



P R E S S   R E L E A S E   –   2 1   N o v e m b e r   2 0 1 1

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## **BARTOLOMEO AMMANNATI – An online-exhibition by the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut**

The Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut is showcasing its current photographic campaign of some important works of Bartolomeo Ammannati in an online-exhibition.

As part of preparations for the exhibition “L’acqua, la pietra, il fuoco. Bartolomeo Ammannati scultore”, which the Museo del Bargello in Florence was holding this year to mark the fifth<sup>th</sup> centenary of the artist’s birth, the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz was involved with a photographic campaign, which could be conducted under ideal conditions. With a view to a revamped museum display and a virtual reconstruction of Ammannati’s Fontana di Sala Grande, a few of his works were removed from the walls of the Bargello; this made it possible for the first time to photograph the sculptures in the round. The resulting photographic documentation provides researchers with a wholly new angle of vision of Ammannati’s sculptural works.

From 21 November 2011 the Photo Library is showing a total of 46 photos from this campaign in its new online-exhibition. They are supplemented with 14 photos of the Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai, where the Photo Library is situated, and one of Ammannati’s main architectural works.

Bartolomeo Ammannati (1511-1592) was one of the most important artists of the Florentine High Renaissance. After an apprenticeship in the workshop of the sculptor Baccio Bandinelli and periods of activity in Venice and Urbino, he received his first major commission between 1540 and 1542: the tomb of Mario Nari in Santissima Annunziata. In 1550 Ammannati went to Rome, where he met Michelangelo, whose works he had already studied with great attention in Florence. His admiration for the ageing master, and the influence his work had on Ammannati’s sculptures, can be felt in all his works, as already in his “Leda with the Swan” dating to c.1536. What cannot be ignored in this sculpture is the stylistic, and also the iconographic, affinity with Michelangelo, who had developed this mythological theme in a now lost, but much copied painting for Alfonso d’Este between 1529 and 1530.

Ammannati achieved his artistic breakthrough after his return to Florence from Rome in 1555. Cosimo I de’ Medici had called him to his court, where, with the active support of Vasari and Michelangelo, he speedily rose to become one of the artists most in demand. Together with Vasari he worked on the transformation of the medieval Palazzo Vecchio into a sumptuous ducal residence and designed a monumental fountain ensemble for the



Salone dei Cinquecento between 1556 and 1561. Alterations in plan to do with the height of the ceiling led to the project being abandoned. But the sculptures for it had already been completed. Some of them, such as the two peacocks flanking Juno, the nymph Castalia and the personified river Arno, were included in Ammannati's fountain above the courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti in 1588-1589. They were then installed as garden-statues in the Boboli Gardens, before eventually being removed to the Bargello for conservational reasons. However, a 3-D model, specially developed in the context of the exhibition marking the sculptor's fifth<sup>th</sup> centenary, provides a virtual reconstruction of Ammannati's original project.

While Ammannati was still working on his fountain for the Salone dei Cinquecento, he received further commissions from Cosimo I. They included the bronze group of Hercules wrestling with the giant Antaeus (1559-1560). It was intended for the fountain in the garden of the Villa Medici in Castello. It captures the turning point in the contest when Hercules powerfully grasps his arms round Antaeus' chest and hoists him into the air.

A small but significant insight into the artist's architectural works is provided lastly by the group of photos of the Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai in the Piazza Santissima Annunziata in Florence. Erected for Ugolino Grifoni, secretary of Cosimo I, between 1561 and 1565, the Palazzo Grifoni is striking not only for its monumentality, but also for its use of red terracotta bricks, nuanced in their varying shades of russet and orange, which Ammannati consciously incorporated into the articulation of the façade. When the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz conducted its photographic campaign in 2010, particular attention was paid to changing lighting conditions and their influence on the colour of the bricks as well as on the plastic effect of the building. So the façade was photographed at different times of the day to illustrate the architect's sophisticated play with colour and texture.

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## Images

Bartolomeo Ammannati,  
Recumbent figure of Mario  
Nari, 1540-42, Florence,  
Museo Nazionale del Bargello,  
marble, height: 67 cm,  
length: 159 cm, depth: 53 cm  
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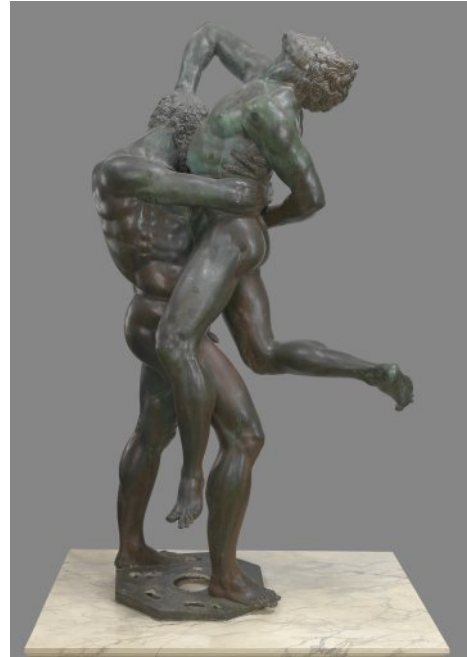
Bartolomeo Ammannati, Leda  
and the Swan, around 1536,  
Florence, Museo Nazionale del  
Bargello, marble, height: 48  
cm, length: 70.5 cm, depth:  
33 cm © Kunsthistorisches  
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Bartolomeo Ammannati,  
Personification of the River  
Arno, 1556-61, marble,  
height: 230 cm ©  
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Bartolomeo Ammannati,  
Herkules and Antaeus, 1559-  
60, Florence, Museo Nazionale  
de Bargello, bronze, height:  
201 cm © Kunsthistorisches  
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Bartolomeo Ammannati,  
Herkules and Antaeus, detail:  
head of Antaeus, 1559-60,  
Florence, Museo Nazionale del  
Bargello, bronze, height: 201  
cm © Kunsthistorisches  
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Bartolomeo Ammannati,  
Palazzo Grifoni, 1561-65,  
Florence, Façade on the Piazza  
Santissima Annunziata ©  
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