

The many visitors to the Accademia Gallery will now be able to see a modern and captivating interpretation of the *David* thanks to the Gallery's customary receptiveness to contemporary art. The sculpture by the architect Antonio Pio Saracino has been installed in the internal courtyard and, therefore, it stands just a few dozen meters away from Michelangelo's original.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Gallery's management team and to all the people who have contributed to the staging of this event, which has an undeniably international scope, in particular to the Embassy of Italy in Washington and GEM GROUP.

**Paola Grifoni**  
Regional Secretary for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Tuscany

*David*: such a strong symbol of Italian heritage, and now a Guardian of the friendship between our two countries. The year of Italian Culture in the U.S. couldn't have left a better legacy.

**Claudio Bisogniero**  
Ambassador of Italy to the United States

Antonio Pio Saracino  
*Hero*, 2015  
Carrara marble, steel bars  
5.17 mt (height) x 1.78 x 1.14 mt  
Accademia Gallery, Florence

*Hero for Florence* is a new edition based on *Hero* at Three Bryant Park, New York, NY

Accademia Gallery, Florence  
Il luogo del David – *Leaflet no. 3*  
HERO FOR FLORENCE  
Homage to David:  
Saracino interprets Michelangelo  
May 5 – September 20, 2015

Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo



Segretariato Regionale del Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo della Toscana

Former Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze



Galleria dell'Accademia



Firenze Musei



Embassy of Italy Washington DC



Italy in U.S.



Global Emerging Markets Group – GEM



Pmg Italia



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Edition based on *Hero* installed at Three Bryant Park, New York, NY

Regional Secretary for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Tuscany  
**Paola Grifoni**

Administrative and HR Director of the Former SSPSAE e Polo Museale della città di Firenze  
**Silvia Sicurana**

Director of the Accademia Gallery  
**Angelo Tartuferi**

Curators  
**Angelo Tartuferi**  
**Renato Miracco**  
**Helen Varola**  
**Matteo Innocenti**

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Ambassador of Italy to the United States  
**Claudio Bisogniero**

Cultural Attaché, Embassy of Italy Washington DC  
**Renato Miracco**

Managing Director GEM GROUP  
**Peter de Svastich**

Curator and Scientific Director Pmg Italia  
**Matteo Innocenti**

Managing Director Pmg Italia  
**Anna Santucci**

Statue Production  
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Communication  
**Pmg Italia – Anna Santucci**

Press Office  
**Marco Ferri**  
**Opera Laboratori Fiorentini – Civita Group**



Accademia Gallery, Florence

# HERO for Florence



Homage to David:  
Saracino interprets Michelangelo

IL LUOGO DEL DAVID



Michelangelo Buonarroti  
*David*, 1501–1504  
Carrara marble  
mt 5.17 (height)  
Accademia Gallery, Florence



David - Hero

Numerous artists, in the broadest sense of the word (painters, engravers, sculptors, graphic designers, photographers and so on), have found the courage to take on Michelangelo's masterpiece with results that differ considerably from the grotesque to the heroic. As regards the reproduction of the sculpture for educational purposes, Clemente Papi's plaster cast (1847) is vitally important. It formed the basis for the "historic" casts now at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich, the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. During the twentieth century, the impact of Michelangelo's masterpiece on artists constituted an inexhaustible source for comparisons, re-examinations and interpretations as well as more or less explicit and/or partial deductions. There have also been copies in bronze, like the one the Municipality of Florence donated to the Chinese city of Ningbo in 2010. One of the most remarkable interpretations is definitely the work that the Turkish artist Serkan Özkaya presented at the Istanbul Biennial in 2005. It is a gilded polystyrene copy, precise in its proportions because it was made with a 3D program, but double the height of the original.

In 2012, for the exhibition *Arte torna Arte* (Art Returns to Art), a sculpture painted in fibreglass and marble dust with identical dimensions to the original was put on display in the courtyard of the Accademia Gallery. The work was by Hans-Peter Feldmann and it was painted by the students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence. The students made the *David* blonde with pink skin creating a decidedly kitsch effect. Antonio Pio Saracino has sculpted his work from the same pure white Carrara marble that Michelangelo used to make the *David*. His modern take on the sculpture has not been conceived for a museum or an art gallery but for an open public space, similar to the way in which Michelangelo conceived

his own work to be seen. The incomparable beauty of Michelangelo's sculpture has been transposed with a modern approach in an intelligent and original way through a captivating decomposition of mass on parallel planes of varying heights. It is quite easy to identify the sculpture with the *David*, especially as regards the contours and the unmistakable pose, in spite of the astonishing fragmentation of the shape compared to the unvarying classic equilibrium that renders Michelangelo's original vision sublime. The fragmentation instantly evokes the incessant volatility and instability of these times. We sincerely hope that *Hero*, through our modern eyes, can show us the values of liberty, justice and civic pride that Buonarroti's *David* embodied for Florentines at the height of the Renaissance.

The Accademia Gallery in Florence and the Italian Embassy in Washington are delighted to present Antonio Pio Saracino's work, which can be defined as one of the most intelligent, and in terms of workmanship, one of the most outstanding modern re-interpretations of a great icon of Western culture.

Angelo Tartuferi  
Director of the Accademia Gallery



The iconographic value of Michelangelo's *David* in all various interpretations throughout history becomes a symbol of multiple meanings. Antonio Pio Saracino's *Hero* draws inspiration from the *David* and becomes symbol of friendship between two countries. The Italian Embassy in DC has been promoting from long times those values. What underlies the very essence of *Hero* is the artist's understanding that the poetic-evocative language of a people is founded on the impulses of the primordial unconscious being, and that its logic is subordinated to deep human roots. The poetic side, be it in a sculpture or in painting, is based on the attempt to achieve the purest contact possible with what Jung called the "primordial collective unconscious". Culture is expression and the cultural expression is the value of humanity. This value represented by the *David* goes beyond history and its meaning is part of our daily life and our collective global imagination.

Renato Miracco  
Cultural Attaché, Embassy of Italy Washington DC

GEM (Global Emerging Markets) is very proud to be involved with this wonderful art project that unites the timeless qualities of one of the great works of art in Western civilization (Michelangelo's *David*) with a brilliant modern sculpture that echoes the finest traditions of Italian craftsmanship and blends them with a more contemporary artistic vision. GEM considers it an honor to have worked with Antonio Pio Saracino, the Italian Embassy in Washington DC, the Accademia Gallery and the Curators of this amazing art collection that surrounds this unique venue.

Peter de Svastich  
Managing Director GEM GROUP

Saracino's new edition of *Hero* nods to Michelangelo's *David*, defender of the city of Florence as a contemporary civic champion who offers protection and surveillance, and also suggests a long history of vulnerability spanning centuries, politics and cultures.

Helen Varola  
Curator, *Hero*, New York

Hero at the Accademia Gallery in Florence, the Power of the Present

Antonio Pio Saracino's interpretation of Michelangelo's *David* takes on a connotation in Florence that I would define as "philological". Tackling such a meaningful paradigm in the city where the sculpture was made and has always lived is tantamount to both a challenge and an act of generosity. The challenge comes in the form of the peculiarity of Saracino's artistic research, which the artist uses to focus upon and analyze some of his more formal ideals through a respectful and tangible comparison with a masterpiece. Attempting to bring the *David's* classical nature into the present is an act of generosity because it means the artist firmly believes in the power of contemporary art and wants to transmit this belief to others.

Matteo Innocenti  
Curator and Scientific Director Pmg Italia

Pmg Italia has promoted and supported *Hero* for Florence due to our great capacity to project our minds towards a sphere that does not forget the excellence of our past. We believe that contemporary art can connect with traditional paradigms and open our minds to new impressions, just as Saracino has demonstrated through his extraordinary reinterpretation of Michelangelo's masterpiece.

Anna Santucci  
Managing Director Pmg Italia



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*Hero*, a public sculpture at Three Bryant Park, New York, was commissioned in 2013 as a gift by the Italian government and Eni to symbolize friendship between Italy and the United States. I never would have expected, two years later, to receive the great honor to see a new edition of *Hero* in the Accademia Gallery of Florence, in the same place as Michelangelo's *David*.

With the New York *Hero*, I wanted to create a symbolic protector of New York City, as *David* was intended as protector of Florence. The statue celebrates the superhuman and the inspiration that it channels. The anthropomorphic layered architectural constructions display the universal ability of mankind to cement its own presence in the world with its perennial construction skills.

Antonio Pio Saracino

Antonio Pio Saracino is a New York-based Designer and Italian Architect. Saracino has designed buildings, monuments and products. His work is in museum collections internationally including the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Art and Design in New York City and the Power-House Museum in Sydney. He participated in the 54th edition of the Venice Biennale and has won numerous awards among which are two American Architecture Awards from the Chicago Museum of Architecture and a Best of the Year Award from Interior Design magazine. He was named one of the world's 25 most interesting trendsetters by ARTnews magazine and recognized as one of the Top Ten Italian Architects under 36 by the New Italian Blood Award. Saracino has exhibited his design work with Industry Gallery in Washington DC, Los Angeles and Dubai, as well as other galleries and museums internationally.

His work has been reviewed internationally in publications such as The New York Times, Architectural Digest, Interior Design, Wallpaper\*. Vogue named Saracino "among the most prolific Italian designers abroad." Among Saracino's recent and past public projects are GATE 150 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy for the Caraffa Museum in Cordoba Argentina and the MuBE Museum in Sao Paulo, Brazil; in 2007 as winner of Brussel's Agorafolly competition, a public installation to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the European Union. In 2013, in New York, Saracino designed The Guardians: Hero and Superhero, two 13-foot-tall sculptures, one in marble, the other in stainless steel, which sit at the entrance to Midtown Manhattan's Bryant Park and will remain on view indefinitely. In 2015 he was invited to design with Steve Blatz the Black Hole a pavilion for design week Milan in the courtyard of the Università degli Studi di Milano.

In 2003, Saracino graduated cum laude with a Master's Degree in Architecture at the Università La Sapienza in Rome, where he worked as assistant professor of architectural design.



Antonio Pio Saracino  
*Hero*, 2013  
4 mt (height) x 1.2 x 0.85 mt  
Three Bryant Park, New York, NY