnership with the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence, and will be on view from February 20 through June 14, 2015 as the centerpiece of MOBIA's 10th anniversary celebration.

Reflecting the breadth and range of MOBIA's mission and initiatives, the museum's anniversary programming also includes these exhibitions:

- ***Back to Eden: Contemporary Artists Wander the Garden***
June 27 – September 28, 2014
As a prelude to the anniversary celebration, MOBIA is organizing an exhibition of 19 works created between 2000 and 2014 that explore how the story of the Garden of Eden has inspired artists working today. MOBIA is commissioning six new works for the exhibition, including pieces by Mark Dion, Dana Sherwood, Mary Temple, and Marina Zurkow. The exhibition will also feature recent works by Jim Dine, Pipilotti Rist, Alexis Rockman, and Fred Tomaselli.
- ***Vice-Regal Art of the Americas from the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros***
July 17 – November 1, 2015
MOBIA is also organizing an exhibition of rarely seen 17th- through 19th-century ecclesiastical works from the collection of noted patron of the arts and education, Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. The exhibition will explore for the first time the pervasive influence of Biblical narratives and symbols on art created in the Spanish Vice-Regal Americas.

Detailed information on these exhibitions follows below. Additional programs and initiatives for MOBIA's anniversary celebration will be announced in the coming months.

"MOBIA's 10th anniversary marks a tremendously exciting time in our development," said Richard P. Townsend, director of MOBIA. "It is a great privilege to work with the Florence Cathedral Museum on *Sculpture in the Age of Donatello*, and we thank President Franco Lucchesi and his Board of Trustees for partnering with MOBIA in this tremendous undertaking. I can think of no better way to celebrate MOBIA's anniversary and look forward to our future. The Bible has inspired—and continues to inspire—artists worldwide, and MOBIA is dedicated to

examining this profound influence in both its familiar and surprising forms. As we move into our next decade, we look forward to exploring new perspectives at the intersection of aesthetics, history, and faith, and we welcome visitors from all walks of life to join that conversation and participate in our anniversary events.”

The anniversary initiatives grow out of the vision of MOBIA’s new institutional leadership, including director Richard P. Townsend, who joined the museum in October 2013; the newly appointed board Co-Chairs Elaine Hirschl Ellis, president and founder of Arts & Crafts Tours and a board member since October 2007, and John Fossum, partner emeritus with Irell and Manella LLP and board member since May 2013. The board has recently added several new members: Dyice Ellis-Beckham, a managing director for Invesco; William R. Cross, a vice president and member of the Equity Group at Eaton Vance Management, Boston; the Reverend Nigel Pearce, senior pastor of Grace Congregational Church of Harlem; and Jean Stark, a private philanthropist, all elected in February 2014. The new trustees bring additional depth and range of experience to MOBIA’s already outstanding and dedicated board. Staff growth at MOBIA includes the appointment of Daniel C. Beaudoin as director of development. Beaudoin joined MOBIA in February 2014 after 25 years of experience in cultural institutions throughout New York.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON MOBIA’S ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITIONS

Sculpture in the Age of Donatello: Renaissance Masterpieces from Florence Cathedral

February 20 – June 14, 2015

The most ambitious exhibition in MOBIA’s history, *Sculpture in the Age of Donatello: Renaissance Masterpieces from Florence Cathedral* will bring to the U.S. for the first time 23 remarkable works created for Florence’s Duomo by leading masters of the early Italian Renaissance, shedding new light on an extraordinary moment in cultural history. Among the highlights of the exhibition are:

- Two larger-than-life figures by Nanni di Banco and Donatello, each nearly seven feet-tall and weighing 1,600 pounds
- Donatello’s famous *Lo Zuccone (Habakkuk)*, created in the most productive period of his career, that blends striking realism and the influence of classical Roman prototypes
- Two recently restored bronze heads, one by Donatello and the other by Michelozzo di Bartolomeo, which were made for the singing gallery—or “cantoria”—that Donatello fashioned for the Duomo interior
- Two wooden models of the Cathedral’s dome and lantern, created by Brunelleschi to obtain the Cathedral Works Committee’s approval
- Three early 15th-century stone reliefs derived from scenes from Lorenzo Ghiberti’s *Gates of Paradise*, his first set of bronze doors for the Baptistery of the Cathedral

Yale-trained art historian Timothy Verdon, director of the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, serves as principal curator for the exhibition, and Harvard-based Donatello scholar Daniel Zolli serves as co-curator.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a full-scale cast of Ghiberti’s *Gates of Paradise* will be on view in New York City at a location that will be announced in the months leading up to the exhibition. *Sculpture in the Age of Donatello* will be enriched by a variety of public and educational programs, as well as an illustrated catalogue featuring essays by Timothy Verdon, Daniel Zolli, and other scholars. MOBIA will be the sole venue for the exhibition, which is available to the museum because of an expansion of the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, scheduled to re-open to the public in October 2015.

Back to Eden: Contemporary Artists Wander the Garden

June 27 – September 28, 2014

Back to Eden will explore the complex relationship between humanity and the natural world as expressed in the work of contemporary artists. The exhibition is guest curated by independent curator Jennifer Scanlan and will include six works commissioned by MOBIA, including video installations by Sean Capone and Dana Sherwood, a diorama by Mark Dion, a light installation by Mary Temple, a cut-paper work by Anonda Bell, and an animation by Marina Zurkow. *Back to Eden* will also feature:

- Jim Dine’s *Garden of Eden* (2003), a stainless steel gate evoking the artist’s childhood memories of his family’s hardware store
- Naomi Reis’s *Vertical Garden (Weeds)* (2007) and *Vertical Garden (Falling Water)* (2008), drawings of imaginary Modernist buildings overgrown with lush greenery
- Pipilotti Rist’s intimate installation *Sparkling of the Domesticated Synapses (Funkenbildung der domestizierten Synapsen)* (2010)

- Alexis Rockman's *Gowanus* (2013), which reflects the effects of pollution on the natural environment of Brooklyn
- Fred Tomaselli's *Study for Expulsion* (2000), an intricate constellation of leaves, pills, and acrylic paint
- Recent works by Lynn Aldrich, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Mat Collishaw, Barnaby Furnas, Adam Fuss, Rona Pondick, and Lina Puerta

Vice-Regal Art of the Americas from the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros

July 17 – November 1, 2015

Organized by MOBIA in partnership with the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, the exhibition will feature more than 40 ecclesiastical works from 17th- through 19th-century Mexico, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, and the Caribbean Islands. The exhibition will explore the pervasive influence of Biblical narratives and symbols in art and culture in the Spanish Vice-Regal Americas and will include paintings, sculpture, furniture, altarpieces, and gold and silverwork. While many aspects of the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros are widely known, this exhibition presents works that have rarely been publicly displayed, and will offer the first comprehensive look at this facet of the Cisneros' collecting. To complement the exhibition, MOBIA will organize programs and events for the Caribbean and Latino communities in New York during the exhibition.

NEW LEADERSHIP

MOBIA's new director, Richard P. Townsend, is an accomplished art historian and museum professional, having held both curatorial and leadership positions at art museums across the United States. These include: the Museum of Latin American Art, where he served as president and chief executive; the Miami Art Museum, where he was deputy director for external affairs; and Price Tower Arts Center, where Townsend was executive director and chief executive. Townsend is a specialist in early modern European art, and his 24-year career has included curatorial and scholarly work on art from the Baroque period to the 21st century. He has organized and commissioned over 30 exhibitions and has published widely. Townsend received his BFA in art history from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1986, and an MA from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University in 1989.

SUPPORT

MOBIA thanks former Board Chair Roberta Green Ahmanson and her husband Howard for generously sponsoring *Sculpture in the Age of Donatello*. The museum is also grateful to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the Gladys Delmas Kriebel Foundation, and Eugene and Jean Stark for helping make this exhibition possible.

Back to Eden is made possible by the generous support of The Bowden Family Fund and Case Systems. Additional support provided by the Atrium Café by Gabriel's.

Major support for MOBIA's exhibitions and programs is provided by the American Bible Society and by Howard and Roberta Ahmanson. Support for MOBIA's operations is provided, in part, by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

About the Museum of Biblical Art

The Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA), which opened in May 2005, is an independent museum committed to engaging diverse audiences in the exploration of historical to contemporary art that has been influenced or inspired by the Bible. MOBIA is an inclusive cultural institution bound by no creed or era that celebrates and interprets art related to the Bible and its cultural legacy in Jewish and Christian traditions through exhibitions, education, and scholarship. Its exhibitions have featured works by artists as varied as Bartolo di Fredi, Enrique Martínez Celaya, Marc Chagall, William Kentridge, Louis Comfort Tiffany, and Jacopo Tintoretto. Incorporated as a not-for-profit educational institution, MOBIA is the nation's only scholarly museum working at the intersection of art and the Bible. MOBIA is located between Columbus Circle and the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts at 1865 Broadway in New York City. For more information on the MOBIA and its programs, visit www.mobia.org.

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