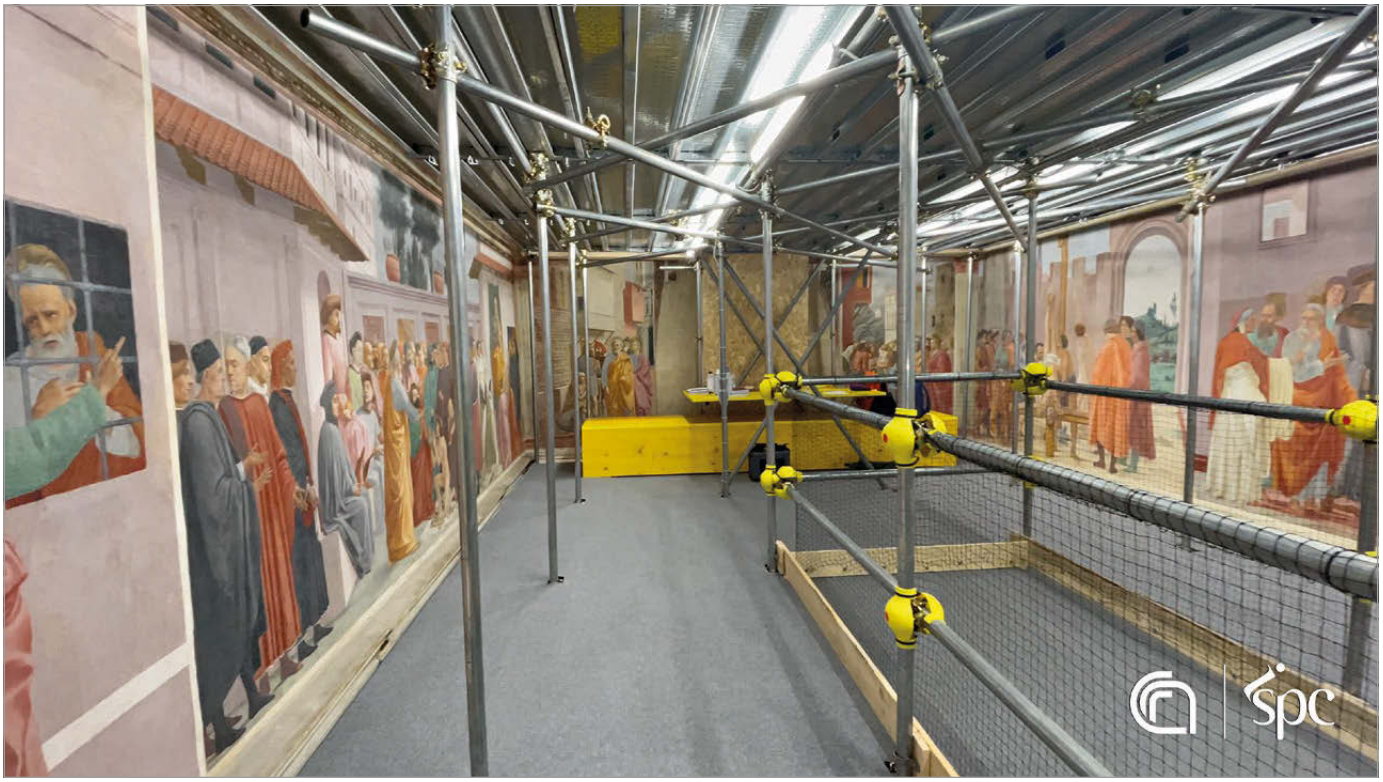

Florence, Piazza del Carmine, the Brancacci Chapel. Friends of Florence Foundation supported the restoration of one of the most important examples of Renaissance painting, here during the works on the frescoes (photograph by L. Rescic CNR – ISPC).

Friends of Florence would like to thank the entire organizing Committee for the preparation of this important conference on the Italian Law of Cultural Heritage and for the publication of the proceedings.
We also thank Mayor Dario Nardella, Soprintendente Andrea Pessina, General Counsul Ragini Gupta and all the invited speakers for their expertise and vision.
Friends of Florence is a nonprofit Foundation supported by individuals from around the world who are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the rich cultural heritage of Florence and Tuscany and conserving irreplaceable artistic and cultural treasures. Friends of Florence identifies significant projects spanning centuries in need of restoration, secures funding, and works in collaboration with local authorities to complete projects.
Since its founding in 1998, the Foundation has raised and donated more than 12 million euro for conservation of more than four hundred projects in Florence and in the region of Tuscany. Friends of Florence works directly with various conservation laboratories to ensure that restoration is done at the highest level, working closely with the Soprintendenza, the Comune of Florence and other entities so that the many projects over the years are completed following an approved time line and budget.
Through its work, Friends of Florence creates opportunities for the study and appreciation of paintings, sculptures, architectural elements, places of worship, and collections at the Uffizi Gallery, the Accademia, the Baptistry, the Piazza della Signoria, dozens of other museums, churches, and public sites.
A model of high-impact, low-overhead philanthropy, Friends of Florence has become the primary source of funding for the city's conservators, a respected partner with museums and cultural authorities in Italy and the U.S., and a publisher/producer of publications, multimedia offerings, seminars, lectures, and cultural travel opportunities.
Briefly I would like to mention just a few of our projects from the last twenty-four years including the marble statuary in the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence's Piazza della Signoria, restored as a first project including Giambologna's *Rape of the Sabines*.
To celebrate its tenth anniversary, Friends of Florence restored the entire Tribune in the Uffizi Gallery after having restored the Niobe Room and numerous ancient sculptures and artworks in the same museum. In 2016, five galleries were renovated housing paintings by Botticelli and Pollaiuolo.
Giovanni Francesco Rustici's bronze sculptural grouping over the north doors at the Florence Baptistry titled *The Sermon of St. John the Baptist* were restored and support was given to finalize the conservation of Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*.
Ghirlandaio's monumental painting *Last Supper* at the Badia a Passignano in Chianti was restored, and the refectory was reopened to the public.
The entire Cloister of the Vows with frescos by Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, and other artists at the Church of the Santissima Annunziata was restored during a four-year conservation effort. In the same church: the restoration of Giambologna's bronze Crucifixion in the chapel of the *Madonna del Soccorso*, along with the six bronze reliefs with scenes from the Passion of the Christ and the entire Chapel of San Luca, which has just been inaugurated.
Since contributing to the restoration in 2004 of Michelangelo's *David,* the *Prisoners*, and numerous other artworks at the Accademia, Friends of Florence continues to support projects by Michelangelo including the recent project for the *Pietà* in the Opera del Duomo Museum and two projects in Casa Buonarroti.
Friends of Florence recently restored the entire Capponi Chapel with its iconic Pontormo masterworks. For the millennial anniversary of the founding of the San Miniato a Monte church overlooking the city, the main altar was completely restored in 2018 and the conservation of the entire Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal soon followed. We are now engaged in the restoration of the apse mosaics of this important church.
Major restoration projects have also been completed in many other churches in Florence including Santa Croce, San Lorenzo, Santo Spirito, and Santa Felicita and in numerous museums including the Horne Museum, the National Archeological Museum, Museum of San Marco, Palazzo Vecchio, the Bargello, and the Prado Museum in Madrid.
Currently the Foundation has more than twenty restorations under way in the city of Florence, in Volterra, Pistoia and other locations.
As the Foundation's president and co-founder, I have been a resident of Florence since the 1970s, and wished to establish the Foundation as a way to share my love for the city and its extraordinary collection of art and architecture and to address urgent needs for cultural preservation. The Foundation is guided by an international Board of Trustees, a Council of Academic Advisors, and the Council for the Future, that offers opportunities for engagement to young, emerging leaders in preservation and cultural realities.
The importance of international cooperation in the world is ever so urgent today as we witness destruction of important historic and cultural sites and treasures in many parts of the globe. Laws must be passed to protect the unreplaceable artistic treasures that form part of our very own DNA for each and every one of us.
This testament to human achievements cannot be damaged or put in peril for our future generations.
I sincerely hope that this conference and the published proceedings will shine a light on a valid dialogue and understanding to achieve international cooperation.

Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda
President of Friends of Florence