

PRESS RELEASE



The restoration of Tintoretto's *Paradiso*

Tintoretto's *Paradiso*, one of the most famous works in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, has returned to its habitual location after an painstaking project of study and restoration that took place live in front of visitors to the Museum during 2012, coinciding with Thyssen's 20th Anniversary. The project benefited from the support of Bank of America Merrill Lynch as part of its Art Conservation Project, which provides grants for the restoration of paintings, sculptures, archaeological or architectural pieces in order to preserve them for future generations.

Motivated by the need to control the deterioration of the painting since the time of its creation around 1588, to guarantee its conservation and to recover its aesthetic balance, the the Museum's restoration department undertook a complete technical study that led on to an extensive process carried out in a completely safe manner and using the most appropriate techniques and procedures.

In the first phase the Museum's restorers ensured the stability of this enormous canvas, which measures more than 8 square metres, studying it in depth through the use of macro-photography, X-radiography, Infra-red reflectography and chemical analyses, among other techniques.

Thanks to advances in digital photography it was possible to obtain a faithful document of the work's chromatism and of all earlier interventions that were evident in the numerous alterations detected.

The X-radiographic study revealed the lengthy process of the work's creation as well as its state of preservation, allowing for an appreciation of how the artist had applied a white

Tintoretto. *Paradiso* ca. 1588. Oil on canvas, 169,5 x 494 cm. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. **More information and images please contact:** Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza – Press Office. Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014 Madrid. Tel. +34 914203944 /913600236. Fax+34914202780.
prensa@museothyssen.org; www.museothyssen.org;
<http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2013/tintoretto/index.html>
<http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/tintoretto/>

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underpainting onto the dark ground before applying a large amount of pale toned pigment in the lightest parts of the canvas, leaving the areas in shadow unpainted.

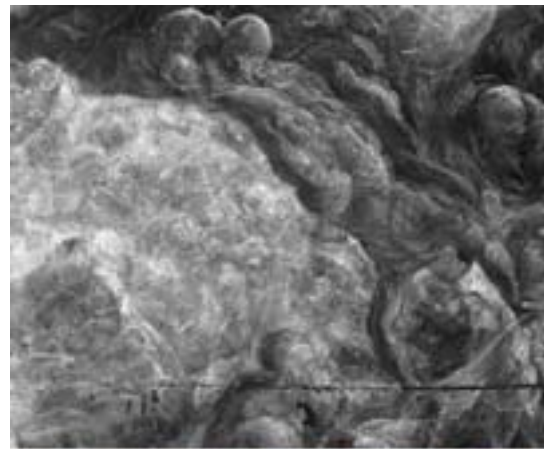


During this phase of restoration important changes to the composition were discovered that had previously been concealed from view. These included the presence of nude figures that Tintoretto subsequently covered over with drapery, the modification or even elimination of some figures and the existence of inscriptions in various parts of the canvas. The infra-red reflectograph showed the preliminary underdrawing through which

Tintoretto worked out the composition, which had been concealed under different layers in paint. In turn, these layers revealed the successive phases of the work's creation.

Chemical analyses undertaken in the laboratory allowed for a precise knowledge of the original materials used by the artist and those that were added later, as well as the work's state of preservation. It was discovered at this point, for example, that Tintoretto used pigments that were highly prized at the time such as lapis lazuli, in addition to his secret procedure of using ground glass mixed with paint to reflect the light and give the painting luminosity.

Following intensive work in the Museum's restoration studio, *Paradiso* returned to the Central Hall in July last year so that restorers could continue their work in full view of visitors and thus introduce them into the process. For more than six months they worked on removing yellowed varnishes and dirt accumulated over the years before finally filling in areas of paint loss. As a result, they were able to return the work to its original splendour.



Thanks to this restoration project it has been possible to learn more about Tintoretto's techniques and materials, which was fundamental for undertaking the restoration procedure and for halting the deterioration of the painting to the greatest possible extent. Furthermore, the results obtained from the study of the artist's creative process have facilitated our understanding of *Paradiso* as a whole and of the context in which it was made.



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About Bank of America Merrill Lynch and the Arts

Developing substantive solutions for social and environmental challenges is at the core of Bank of America Merrill Lynch's mission, and the arts and culture platform is a key component of the company's integrated corporate responsibility strategy.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch helps a broad spectrum of arts programmes thrive, encompassing sponsorships, community grants and loans to museums from the company's own art collection. The Bank of America Merrill Lynch Art Conservation Project provides grants for the restoration of paintings, sculptures, archaeological or architectural pieces that are significant to the cultural heritage of a country or region or important to the history of art in order to preserve them for future generations.

Recent and upcoming sponsorships include, Americans in Florence: Sargent and the American Impressionists at the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (March – July 2012), Jeff Koons: The Painter & The Sculptor at Schirn Kunsthalle and the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt (June – September 2012) and Roy Lichtenstein at Tate Modern, London (February – May 2013). The company is Season Sponsor of the Old Vic Theatre in London, as well as Global Sponsor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which travelled to Russia and Italy in 2012.

Through the company's Art in Our Communities[®] programme, the Bank of America Merrill Lynch Collection has been converted into a unique community resource. The collection has grown in size and scope in recent decades with artworks from numerous legacy institutions, and offers museums and non-profit galleries the opportunity to borrow complete or customised exhibitions at no cost. This helps to secure vital revenue for those institutions that may lack sufficient resources to fully curate and manage exhibitions on their own, and also guarantees that the collection is shared with as wide an audience as possible. Since its launch in late 2008, more than 50 exhibitions have been loaned to museums around the world. Shows in 2012 included Conversations at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) in Dublin, Shared Space, part of PhotoEspaña 2012, at the Real Jardín Botánico in Madrid (June – July 2012), Andy Warhol: The Portfolios at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (June – September 2012) travelling to the Museo del Novecento in Milan in April 2013, and Gaze: The Changing Face of Portrait Photography, at Istanbul Modern Museum (October 2012 – January 2013). Learn more at www.bankofamerica.com/about and follow us on Twitter at @BofA_Community.

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