

## Bugiardini Powerpoint Presentation Text

### **From Florence to Bologna: examination and treatment of Giuliano Bugiardini's *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist***

#### **SLIDE 1**

Giuliano Bugiardini's *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist*, part of the Samuel H. Kress collection at the Allentown Art Museum, is among the artist's best known works, most of which depict the Virgin and Christ Child with the infant Saint John the Baptist. Although a prolific artist, Bugiardini's creative process has not been studied. Recent technical examination and restoration of the painting by Nica Gutman Rieppi, Associate Conservator for the Samuel H. Kress Program in Paintings Conservation, provided an opportunity to observe some of the artist's painting techniques, to identify some of his materials, and to gain a better understanding of his studio practice. During the initial visual examination of the painting, brushwork unrelated to the final image was observed prompting a more detailed investigation using a variety of analyses including stereomicrography, x-radiography, infrared reflectography, cross-section examination and fiber optics reflectance spectroscopy. Various changes in the composition, made both in the preparatory drawing stage and during the build-up of the paint layers were revealed. Comparison with his earlier painting of the same subject, the *Madonna and Child with Saint John* at the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, helps us better understand the changes identified in the Allentown painting and illustrates the artist's formal evolution.

#### **SLIDE 2**

An Italian painter and draughtsman, Giuliano Bugiardini (b. 1475 d. 1574) was associated with the 16th c. Florentine Mannerist style of painting. Born Giuliano di Piero di Simone Bugiardini, he was also known as Giuliano di Piero di Simone. According to the 16th-century biographer and artist Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), Bugiardini first studied with the sculptor, Bertoldo di Giovanni, and began his training in painting as an apprentice in the studio of Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449 – 1494). It was in Ghirlandaio's studio that Bugiardini was introduced to Michelangelo (1475 – 1564), whom he assisted on the frescos of the Sistine Chapel ceiling. While his early work reflects the style of his master, his mature work was strongly influenced by Mariotto Albertinelli (1475-1515), whom he met through the artists' guild, the *Compagnia di San Luca*, and with whom he shared a studio from 1503 until 1509, when Albertinelli joined the workshop of Fra Bartolommeo (Baccio della Porta, 1472 – 1517).

#### **SLIDE 3**

Bugiardini's *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist* (Allentown Art Museum) shows the artist's awareness of the Florentine works of Raphael (1483 – 1520), in particular, the subject matter and iconography of Raphael's *The Holy Family with a Palm Tree* (1506) (at the bottom left), and the pyramidal composition of Raphael's *Esterhazy Madonna* (1508) at the bottom right.

The *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist*, which was purchased by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1931 and given to the Allentown Art Museum in 1960, was for many years erroneously documented as an early work in Bugiardini's *oeuvre*. Signed in gold with an elegantly abbreviated signature, "IVL.FL.F." (*Julianus Florentinus Fecit*), but not dated, it was believed to have been painted around 1510, not long after Raphael's *The Holy Family with a Palm Tree* and the unfinished *Esterhazy Madonna* in Budapest.

#### SLIDE 4

Consequently the *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist*, in the *Galleria dell' Accademia* in Florence, which is fully signed and dated, “*JULIANUS FLORENTINUS FACIEBAT 1520*,” was considered an elaboration of the subject of the Allentown painting, revisited by the artist a decade later. However, recently discovered 17th century archival material has identified the Allentown painting in the Oratory of the Church of Santa Maria di Galliera in Bologna, indicating that it was painted during the artist’s Bolognese sojourn, between 1523 and 1525, and thus, the later of the two paintings.

#### SLIDE 5

The earliest known mention of the Allentown painting was by the 17th century historian A. Masini in 1650 as, “a small painting which decorates the altar of the Oratory [of Santa Maria di Galliera].” The painting was still in the Oratory in 1803 when it was published in a guidebook of Bologna. In his travel diaries, the dealer and art historian Otto Mundler, noted that the painting was being offered for sale during his visit to Bologna on September 17, 1857, “Palazzo Aldovadi contains some pictures for sale...Madonna di Gallier a picture recently discovered, Virgin and Child with S. John the Baptist. The infant child is breaking a fruit from a palm tree; S. John is extending his hands toward it. The figures are 2/3 size of life. -2 f. 8 ½ in. w. 3 f. 8 in. h. w ... The picture has been recently restored. – For sale, but a large price demanded- Marked IVL.FL.F (the well known signature of Giulio Bugiardini).” Otto Mundler was appointed by Sir Charles Eastlake, Director of the National Gallery of Art in London, to investigate new acquisitions. Perhaps based on Mundler’s advice, Eastlake considered purchasing the painting in 1862, but ultimately did not. Sir Charles wrote: “The head of the infant C(hrist) is so placed under a palm tree that the tree seems part of it—This might be rectified by making the gilding of the nimbus a little more conspicuous—the hair might also be brought down an inch & half on the forehead & the top of the head reduced—the nimbus would then also require to be brought lower. The same defect (too much forehead & skull) is observable in the little St. John & might be rectified—his body is also a little too thick”. Eastlake’s comments reveal a common 19<sup>th</sup> century attitude wherein the “improvement” of paintings is regarded as entirely legitimate. It is unclear whether the painting was sold around that time or returned to the Oratory. At an unknown date, and for an undetermined period of time, the painting was exhibited in the Pinacoteca dell’Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna, and included in the Pinacoteca’s 1876 catalogue: “Madonna and Child with Saint John signed ‘IVL.FL.F,’ provenance, Oratory of the Church of Santa Maria Galliera.” The painting had not appeared in previous catalogues nor was it present in subsequent ones. Based on the catalogue’s description of the signature, the reference in Otto Mundler’s travel diaries, as well as a reference by the nineteenth century art historian, Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, who in 1866 referred to the painting in the oratory of Santa Maria di Galliera as having the same subject as the version in Florence, it seems certain that the Allentown painting was in Bologna.

#### SLIDE 6

##### Panel Preparation

The painting is on a wood panel support, possibly poplar, which was thinned and **cradled** by Stephen Pichetto in 1932, shortly after the painting entered the Kress collection. The cradle, seen on the reverse, comprises criss-crossed wood battens. The battens parallel to the grain, in this case the vertical battens, are adhered to the panel wood. The transverse ones are free, passing through slots cut in the vertical battens. The cradle was an early restoration device attempting to reinforce the panel and prevent it from warping.

### SLIDE 7

The panel preparation is characterized by vertical white lines, plainly visible in the recent **x-radiograph**, which occur randomly along the vertical grain of the wood. Areas of exposed wood on the reverse did not shed any light on the origin of these vertical lines.

### SLIDE 8

These same radio-opaque lines appear in an early **shadowgraph** taken by Alan Burroughs before the 1932 restoration, i.e., before the panel was thinned and the cradle applied, proving that they are not a later, restorer's repair applied to the reverse, but represent an original artist's material applied to the front of the wood panel as part of the preparation. Prominent vertical cracks in the surface of the painting correspond with the outer edges of the anomalous striations.

### SLIDE 9

Although the materials used for the ground in the Allentown panel are fairly traditional, with **gesso** as the first layer, followed by a thin *imprimitura* of lead white, a commonly found preparation in this period, this doesn't explain the odd striations seen in the x-radiographs. The lead white *imprimitura* was rapidly applied in horizontal brushstrokes, and is clearly distinguishable from the vertical lines of the radio-opaque striations. There are several possible explanations. The panel may already have had wide cracks along the vertical grain that were filled with a lead based material before the application of the gesso. Alternatively, a previously prepared panel, with the gesso already cracked, may have been used, the cracks filled with a lead-containing material, and sanded prior to the application of the *imprimitura*.

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The x-radiograph detail of the Madonna's proper left shoulder, on the top left, reveals white dots in the areas associated with the striations, suggesting the presence of lead soaps. The photomicrograph of the Madonna's red robe, seen at the bottom left, shows an area of paint corresponding to one of the vertical radio-opaque white lines seen in the x-ray image. The dark spots may also represent lead soap aggregates that have migrated to the surface from the underlying lead-containing filling material.

This repair of faulty panels or grounds, done in the artist's studio, may be a fairly common practice.

### SLIDE 11

#### Underdrawing

To further understand Bugiardini's working methods, the painting was examined with **infrared reflectography**, which revealed an extensive preparatory **underdrawing** for all three painted figures as well as the landscape and palm tree. The infrared digital composite detail of the Madonna's torso, seen here, also provided important information about the artist's painting process and what the painting may have looked like during these various stages.

### SLIDE 12

Study of the drawn lines with both infrared reflectography and stereomicroscopic examination suggests the use of a dry, black-colored drawing medium, possibly charcoal, applied directly to the lead white *imprimitura*. On the right is a photomicrograph of abrasion of the pink flesh-tone paint of St. John's raised hand, which reveals the black colored drawn line of the contour of the base of St. John's thumb. The quality of the line and the presence of discreet small black particles of material suggest that the underdrawing medium was dry (as opposed to a liquid medium, such as ink or paint, which exhibit very different visual properties).

### SLIDE 13

#### Design Transfer

The nature and quality of the drawn lines suggests two different types of underdrawing, one that results from a design transfer, likely from a **cartoon**, and another that appears to be a freehand sketch. The even weight of the drawn lines and the schematic nature of the contours and details within forms, suggest that cartoons may have been used for the figures of both the children and for the Madonna's torso and arms. As the two Allentown children are identical in scale and pose to those in the earlier Florentine painting, it is likely that the same cartoon was used. This re-use of cartoons in the artist's workshop, as well as the sharing of cartoons between different artists and their studios, is common in Renaissance and early modern painting.

### SLIDE 14

The underdrawing for the robes of the Allentown Madonna is different from the painted images of both the Allentown and Florentine versions, with a distinct style for the sleeve and placement of the mantle. The underdrawn mantle is similar to that in the Florentine painting, draping diagonally across her torso; however, unlike the Florentine painting, it wraps more tightly around the Madonna's waist. The Allentown Madonna's body is turned more toward the Christ Child, with her proper right shoulder positioned further to the right, her neckline higher, her extended proper right arm lowered, and her fingers raised.

### SLIDE 15

In the initial drawing her body was more foreshortened, with her knees placed much higher. The nature of the underdrawing for the Allentown Madonna suggests the use of a cartoon. The similarities of the underdrawn image to the Florence painting imply that the same cartoons may have been used for both paintings

### SLIDE 16

However, there are enough deviations to make us wonder whether the cartoon was originally made for another, earlier painting (either lost or never completed) and re-used for both the Florence and Allentown paintings, with changes made during the painting stages of both works. As many of Bugiardini's paintings incorporate elements from earlier works, especially in his large series of paintings depicting the Madonna, the Christ Child and St. John, Bugiardini must have kept and re-used cartoons in his studio, and appears to have brought some of them with him during his brief stay in Bologna. Infrared examination of the Florence painting would provide further insight to Bugiardini's use of cartoons.

### SLIDE 17

#### Drawing from Life

While the schematic nature and quality of the underdrawn lines for the Madonna's robe and the two child figures suggest the use of design transfer, likely using cartoons, a very different, loosely sketched underdrawing is found in the landscape, the palm tree and the Madonna's head, suggesting a more freehand application. The underdrawing for the Madonna's head is not worked up in detail but consists of rapidly sketched strokes marking the general shape and placement of the head and basic facial features.

### SLIDE 18

A rare surviving sketch of a female head by Bugiardini, today in the collection of the Department of Graphic Arts at the Louvre, bears striking similarity to the Allentown Madonna. This highly finished drawing is larger in size than both the underdrawn and painted heads of the Allentown Madonna, and could thus not have served as a cartoon for the painting, but, rather, most likely functioned as a preparatory study. Due to Bugiardini's re-use of cartoons to transfer the design, facial features depicted in his multi-figural paintings often appear somewhat generic and conventional. The particular upward slant of the eyes and the expression of serene contemplation seen both in the preparatory drawing in the Louvre and the Allentown painting, appear more specific and akin to a portrait, perhaps drawn from a live model. Although Bugiardini often borrowed figures to compose his paintings, Giorgio Vasari's brief description of the artist's stay in Bologna supports such studio practice: "...having been drawn to Bologna by certain friends, he executed some portraits from life, and, for a chapel in the new choir of S. Francesco, an altar-piece in oils containing Our Lady and two Saints, which was held at that time in Bologna, from there not being many masters there, to be a good work and worthy of praise."

### SLIDE 19

#### Artist's changes

Examination with infrared reflectography reveals that Bugiardini changed his mind several times while painting. In particular, he radically rethought the Madonna's pose and positioning of her mantle. The digital infrared composite detail of the Madonna's torso, upper left, shows the underdrawn lines mapped in red and the early lay-in of paint for the mantle and finger positioning, mapped in blue. (blue).

The detail of the Madonna's torso photographed in specular light, seen at the bottom left, reveals the texture of the early painting of the blue mantle, most noticeable in the area to the upper right of St. John's head.

### SLIDE 20

This digital infrared composite detail of the Madonna's torso shows the underdrawn lines mapped in red, the early lay-in of paint for the mantle and finger positioning mapped in blue, and the final changes seen in the painting mapped in green. In the completed painting, the mantle no longer falls across the Madonna's waist but rather covers her entire proper right side, from just below the waist, tightly encircling her body. While the mantle still continues to drape back over her proper left shoulder, additional painted folds and fabric were added to cover part of her proper left arm, creating a greater sense of movement and better balance to the composition. Additionally, in a later stage of painting, the Madonna's posture was shifted, leaning less toward the Christ Child.

### SLIDE 21

This is evidenced by a *pentimento* of the landscape which extends underneath the red paint of the Madonna's proper right shoulder. The pentimento, indicated on the left with white arrows, can be seen with the naked eye, as seen in the detail photograph on the left and in the x-ray shadowgraph on the right. In the x-ray, the more radio opaque paint of the landscape and sky is seen underneath part of the less radio opaque painted of the red robe. The red dashed line indicates the contour of the Madonna's shoulder.

### SLIDE 22

Unlike the Florence painting with the Madonna's red sleeve pushed up to her elbow, the sleeve in the Allentown painting extends below her elbow, emphasizing the downward direction of her

gaze and establishing a central focal point between the two children. Although the Madonna's head was painted slightly larger than the underdrawn head, she was always conceived with her head tilted downward as no changes were made to the Madonna's face or to the angle of her head. With her downward gaze and the shift in her posture, the Virgin more effectively interacts with both children, reinforcing her symbolism as mediatrix between her Son and mankind. The changes made during the painting stages ultimately shift the painting away from the Florence Accademia version and towards a Raphaelesque model.

### SLIDE 23

#### Painting Technique- Sky

After the underdrawing was applied on top of the upper lead white *imprimitura*, the painting of the sky was begun, before the execution of the figures. The sky was built up in multiple layers, starting with an application of bright pink oil paint applied overall to the area of the sky and worked around a reserve left for the Madonna's figure.

### SLIDE 24

The x-radiograph detail of the sky to the left of the Madonna's face shows the horizontal application of the radio opaque lead white containing pink underlayer. Brush strokes can be seen worked up to the edge of a reserve left for the later painting of the Madonna's head and chest.

The photomicrograph of the top left edge of the painting, seen at the bottom right, reveals that this lay-in of pink paint was thickly applied in horizontal brush strokes, imparting a strong texture left visible in the final painted image. The area of the sky was further built up with subsequent thin applications of more dilute light blue oil paint layers, the lowermost likely containing azurite and the uppermost likely containing ultramarine. The pink underlayer, combined with additional later touches of pink in the clouds and the horizon line creates an overall warm glow contrasting with the cooler blue paint of the sky.

### SLIDE 25

#### Layering of Blues

The particular balance and contrast of warm and cool colors seen throughout the painting appears to be an effect the artist strove for from the inception of the painting process, as evidenced by the particular paint layering system. As is seen in the layering of the light blue sky, an under lying warmth is also echoed in the Madonna's blue mantle which was entirely underpainted with a bright red paint layer. This particular layering structure is not a result of the artist's changes made during the painting process as the red underpaint is present under the areas of the blue mantle that do not extend over the earlier or final painted versions of the Madonna's red robe. Stereomicroscopic examination of the wide **drying cracks** present throughout the blue mantle, especially in the darker blue shadows, reveal the underlying red paint. The red underpaint paint can be seen in drying cracks in the blue paint of the mantle, top left slide, and along the edge of the robe and within the interstices of cracks, as seen on the bottom left.

### SLIDE 26

A **cross-section** was made of a minute sample taken from the lighter blue outer lining of the mantle. The cross-section, seen in visible light on the top right and in ultra violet light on the bottom right, shows the paint stratigraphy of the mantle, with the red paint underlayer, comprising a mixture of vermilion and red lake pigments, applied on top of the lead white upper ground layer. A thick, medium-rich, blue paint layer containing azurite and lead white

pigment particles was painted on top of the red layer, followed by a thin lighter blue paint layer containing ultramarine and lead white pigments. The pinkish fluorescence of the uppermost blue layer, seen under **ultra violet light**, suggests the presence of a lake pigment. The lack of a defined interface between the underlying red layer and the blue azurite containing layer above it suggests that the red layer was still somewhat wet when paint was applied over it. This, combined with the fact that the upper-lying azurite containing layer was particularly rich in medium, likely attributes to the wide drying craquelure.

#### SLIDE 27

##### Madonna's red robe

A cross-section sampled from a shadow of the Madonna's red robe reveals an initial lay in of bright red paint containing vermilion and translucent red particles, similar to the layer found under the blue paint of the mantle. A slightly cooler-toned, very resinous pink layer containing translucent red and lead white pigment particles was **scumbled** on top of the initial bright red layer, followed by a deep red translucent glaze. Examination of the cross-section under ultraviolet light, on the bottom right, reveals a bright pink fluorescence in the uppermost layer, and to a lesser degree in the underlying layer as well, which is often characteristic of lake pigments. Unlike the cross-section of the blue mantle, there is a defined interface between the initial red paint layer and the upper resinous pink layer, suggesting that more time had passed before the red layer was painted over.

#### SLIDE 28

Some pigments were identified by Dr. John Delaney and Dr. Paola Ricciardi of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., using a non-destructive technique called Fiber Optics Reflectance Spectroscopy (FORS). The green dots mapped on the photograph on the left note the areas of the painting analyzed. Because this technique takes a reading from the upper surface of the paint layers, it was not possible to determine exactly where these pigments are found in the paint layering structure. Further scientific analysis of the paint cross-sections could provide such information.

#### SLIDE 29

##### Treatment

When the painting was brought to the Conservation Center, the varnish was extremely discolored, and some of the old retouches from past restoration had blanched, especially those in the sky. The discoloration of the varnish was particularly disfiguring as it imparted an overall yellow tonality to the image, most noticeable in the blue sky. After thorough examination of the painting and spot testing of the varnish and paint layers, cleaning of the painting was carried out.

#### SLIDE 30

With the careful removal of the varnish layers, the juxtaposition and balance of cool and warm hues was restored, seen, for example, in the contrast between the bright blue sky and the warm pinkish glow of the horizon.

#### SLIDE 31

Additionally, the pinkish red of the Madonna's robe is now offset by the bright green of the middle ground landscape, more effectively situating the figure in the foreground and creating a greater depth of the landscape.

#### SLIDE 32

The artist's brushwork and paint handling are also more evident after the cleaning, revealing the artist's technique of contrasting paint textures. This is beautifully displayed in the Madonna's flesh tones, which were underpainted with a warm pink textured paint, on top of

which cooler highlights and shadows were thinly **scumbled** with a more dilute paint. The pink paint was applied rapidly with textured brush strokes while the upperlying fleshtone layers were more delicately applied, with a more fluid consistency. The texture and warm glow of the underlying pink layer can be seen in this detail of the Madonna's proper left eye. The detail of the Madonna's mouth shows the fluid, more dilute consistency of the thin upper flesh layers. The texture of the underlying pink layer can also be seen below her mouth.

### **SLIDE 33**

Acknowledgements