

## Slow Art Florence – Instructions for use

Where: The church of Santa Croce

If you wish to aim for the group discount, meet at 3:50 p.m. under the statue of Dante. Or enter earlier to give yourself more time inside! If you're a resident of Florence, bring your ID card and you get in free.

The church closes at 5:30pm and they will start to kick you out, pushing you towards the courtyard areas, starting at 5pm, so plan accordingly.

When you're done, head over to Brac (just 2 blocks away) and we'll meet to talk about the experience.

**Please note: This is NOT a group tour** but rather a personal learning experience. We think that by looking at a work of art for a bit longer than usual, you'll see more and learn something interesting on your own. So, go by yourself or with one other person if you wish to discuss while you look, but try to focus on the art. REMEMBER, **this is not a competition**, nor do you have to prove anything to anyone. This is for YOU. Enjoy it.

**What to bring: Most importantly, bring pen and paper** so you can write down your thoughts. A sketch pad, if you're at all artistically inclined, could be useful too. Maybe binoculars? You are allowed non-flash photography in the church so bring a camera – we'd love it if you'd share your photos of the event (the part at Brac too) online!

### **LIST OF WORKS**

The following is the list of FIVE works that I have chosen for us to concentrate on for about 10 minutes – I've calculated some time to negotiate the space of the church. The map above should help you locate the pieces in this large space. If you have time, feel free to spend time looking at something else slowly if it catches your eye, but do try to cover these works in order to have a common conversation topic later.

#### **1) A comparison between two tombs.**



Here's an opportunity to compare two tombs: their styles, meanings, and the artistic elements that make them up. The tomb on the right is the Quattrocento resting place of city chancellor Leonardo Bruni (he wrote a history of Florence and had great civic pride), sculpted by Bernardino Rossellino. To its left, the artist of composer Gioachino Rossini's (d. 1868) tomb sought to imitate the shape of the earlier work. Here are some things to consider:

- What are the materials used?
- What do these two tombs have in common? And what's different between them?
- What do they say about the figure commemorated?
- Are they sacred or profane? Are they humorous or serious? What words or emotions describe them?

## 2) Donatello's Annunciation, 1435



I prefer to write very little about this work and let the art talk to you. Consider the following aspects:

- The figures' expressions and how they might have felt.
- The moment of the story being told
- The medium and way it is treated
- The role of the putti up top
- The fresco fragments on the wall
- The shape of the work and how it contributes or what it means
- Who's included and who is missing here

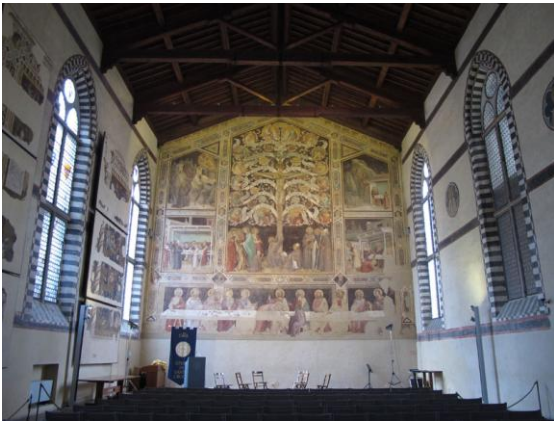
## 3) The Pazzi Chapel by Brunelleschi, 1440s to 60s



Located off the friar's courtyard (or cloister), this was the chapter house or meeting room for the religious community of Franciscan friars that lived here. It's a purely Renaissance space and the only work of architecture that we're going to consider here. I suggest sitting down on one of the benches that line the walls and attempting to understand the space. I challenge you to draw a floor plan of it to the best of your abilities, based on what you understand of how it is constructed. It's a fascinating space with lots of mathematical ratios.

Beyond the space, there's lots to look at here. Approach it however you wish. You could make a list of all the elements here (relief sculpture, architectural "things" like columns), or draw something, or try to figure out how the elements relate to each other... enjoy!

#### 4) The Tree of Life by Taddeo Gaddi, with Last Supper below, 1360s



You can take advantage of the abundant seating that faces this complex fresco. It requires a bit of explanation – the tree of life is a devotional subject derived from the writings of Saint Bonaventure. Below is a Last Supper. At either side are narrative images in separate fields: a depiction of Saint Francis, and three holy scenes that took place at meals. Questions:

What might have been the function of this room in the past? Imagine it empty with just wooden benches and tables lining the walls. What might have been the effect? Do you find this work inspiring? How do you approach

it? What emotions or effect does it have on you?

#### 5) The Descent of Christ into Limbo by Bronzino (1552)



Spin around in those seats and check out the newly restored oil painting on panel by the great Mannerist artist Bronzino. It was damaged in the 1966 flood and has been in restoration from 2003 to 2007 so it's a newcomer to the art world and to this museum.

Let your eyes roam around this visual feast. Follow (and count) the limbs, see how colours meet, match, or clash. Explore figures' expressions and positions. And what about that upper lefthand corner!