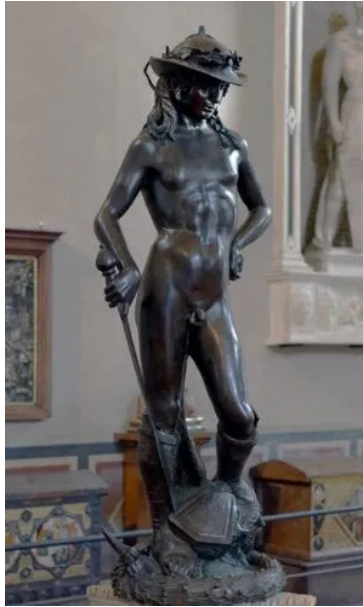


St David's Day Lecture, 1st March 2025
The Coxwell Room, Cirencester Baptist Church, GL7 1YE



Two Renaissance Giants

Donatello



Michelangelo



This talk celebrates St David's Day with a spot focus on two seminal works from the Italian Renaissance, namely Donatello's David of c.1440 and Michelangelo's David of 1501-4. Both sculptures focus on the biblical narrative from 1 Samuel 17 in the Old Testament, yet allegorically David became a symbol of fortitude for the Florentines in a secular sense. Donatello's early Renaissance David (now in the Bargello Museum) conceived in bronze was the first fully nude figure since antiquity. It was commissioned by that great patron of the arts Cosimo de Medici to adorn the garden of the Palazzo Medici in Florence. Among many other readings, David posing after the conquest could be seen as a symbol of Medici power; an object that reaffirms Cosimo's social and political authority as *de facto* ruler of Florence. David is also a powerful symbol for the city and Republic of Florence - of the victorious underdog versus the greater adversary, Milan. Michelangelo's High Renaissance David was commissioned by the Board of Directors of the Cathedral Works in 1501. Michelangelo was just 26 when he gained the commission to work on an abandoned and flawed block of Carrara marble which had already been worked on by two lesser-known sculptors. The intention was for the figure to be placed 80 metres above ground level on the north tribune of the Duomo in Florence, hence Michelangelo's use of optical compensation whereby he enlarged the hands and head. In 1504 Michelangelo's masterpiece was placed in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, only to be moved to the Accademia in 1873 and replaced with a replica. Michelangelo's colossus, standing at 17 feet tall and posing before combat, became a symbol of defiance against the Medici who had been expelled from the city in 1494. In fact, his stony gaze is pointedly directed towards Rome during the family's temporary exile there from Florence during Savonarola's ephemeral spell as virtual ruler of Florence (1494-5).



6:30pm Drinks and Canapés
7:30pm Lecture
8:30pm Close

Contact Linda Chan-Jones dsiascorinium@gmail.com for booking information