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Art 485: Senior Seminar in Art History  
Thursdays, 6-9 p.m., 417 Clough

## **Donatello**

**Art 485** is a senior seminar designed to allow junior and senior art history majors a chance to examine the discipline of art history by focusing on one artist or movement. Emphasis is placed on critical reading and interpretation of images through class discussion, scholarly writing, and formal presentations.

### **Course Objectives and Description**

This course will introduce students to advanced critical methods of art history through an extensive examination of the Renaissance sculptor, Donatello. Donatello is one of the most famous and important Renaissance artists, and is also one of the most difficult figures of the period for the art historian to analyze. Students will be introduced to the biography of the artist, the sculptures associated with him, his influence on followers, and his impact on the history of art. Students will fully engage themselves with an extensive bibliography, intensive critical debates, and critical issues of iconography, connoisseurship, patronage, and the contextualization of Donatello's works. A crucial aspect of the course is to learn how art historians select objects and subjects for research, how they investigate works of art, and how they employ different methodologies in the course of critical analysis.

### **Grading:**

- Several Informal Presentations to be assigned weekly (with 1-page summaries)
- 1 Formal Presentation (20 minute talk with slides, followed by response from a critical audience)
- 1 research paper with full bibliography (and a preliminary draft)

## **Preliminary Bibliography I: Important Books on Donatello in English**

Avery, Charles, Donatello: An Introduction, New York, 1994.

Bennett, Bonnie A., and Wilkins, David G., Donatello, New York, 1984.

Greenhalgh, Michael, Donatello and His Sources, New York, 1982.

Italian Renaissance Sculpture in the Time of Donatello, exh. cat., eds. A.P. Darr and G. Bonsanti, Detroit, 1985.

Janson, H.W., The Sculpture of Donatello, Princeton, 1957 and 1963.

Lightbown, Ronald W., Donatello and Michelozzo: An artistic partnership and its patrons in the early Renaissance, London, 1980.

Munman, Robert, Optical Corrections in the Sculpture of Donatello (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 75, Part 2), 1985.

Pope-Hennessy, John, Donatello: Sculptor, New York, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_, Italian Renaissance Sculpture, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., London, 1999.

## **Preliminary Bibliography II: Comprehensive list of books and articles on Donatello (Many Languages)**

### **I. Sarah Blake Wilk, Fifteenth-Century Central Italian Sculpture: an annotated bibliography, Boston, 1986, entries 776-1090.**

This contains summaries of over 300 articles pertaining to Donatello and is complete to 1986.

### **II. BHA Online**

Rhodes now has a subscription to this comprehensive database. It is searchable through any Rhodes computer and should contain virtually all publications pertaining to Donatello starting where Wilk leaves off.

Note: While there are nice collections of books and journals at Rhodes and U Memphis, do not assume that the article you need is in either library. You should check these sources early and order what you need through interlibrary loan.

Note: With the above resources there is NO excuse for unfamiliarity with the literature.

**January 13: Introduction, Questions, and Research Methods**

Introduction to the discipline of art history, discussion of its substance and methodologies.

Review of Research Methods and Sources

Assignment of Projects

**January 20: Methodologies**

The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology, Donald Preziosi, ed., Oxford, 1998.

Excerpts from this book will be assigned.

**January 27: Donatello and Biography**

Read: Vasari, "Life of Donatello" from Lives of the Artists (any translation).

Read: Pope-Hennessy, Italian Renaissance Sculpture, bio and bibliography on Donatello.

Read: Frederick Hartt, History of Italian Renaissance Art, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., New York, 1994

(Chapter 7: Gothic and Renaissance in Tuscan Sculpture; Chapter 10 The Second Renaissance Style in Architecture and Sculpture; and Chapter 12: Crisis and Crosscurrents).

**February 3: The Sculptures of Donatello (I)**

Choose one work from the following list

The Prophet David

St John the Evangelist seated, Florence

St Mark for Or San Michele, Florence

Marble Statue of David with the Head of Goliath, Florence

St George Statue, Florence

St Louis of Toulouse, Florence

Bearded and Beardless Prophets, Florence

Jeremiah and Habakkuk, Florence

**February 10: The Sculptures of Donatello (II)**

Bust of San Rossore, Pisa

Coscia Monument, Florence

Relief of Herod and Saint John, Siena

Brancacci Tomb, Naples

Pulpit for Cathedral of Prato

Cantoria for Cathedral of Florence

Saint George and the Dragon Relief, Florence

Ascension Relief, London

Note: John Stomberg Lecture on Burke-White Photographs at 7:00

**February 17: The Sculptures of Donatello (III)**

St John the Baptist, Venice  
Annunciation in Santa Croce, Florence  
Bronze David, Florence  
Stucco Decoration in San Lorenzo, Florence  
Bronze Doors, San Lorenzo, Florence  
Gattamelata, Padua  
Crucifixion and High Altar Figures, Padua  
High Altar Reliefs, Padua

**February 24: CAA Convention (Class rescheduled)**

**March 2: The Sculptures of Donatello (IV)**

Pazzi Madonna, Berlin  
Madonna of the Clouds, Boston  
Chellini Madonna, London  
Roundel from Siena Cathedral  
Mary Magdalene, Florence  
Judith and Holofernes, Florence  
St John the Baptist, Siena  
San Lorenzo Pulpits, Florence

**March 9: Spring Break**

**March 16: Dress Rehearsal for Formal Presentations**

All students.  
Formal Presentation by Victor: The Sexuality of Donatello and his Bronze David

**March 23: Formal Presentations**

4 Students

**March 30: Formal Presentations**

3 Students

**April 6: Class Rescheduled**

(I will be at the Midwest College Art Conference delivering a paper on Donatello.)

**Tuesday, April 11:** James Elkins Lecture at 8:00 in Hardie Auditorium (required)

**April 13: Themes and Issues: The followers of Donatello**

Michelozzo

Antonio Rossellino

Desiderio da Settignano

Mino da Fiesole

Benedetto da Maiano

Andrea del Verrocchio

Antonio del Pollaiuolo

Bertoldo di Giovanni

**April 20: Easter Recess**

**April 27: Themes and Issues: Attribution Problems**

The following sculptures present highly contentious attributional or iconographical problems for class discussion:

Laughing Virgin and Child Statuette in the V&A, London

Dudley Madonna in the V&A, London

Martelli David in the NGW

St Jerome relief in the NGW

Martyrdom of Sebastian (Jacquemart-Andre)

Angels with Candlestick (J-A)

Feast of Herod (Lille)

Bust of Niccolo da Uzzano, Bargello

Pazzi Chapel Roundels, Santa Croce, Florence

\*Or another work approved by instructor beforehand\*

**Papers Due** (include copies of summary for each classmate)