

## CARLO ORSI

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### PRESS RELEASE

## GALLERIA CARLO ORSI TO SHOW AT THE 33rd EDITION OF THE FLORENCE INTERNATIONAL ANTIQUES BIENNALE

WORKS OF ART ON DISPLAY WILL INCLUDE  
A *MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. MARY MAGDALEN* BY TITIAN  
AND

A REDISCOVERED PAINTING BY FLEMISH RENAISSANCE MASTER FRANS FLORIS DEPICTING  
*SUSANNAH AND THE ELDERS*

28 September to 6 October Palazzo Corsini  
(Via del Parione 11, Florence)

### PHOTOS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

The Galleria Carlo Orsi is set to be one of the leading players at the forthcoming edition of the Florence International Antiques Biennale at Palazzo Corsini from 28 September to 6 October 2024, where it will be showing a meticulously chosen selection of old master paintings and sculptures. The works of art on display will include, in particular, a "*Madonna and Child with St. Mary Magdalen*" by Titian (1555-60), a majestic panel painting by Frans Floris depicting "*Susannah and the Elders*" (1548), a *Self-Portrait* by Fra' Galgario (1715), Jean-Baptiste Gauffier's "*Portrait of Étienne Michaux*" (1801) and a coral *Capezzale* (bedhead decoration) depicting the *Assumption*, made by a master from Trapani in or around the first half of the 18th century.

Titian's "*Madonna and Child with St. Mary Magdalen*", which can be dated to some time between 1555 and 1560, comes from a private collection in New York but has belonged in the past to prestigious collections in both London and Rome, as recorded by Federico Zeri in 1991. The picture is remarkable for its sophisticated composition and its emotional depth, both typical features of Titian's mature work. The superb quality of the brushwork and the excellent condition of the painted surface give this picture the edge over other versions of the same subject hanging in some of the world's leading museums, such as the Hermitage, the Gallerie degli Uffizi and the Museo di Capodimonte.

The works of art on display will also include a large panel painting by Flemish Renaissance Master Frans Floris, depicting "*Susannah and the Elders*". Signed and dated 1548, this is one of a handful of surviving pictures painted by the artist after his return to Antwerp, his birthplace, following a lengthy period of study in Italy. Floris has long been appreciated for his handling of the nude and for the manner in which he typically combines an Italianate style inspired by Tuscan Mannerism with his native Flemish painting technique. In the centre of the composition, Susannah, Joachim's young wife, is about to bathe, unaware of the two old men spying on her through the bushes. Floris's work effectively melds the two approaches to painting that had such a profound influence on the Renaissance in Europe. He also introduces an innovative feature into his portrayal of the story of Susannah, long a favourite subject with many of his contemporaries, in that in this picture he captures the moment preceding the climax of the story, thus drawing the observer into the thick of the events about to unfold.

The stand will also contain a “*Self-portrait*” by **Vittore Ghislandi, known as Fra’ Galgario**, dated c. 1715. The picture reveals a bareheaded, ageing friar in a black habit, in a half-bust pose facing right, set against a black background. Fra’ Galgario portrays himself with white hair, though he is younger in years here than in his most famous *Self-portrait*, now in the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, dated 1732.

Another important work by a foreign artist, yet in which Italy’s stylistic influence emerges very strongly, is **Jean-Baptiste Gauffier’s “Portrait of Étienne Michaux”**. Dated 1801, this is one of the last works by Gauffier, who died that same year. A smaller version of the portrait, possibly a trial run for the picture the artist painted in Florence, is currently to be found in the Musée Fabre in Montpellier. The painting portrays Commissaire Ordonnateur-en-Chef des Guerres Étienne Michaux, a member of the French Army’s General Staff under Murat, standing proudly on the terrace of a garden to the southeast of Florence. The dome of the Cathedral stands out clearly against the Appenines in the background. Italy was to play a major role in Gauffier’s formative years, just as it had done for Floris. He moved to the papal capital in 1784 after being awarded the Prix de Rome, but was forcibly expelled from the city by anti-French rioters in 1793. He then chose to settle in Florence, where he began to devote his energies to portrait painting.

The stand will also contain a **Capezzale**, or bedhead decoration, portraying the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin*, made by a **master from Trapani** in or around the first half of the 18th century. Probably commissioned by the Senate of Palermo as a gift for some illustrious figure, it captures to perfection the Trapani artisans’ skill, which was beginning by now to verge on *virtuosismo*. The gilt copper support of the whole sits side by side with the floral volutes of the external mother-of-pearl and coral frame.

In the centre, on a plain background adorned with small winged cherubs’ heads, we see the amber figures of the Virgin and two angels, surrounded by a gilt copper sunburst.

The item’s size, the sophistication of the carving and the period in which it was fashioned come together to make this a unique piece, truly one of its kind.

The 33rd edition of the International Biennale will be a showcase for galleries from the international scene specialising in a broad range of artistic disciplines. The quality and substance of the works of art on display at the exhibition, together with the unique charm of the venue, Palazzo Corsini, are the outstanding features that have allowed this event to become the world’s second most important fair for classic, old master art.

The Galleria Carlo Orsi, specialising in old master paintings (particularly Italian) and in sculptures and *objets d’art* ranging from the 14th to the 17th centuries, has become a focal point for private collectors, art dealers, curators, auction house experts and art lovers from all over the world. The Galleria shows at the most prestigious exhibitions and art fairs in Europe and North America, including TEFAF Maastricht, the Florence International Antique Biennale, Arte e Collezionismo in Rome, Modena Antiquaria and Flashback in Turin. The Galleria Orsi also supports numerous museums, loans works of art and funds publications, while also producing its own catalogues containing studies relating to specific artists and works of art.

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