

Gilded Venetian ceiling glitters once again



VENICE. The New York- and Venice-based non-profit organisation Save Venice has completed the restoration of the 15th-century carved wooden ceiling of the Sala dell'Albergo in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice. The project coincides with the renovation of the gallery.

The Sala dell'Albergo, the former boardroom and repository of registers and reliquaries of the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Carità—one of the oldest confraternities in the city—was split into a lower and upper space at the end of the

15th century. In 1482, the Council of Ten granted 200 ducats for the creation of the ceiling, featuring bas reliefs of Christ and the four evangelists in *tondi*, all decorated in gold, and, as revealed during the restoration, azurite. Restorer Roberto Saccuman, under the direction of Matteo Ceriani from the Superintendency of Fine Arts and State Museums of Venice, consolidated the ceiling carvings and treated the 15th-century spiral wooden staircase. The bas reliefs have been removed from the ceiling and are on display on the ground

floor of the Sala. They will be remounted in May 2012.

Save Venice is also funding the restoration of another of the room's masterpieces, Titian's *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, 1534-38. Restoration work on Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna's 1446 triptych, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints*, is now complete. The room's reliquary cross, donated by Cardinal Bessarione in 1470, is undergoing restoration at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure with the support of Banca Intesa. ■ Lidia Panzeri