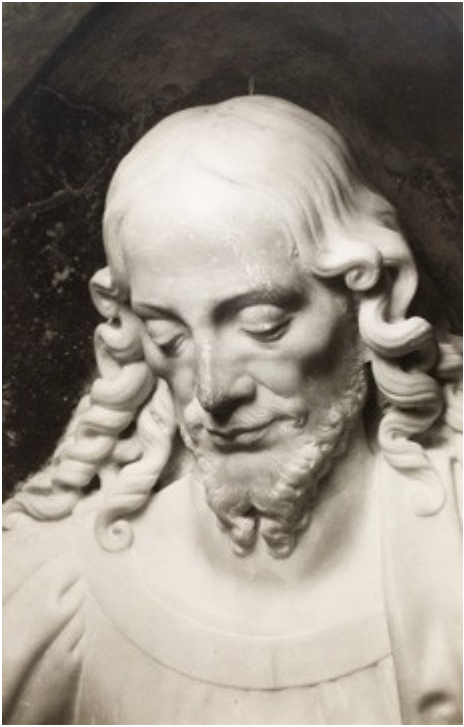




Update: August 6, 2019 (original release date: July 25, 2019)

Photographs of Verrocchio sculptures by Renowned Scholar and Photographer Clarence Kennedy in National Gallery of Art Library Installation



Andrea del Verrocchio, *Putto Poised on a Globe*, c. 1480
terra cruda (unbaked clay)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Washington, DC—In conjunction with the exhibition [Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence](#) on view in the West Building from September 15, 2019, to January 12, 2020, the National Gallery of Art Library presents a selection of 30 photographs of Verrocchio sculpture by the scholar and photographer Clarence Kennedy. This installation primarily includes photographs from Kennedy's album *The Unfinished Monument by Andrea del Verrocchio to the Cardinal Niccolò Forteguerri at Pistoia*, which reestablished this complicated and underappreciated monument within Verrocchio's body of work. ***In the Library: Verrocchio, Connoisseurship, and the Photographs of Clarence Kennedy*** is on view from September 16, 2019, to January 10, 2020, in the East Building Study Center, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

"The Gallery would like to thank the Harvard Fine Arts Library, the repository of Kennedy's negatives and professional papers, for the loan of plates from their unbound deluxe edition of the Forteguerra monograph," says Roger Lawson, executive librarian, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "Harvard's Forteguerra plates are displayed alongside other Kennedy photographs from the Gallery's collection, including unique images of Verrocchio's Silver Altar relief in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence, and sculptures from the Gustave Dreyfus Collection photographed for the art dealer Joseph Duveen. The juxtaposition of these images illustrates Kennedy's role as connoisseur, thoughtful art historian, and innovative photographer. The library is delighted to present this exhibition as a fitting complement to ***Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence.***"

About Clarence Kennedy (1892–1972) and the Forteguerra Cenotaph

Clarence Kennedy (1892–1972), an art historian at Smith College and self-proclaimed "scholar-photographer," revolutionized documentary art photography with subtle and illuminating details of Italian Renaissance sculpture. Inspired by sculptors with large workshops, such as Andrea del Verrocchio (c. 1435–1488) and Desiderio da Settignano (c. 1429–1464), his exquisitely detailed photographs allowed him to compare motifs, methods, and styles to distinguish the master's hand from the work of his assistants. Kennedy was highly regarded by both art historians and photographers. Among his closest friends were Polaroid founder Edwin Land and Ansel Adams, whose 1955 portrait of Kennedy is included in the installation.

Limited photographic resources available for teaching art history in the early 1920s led Kennedy to pursue photography, resulting in the seven-volume photographic series *Studies in the History and Criticism of Sculpture*. The first six volumes in Kennedy's *Studies* were portfolios comprised of approximately 50 individual photographs without accompanying text. Among the photographs included in these portfolios were surveys on the ancient Greek Erechtheion and the Siphnian Treasury, as well as quattrocento Florentine subjects. Additional volumes concentrated on more generalized themes, such as portraiture and relief sculpture, as well as monographic surveys of Desiderio's *Marsuppini Tomb* (Santa Croce) and *Tabernacle of the Sacrament* (San Lorenzo). He also planned and partially completed a portfolio on the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal by Antonio Rossellino (San Miniato al Monte).

In 1932 Kennedy published volume seven, *The Unfinished Monument by Andrea del Verrocchio to the Cardinal Niccolo Forteguerra at Pistoia*, which unlike its predecessors is bound and contains text. The text was written by his student Elizabeth Wilder, and was supported with documents discovered by Italian art historian Pèleo Bacci. Kennedy photographed the monument using a continually moving light source during a long exposure that revealed details that allowed Kennedy, Wilder, and subsequent scholars to properly study and compare the details within the monument and throughout Verrocchio's oeuvre. It also focused new attention on a major work long dismissed as a workshop production.

The Forteguerra cenotaph is nearly three stories high with life-size figures including Christ surrounded by four angels with the virtues Faith, Hope, and Charity positioned above putti and a bust of the cardinal. Verrocchio received the commission in 1476 but left it incomplete when he moved to Venice in 1486 to work on a different commission. The monument's precise location in the Pistoia Duomo was not decided until after Verrocchio's death and its initial installation was significantly altered in the 16th and 18th centuries. Charity, the bust of Forteguerra, and the flanking putti are all later additions. These modifications, as well as the monument's placement high on the wall in a dark aisle, made it nearly impossible to study the sculpture properly before Kennedy's campaign.

An accompanying online feature can be accessed at www.nga.gov/verrocchiokennedy.

The installation is curated by Melissa Beck Lemke, image specialist for Italian art in the department of image collections, National Gallery of Art.

History of the Department of Image Collections

The library's department of image collections serves as a vital component of the vast resources for art historical research at the National Gallery of Art. The image collections comprise more than 16 million items representing the entire history of Western art, as well as a growing collection documenting Eastern art. The seeds of the National Gallery of Art photographic archives, the photograph component of the image collections, were planted in 1943 when Solomon R. Guggenheim gave funds to the young museum to purchase the Richter Archive of Illustrations on Art. This archive, created by George M. Richter (1875–1942), a collector and authority on Renaissance art, consisted of 60,000 photographs and clippings from books and catalogs. All European schools were represented in the collection, with special concentration in Italian painting.

A National Gallery of Art press release from August 4, 1943, emphasizes the Richter Archive's importance for scholarship in Washington, specifically for research on the Gallery's holdings. The acquisition was particularly timely because of growing concern for art and architecture lost or destroyed in World War II. The Gallery's statement points out that "the photographs . . . will be an invaluable record of many works of art from great European museums now either destroyed or dispersed. The photographs of paintings in private collections, to which Mr. Richter had access, are in many cases unique, and may be of great assistance in establishing the rightful ownership of works of art when the war is over."

In 1970 plans were announced to establish a photographic archive at the Gallery with the Richter gift as its core. Through a generous start-up grant and the promise of continued support from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Alessandro "Sandrino" Contini-Bonacossi was hired in September 1970 as the archive's first curator. Contini-Bonacossi, who had previously served as a curator at the Samuel H.

Kress Foundation, quickly began amassing what the Kress Foundation's vice president described as "one of the great photographic collections of the world."

A year later the photographic archive had acquired nearly 2.5 million photographs. The purchase in July 1971 of approximately 130,000 negatives from the Parke-Bernet auctions and the gift of the Clarence Ward Medieval Architecture Archive nearly doubled the archive's holdings. Other acquisitions included the purchase of the Foto Reali and Gramstorff negatives, as well as the complete offerings of Fratelli Alinari. Contini-Bonacossi also initiated the archive's associations with Zodiaque and the Corpus Photographicum of Drawings.

Contini-Bonacossi was succeeded by Ruth Philbrick in 1975, who continued to strengthen the archive by seeking out notable commercial and private collections. Among the numerous important collections acquired during her tenure are the René Huyghe and Venturi/Rewald archives, the archives of the Witt Library and the Conway Library on microfiche, and images from Art International and the Munich Central Collecting Point.

In 2004, under the leadership of Gregory P. J. Most, chief of the department of image collections, the photographic archive and the slide library were merged into a single resource. Most has continued to expand the collection with the addition of a digital imaging program, the acquisition of the Paul Katz Archive of portraits of artists, and the Cleveland Museum of Art Photograph Library and its extensive non-Western holdings, in addition to rare photographs and albums. The department of image collections' reciprocal relationships with other departments at the Gallery, especially the curatorial offices, has resulted in the development of an exhibition archive—photographs, transparencies, and negatives documenting objects from every exhibition in the Gallery's history.

The department serves the Gallery's staff, CASVA members, visiting scholars, and qualified researchers. Initial access to the library is by appointment, Monday through Friday. Call (202) 842-6026 or email image-collections@nga.gov for more information.

Update: August 6, 2019

This update includes accompanying online feature.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The

Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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In the Library: Verrocchio, Connoisseurship, and the Photographs of Clarence Kennedy

[Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence](#)

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