

BERNINI

GALLERIA BORGHESI

1 NOVEMBER, 2017 – 25 FEBRUARY, 2018

Rome, 30 October 2017 – On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its reopening, the Galleria Borghese and its institutional partner FENDI are delighted to present the great exhibition dedicated to Gian Lorenzo Bernini. It continues the critical discourse that began with the exhibition *Bernini Scultore: la nascita del barocco* in Casa Borghese [*Bernini the Sculptor: the Birth of the Baroque* in Casa Borghese], hosted at the museum in 1998.

The exhibition is curated by Andrea Bacchi and Anna Coliva, with the collaboration of eminent scholars and specialists - Maria Giulia Barberini, Anne-Lise Desmas, Luigi Ficacci, Sarah McPhee, Stefano Pierguidi – who have long been studying the great artist, his work or specific aspects of it, in the context of the great Baroque season.

The guiding theme of the exhibition is the Galleria Borghese as a privileged setting for the sculpture of Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Cardinal Scipione, his first client, wanted him to create autonomous marble groups, to give “excellent examples of imagination” to the spaces of each room; the next client, Pope Urban VIII Barberini, wanted his talents as a sculptor for an overall construction of the space, which would be architecture, but at the same time, involved light, colour, figuration, and dimensional and proportional illusions.

The exhibition focuses on Bernini, a sculptor of statuary who worked primarily and directly with marble, starting with the pieces he made in collaboration with his father Pietro and ranging to the last marble works his chisel touched. However, a number of thematic investigations dedicated to specific aspects of his opus (painting, the putti, the restorations, creating a work from a drawing, terracotta, marble), make it possible to sketch out a well-rounded portrait of Bernini: the matchless virtuoso of the chisel but also of the paintbrush.

The exhibition is divided into eight sections – The Apprenticeship with Pietro; Youth and Birth of a Genre: the putti; The Borghese Groups; The Restoration of Antiquities; The Busts; Painting; Bernini and Louis XIV; The Profession of Sculptor: the preparatory works –flanked by the extraordinary sculpture of Santa Bibiana, restored on the occasion of the exhibition and a case in itself.

The Apprenticeship with Pietro examines the youthful works of Gian Lorenzo (until 1617), with a focus on works created closely with or in direct collaboration with his father Pietro, who passed on to his son the extraordinary mastery of the chisel.

The Youth and Birth of a Genre: the putti is dedicated to a genre that the very young Bernini worked with but then practically denied when he became a master, with no wish to be remembered for his juvenilia. The chance to see the *The Goat Amalthea with the Infant Jupiter and a Faun* next to the other putti by Gian Lorenzo (or by both Bernini father and son again) is an opportunity to reflect on the attribution of the small Borghese group, a piece which critics recently highlighted with respect to stylistic discrepancies in the language of the two Bernini men.

The Borghese Groups is centred on the monumental sculptures by Bernini preserved in the museum. The first Borghese group, the *Aeneas, Anchises, and Ascanius*, is examined alongside the painting, depicting the same subject, by Federico Barocci (usually exhibited in the first floor picture gallery): in a philological recovery of the Galleria Borghese’s first layout documented by Jacopo Manilli’s guide (1650), this will be a return to that interaction between painting and sculpture that was one of Gian Lorenzo’s first critical objectives.

The section follows the gallery’s permanent exhibition itinerary up to the last Borghese group, *Apollo and Daphne*.

Following the example of his father, Gian Lorenzo also devoted himself, although only as a young man, and in rare cases, to the **Restoration of Antiquities** and to repairing ancient marble works. The joint loan of two of his most famous restorations (*Hermaphrodite* and *Ares Ludovisi*), next to one of father Pietro’s great restorations (the *Marco Curzio Borghese*), is an opportunity to adequately focus on this crucial aspect of Bernini’s youthful work.

Another thematic study is dedicated to the **Busts**, the genre in which Bernini as a marble sculptor worked most frequently (the main object of this exhibition). It traces a long chronological arc of the

artist's career, from the early 1630s to the 1670s. Exhibited alongside the delicate Paul V Borghese are pieces that the general public rarely sees, such as the busts from the Museum of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini.

The section dedicated to **Painting** comprehensively completes the description of Bernini as an all round artist. Exhibited next to a limited number of canvases whose attributions are universally accepted, is the only painting already confirmed as Bernini's work by an early 17th-century inventory, Saints Andrew and Thomas, from the National Gallery of London (formerly Barberini), a crucial work for knowing Gian Lorenzo as a painter, and not included in the 1998 exhibition.

Bernini and Louis XIV involve the design and preparatory terracotta made for one of the most important commissions of Bernini's entire career: an equestrian monument to the French sovereign Louis XIV.

The Profession of Sculptor: the preparatory works focuses on the tangible practice of sculpting, with a diachronic exhibition of works dating back to several periods in Gian Lorenzo's career. These are all pieces made by him, but not so much in marble, which is the specific focus of the exhibition, as in terracotta and bronze.

THE SANTA BIBIANA BY BERNINI. AN OPEN-SITE RESTORATION

Rome, 30 October 2017 – The Galleria Borghese and its institutional partner FENDI are delighted to announce that, on the occasion of the monographic exhibition dedicated to Gian Lorenzo Bernini, the statue of Santa Bibiana (1624-1626) was restored. For the first time in history, the work left the place where it had stood since its origins, the Roman church of the same name in the Esquiline District for which it was conceived and made by Bernini in the years 1624-1626.

From 4 September to 16 October, 2017, visitors were able to admire the restoration work in progress, thanks to the open work site located in the museum's portico. The restoration, handled by the CBC Conservazione Beni Culturali Società Cooperativa, brought the work back to its full conservational integrity and the height of its aesthetic, for the enjoyment of viewers.

Pope Urban VIII commissioned Gian Lorenzo Bernini to make the work in 1624 for the altar of the church of Santa Bibiana in Rome, crowning the restoration of the ancient building on the Esquiline Hill, in anticipation of the 1625 Jubilee. Pope Urban VIII Barberini involved Bernini as a sculptor and the artist restored a sense of global construction to the space, conceiving the statue as part of an architectural whole.

Santa Bibiana is included in the great exhibition dedicated to Gian Lorenzo Bernini, among the artists most representative of Cardinal Scipione Caffarelli Borghese's collection. The exhibition will open to the public from Wednesday 1 November 2017 until 4 February 2018. It is the second event to celebrate twenty years since the reopening of the Galleria Borghese to the public in 1997, and a continuation of the specific critical programme begun in 1998 with the exhibition *Bernini Scultore: la nascita del barocco* in Casa Borghese [Bernini the Sculptor: the Birth of the Baroque in Casa Borghese], curated by Anna Coliva.

The restoration in an open site and the exhibition of Bernini's Santa Bibiana were realised in scientific collaboration with the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C..

For this extraordinary opportunity, the Galleria Borghese thanks the Vicariate of Rome – Commission for Religious Art and Cultural Heritage; and the Special Superintendence of Fine Arts Archaeology and Landscape of Rome, in particular the Superintendent and Architect Francesco Prosperetti and the Art Historian official Roberta Porfiri, for the loan agreement and management of the restoration.