



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE APOLLO DEL BELVEDERE IN THE OCTAGONAL COURTYARD OF THE VATICAN MUSEUMS RECEIVED GRANT FUNDING FROM THE BANK OF AMERICA ART CONSERVATION PROJECT TO SUPPORT ITS RESTORATION AND THE MISSION OF THE PATRONS OF THE ARTS

VATICAN CITY, June 24, 2021 – The Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums (PAVM), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to the restoration, preservation and promotion of the artistic patrimony entrusted to the Vatican Museums, is pleased to receive grant funding in the amount of \$250,000.00 from the **Bank of America Art Conservation Project** for the restoration of the **Apollo del Belvedere** in the Octagonal Courtyard of the Vatican Museums.

Pope Julius II (1503-1513) had this II century AD marble statue moved into the Octagonal Courtyard during his pontificate, which initiated the origins of the Vatican Museums. This statue is considered the highest form of art, and is one of the most admired among the ancient statues of Rome.

“The **Apollo del Belvedere** forms the original nucleus of the Vatican Collection, as Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, upon becoming Pope Julius II, had the statue moved from the *viridarium* of his Cardinal Palace at St. Pietro in Vincoli to the Vatican,” said **Dr. Barbara Jatta, the Vatican Museums Director**. “Pope Julius had the **Apollo** statue placed in the garden adjacent to the Palazzetto di Belvedere, thus the origin of its name.”

The **Apollo del Belvedere** is among 23 other major art restoration projects that have been selected for grant funding for the **Bank of America Art Conservation Project**. This funding will allow restorers to urgently secure the statue. Based on the monitoring progress, it has been

slightly moving for some months. This movement is signaled by the implemented sensors and raises considerable concern.

The Italian and International Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums assisted in securing support from the **Bank of America Art Conservation Project** grant. “**The Italian & International Chapter of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums** is honored to have contributed in securing funds for the historical restoration of the **Apollo del Belvedere**, one of the world's most celebrated and recognizable masterpieces.” said **Sabrina Zappia, President, Italian & International Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums**. “We are very excited to have entered into a strategic partnership with the Bank of America Art Conservation Program for our art preservation initiatives at the Vatican Museums,” continued **Amy Gallant Sullivan, Founder, Italian & International Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums**. “We hope to continue being able to collaborate with Foundations dedicated to supporting the perpetuation of historic Arts.”

“This is an exciting moment for the **Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums** because The **Bank of America Art Conservation Project** grant diversifies our revenue stream and allows us to enter a new era of fundraising. We look forward to pursuing and exploring these type of relationships and opportunities in the future” said Rev Kevin Lixey, LC, International Director of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums

Before the Bank of America grant, in late 2020, the **Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums** secured funding from its **Illinois and New York Chapters** for the preliminary studies of the **Apollo del Belvedere**.

In a shared statement, **Anne Shea, the Illinois Patrons Chapter Leader**, and **Donna D’Urso, New York Patrons Chapter Leader**, express that they “want to support the continued showcasing of the **Apollo del Belvedere** as one of the world’s most important sculptures housed in the Vatican Museums’ collection. It’s because of the Chapters’ deep commitment to the Vatican Museums and the mission of the **PAVM** to promote, restore and conserve these iconic artworks for future generations, and, in this case, it’s the preliminary study which will be so important in the future for any conservation going forward on the statue. The **Illinois and New York Chapters** are honored to be part of this incredible legacy of the **Apollo del Belvedere!**”

The preliminary studies allowed the expert restorers to carry out a careful analysis, which will benefit their eventual restoration work. To carry out the latter, the **Apollo del Belvedere** needed financial assistance. Now, because of the generous funding from the **Bank of America Art Conservation Project**, restorers can conserve this historically and culturally significant work of art that is in danger of deterioration.

The philanthropic support of the **Bank of America Art Conservation Project** will also be vital as the Vatican Museums recover from the pandemic. With three closures, the Museums’ doors

were closed and the revenues from ticket sales have impacted the restoration budget. The grant will directly benefit the restoration department because it ensures that restoration work can continue in the Museums. Current ongoing campaigns from the **PAVM** include a Covid-19 Emergency Restoration Fund that was established in March 2020 to assist with the restoration budget.

About the Apollo Belvedere

This statue was part of the collection which Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere held in his palace in Rome. When he was elected Pope as Julius II (1503-1513) the statue was transferred to the Vatican, where it has remained since at least 1508. The god, **Apollo**, moves forward majestically and seems to have just released an arrow from the bow which he originally carried in his left hand. The work has been dated to mid-way through the 2nd century A.D. and is considered to be a copy of an original bronze statue of 330-320 B.C. by Leochares, one of the artists who worked on the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus.

The statue has always been greatly admired, but owes its fame particularly to Johann Joachim Winckelmann who considered it the sublime expression of Greek art, “of all the works of antiquity that have escaped destruction, the statue of **Apollo** represents the highest ideal of art.”

About the Bank of America Art Conservation Program

The **Bank of America Art Conservation Program** provides grants to nonprofits that conserve historically or culturally significant works of art that are in danger of degeneration, including works that have been designated as national treasures. The Foundation’s art and culture grant-making process is focused on conserving global artistic heritage and increasing access to culturally enriching experiences.

About the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums

Pope Julius II, who employed Michelangelo to create the iconic frescoes of the Sistine Chapel and Raphael to paint the School of Athens at the height of the Renaissance, established a tradition of patronage within the Vatican. In 1983, the patronage tradition officially continued upon the formation of the first **Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums** chapters in California and New York. In the time that followed, local chapters in sixteen states and nine countries were established. Through their generosity, the **PAVM** have accomplished the restoration of some of the most monumental works of art and architecture in the Vatican Museums, most notably the famous frescoes of the Raphael Rooms and the Gallery of the Maps,

the Pauline Chapel, the Gallery of the Candelabras, the Vatican Gardens, the Pontifical Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs.

The **PAVM** has a strong commitment to fundraising because they sustain one of the oldest and most unconventional museums in the world. Unlike other major museums, the Vatican Museums receive no tax revenue to sponsor the restoration of its treasures, and therefore rely significantly on the generosity of its Patrons.