

**Previously unattributed sculptures in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest have been identified by a Venetian art historian.
The artworks will be restored with the support of Venetian Heritage.**

Through the collaboration between the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest and the Venetian Heritage foundation, based in Venice and New York, two sculptures preserved in the Budapest collection will be restored. The marble statues depict Minerva and Saturn and were catalogued in the Collection of Art after 1800 at the Museum of Fine Arts as unknown works from the 19th century. However, Venetian art historian Maichol Clemente recently identified them as the work of the esteemed Venetian sculptor Giusto Le Court.

The two sculptures once formed part of the most significant 17th-century collection belonging to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614–1662). Archduke Leopold served as governor of the



Spanish Netherlands on behalf of Emperor Ferdinand III from 1647 to 1656 and amassed an incredibly rich collection, which now constitutes the core of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. His interest in Venetian sculpture arose upon his return to Vienna after 1656, thanks to the efforts of the Habsburg Empire's ambassador to Venice, Humpert Jan Černin di Chudenice (1628–1682), who facilitated the acquisition of works by Melchior Barthel (1625–1672), a German sculptor working in Venice, and Giusto Le Court. Le Court's sculptures in Vienna became dispersed over time, eventually finding their way to Budapest. The Minerva and Saturn statues were donated to the Antiquities

Collection of the Hungarian National Museum in 1817 by Archduke Joseph of Austria, Palatine of Hungary. In 1906, they were transferred to the Museum of Fine Arts.

The statues deteriorated in condition over the centuries, and as they were regarded as works by an unknown artist, their restoration was never previously considered. Thanks to this remarkable art historical discovery and especially to the generous support of Venetian Heritage, the sculptures will be expertly restored in the coming months.

Venetian Heritage is an international non-profit organization with headquarters in Venice and New York, which supports cultural, artistic, and research projects related to Venice's artistic heritage. This restoration marks the first collaboration between the Museum of Fine Arts and Venetian Heritage.

The collaboration is announced on Thursday 9 November 2023 at the Museum of Fine Arts. During the event, Miriam Szócs, head of the Collection of Sculptures, and Toto Bergamo Rossi, director of Venetian Heritage, presented the details of the collaboration. The identification of the artworks is discussed in a lecture by Maichol Clemente, the Venetian art historian responsible for the attribution of the sculptures.

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