

**TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund announces
National Gallery of Ireland
and
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art as
2024 Beneficiaries**

Maastricht, Netherlands – January 16, 2024: The European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF) has announced that the **National Gallery of Ireland (Dublin, Ireland)** and the **Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (Connecticut, USA)** are the recipients of this year's **TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund (TMRF)**, an annual grant created in support of the international art community's vital work to preserve artistic and cultural heritage.

The National Gallery of Ireland has received funding from TEFAF to restore Ludovico Mazzolino's (c. 1480 - c. 1530) *The Crossing of the Red Sea* (1521), which has been part of its collection for over a century. This biblical artwork is remarkable for its size and rarity and because it departs from the conventional rules of perspective.



Ludovico Mazzolino's *The Crossing of the Red Sea* (1521)

In its current fragile state, the painting cannot be safely displayed; with severe delamination of the paint layer and soiling to the cracked surface, *The Crossing of the Red Sea* requires extensive conservation efforts. With TEFAF's funding, the National Gallery of Ireland will collaborate with experts in Mazzolino's work to better understand his artistic practice so that this rare large-scale masterpiece can be sensitively restored and made accessible to the visiting public.

Dr Caroline Campbell, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, commented, "Ludovico Mazzolino was a prominent painter in sixteenth-century Italy, where he worked for the Este court in Ferrara and later in Bologna. *The Crossing of the Red Sea*

is recognized internationally as an important and rare large-scale example of his work. It has been part of the National Gallery of Ireland's collection since 1914, acquired just 50 years after we opened our doors. Unfortunately, due to the fragility of the panel, we have been unable to put it on display for many decades. We are delighted to receive this grant from the TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund, which will enable us to undertake essential conservation treatment on this striking painting and make it possible to return it to our galleries for the enjoyment of our visitors."

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, has received funding from TEFAF to restore *Venus with a Nymph and Satyr* (1600), a marble sculpture by Pietro Francavilla (1548 – 1615) with an intriguing history. Initially, it was commissioned for the gardens of the Villa Zanobi Bracci in Florence, Italy, but in 1750 was sold to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and stored at the royal estates of Kew and Windsor. In the early twentieth century, the sculpture emerged on the commercial art market and in 1925 was transported to the Fogg Museum, Harvard, to be installed in its Renaissance courtyard. However, due to its erotic nature, the sculpture was not displayed there and was instead acquired by Everett Austin Jr., the then-director of the Wadsworth Atheneum.



Pietro Francavilla's *Venus with a Nymph and Satyr* (1600)

The sculpture has endured damage and undergone multiple restorations throughout its rich and intriguing history. However, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is steadfast in restoring the sculpture's aesthetic appeal and historical significance.

With the assistance of the TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund, the museum aims to regain the statue's former glory.

Matthew Hargraves, Director of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, commented, "Pietro Francavilla's *Venus with Nymph and Satyr* is perhaps the greatest Mannerist sculpture in the United States. Since 1934, it has been the centerpiece of our landmark Modernist Avery Memorial building. We are incredibly grateful for this grant from the TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund to conserve Francavilla's great marble. It will bring this stunning sculpture back to life and return it to pride of place at the very center of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art as a symbol of our beloved museum's renewal."

Hidde van Seggelen, President of the TEFAF Executive Committee, expressed his excitement in supporting the two restoration projects in 2024 through the TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund: "This fund will aid in preventing further deterioration of these two important works of art, restoring them to their original state of grandeur. The conservation of a sculptural masterpiece and a painting by one of the great artists of the Italian Renaissance highlights the essential role played by TMRF in strengthening TEFAF's commitment to research and preservation of our shared and diverse artistic heritage."

The TMRF 2024 events programme will include a TEFAF Talk by ICOM-CC, powered by Aon, titled *Conversations on Conservation: Mazzolino's Crossing of the Red Sea*, on Monday, March 9, at 15:00.

ABOUT TEFAF MUSEUM RESTORATION FUND

The TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund was established in 2012 to support and promote professional restoration and related scholarly research of significant museum artworks. Championing art in all its forms, applications for its grants are open to museums from all over the world and artworks of any age. Each year, a maximum of €50,000 is allocated to projects. The committee of independent experts usually selects two winners to each receive up to €25,000 to support their restoration project.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND

The National Gallery of Ireland is Ireland's major national cultural institution devoted to collecting and caring for fine art. When the Gallery was first opened to the public in January 1864, there were just 125 paintings on view. Still, its collection has grown exponentially, and its footprint has expanded three times, most recently with the construction of the Millennium Wing in 2002. Through shrewd acquisition over the last 150 years (often operating with minimal budgets) along with the generosity of benefactors, the National Gallery of Ireland has built a collection of worldwide importance, with more than 16,000 works of art by the likes of Fra Angelico,

Caravaggio, Gainsborough, Goya, Murillo, Picasso, Poussin, Rembrandt, Rubens, Velázquez, and Vermeer. The Gallery is also home to the Irish Collection, which broadly represents every Irish artist of note between 1700 and 1950 and an extensive Prints and Drawings Collection.

ABOUT WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1842 with a vision for infusing art into the American experience, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is home to an expansive and diverse collection of nearly 50,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years and encompassing everything from European art from antiquity through Modernism as well as American art from the 1600s to the present. The oldest continuously operating public art museum in the United States, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art presents groundbreaking exhibitions that explore every era of art history while being at the forefront of collecting works by artists such as Caravaggio, Frederic Church, Georgia O’Keeffe, Salvador Dalí, and Kara Walker. Holding its collection in trust for all people, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is dedicated to advancing knowledge and inspiring an appreciation of excellence in art and culture. It is a museum driven by its mission to be where contemporary culture meets great masterpieces, all feel welcome, and a diverse audience can engage in meaningful ways. The greater Hartford region’s vibrancy, character, and well-being are strengthened.

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ABOUT TEFAF

TEFAF is a not-for-profit foundation that champions expertise, excellence, and diversity in the global art community. This is evidenced by the exhibitors selected for its two fairs, which occur annually in Maastricht and New York. TEFAF is an expert guide for private and institutional collectors, inspiring art lovers and buyers everywhere.

ABOUT TEFAF MAASTRICHT

TEFAF Maastricht is widely regarded as the world’s premier fair for fine art, antiques, and design, covering 7,000 years of art history, from ancient to contemporary. Featuring over 270 prestigious dealers from some 22 countries, TEFAF Maastricht is a showcase for the finest artworks currently on the market. Alongside the traditional areas of Old Master paintings, antiques, and classical antiquities that cover approximately half of the fair, you can also find modern and contemporary art, photography, jewelry, 20th-century design, and works on paper.

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