Opening at the Currier Museum of Art in mid-October is *Myth and Faith in Renaissance Florence*. This one-of-a-kind exhibition will explore the role of the ancient world in shaping the art of Montorsoli, a key member of Michelangelo’s inner circle and more broadly of Renaissance Florence, while unraveling the complex iconography of Florence’s patron saint, John the Baptist.

*Myth and Faith in Renaissance Florence* unveils a recently discovered masterpiece of Renaissance sculpture acquired by the Currier Museum last year. The terracotta sculpture appears to combine features of John the Baptist with those of the ancient god of war, Mars. As Christianity spread across the peninsula, the Baptist supplanted the god of war as the official protector of the city of Florence. And in times of political crisis, the hybrid image made John the Baptist more assertive and militaristic. Broader representations of John the Baptist reflect how Renaissance artists responded to a wide range of social and political factors by creating richly complex works of art.

Three main themes will be emphasized in *Myth and Faith in Renaissance Florence*: Montorsoli’s dynamic role in enhancing depictions of John the Baptist in Florence; the restoration of ancient Roman sculptures that changed the course of Renaissance art; and the flourishing of Michelangelo’s style through his followers. Key loans of objects from museums and private collections throughout the United States and Italy will support this narrative, providing greater understanding of the issues shaping Renaissance art and beyond.

The exhibition works and related programming should spark interest among people of all ages and walks of life. Considering the painted and sculpted representations of the Baptist, among other significant figures that will be highlighted, *Myth and Faith* will dimensionalize and inspire dialogue about varied themes in 16th century Florentine life as compared to themes found in contemporary culture. Such topics include heroism, gender, and creative expression. The ‘everyday’ also will be explored through a study of the objects, symbols, and motifs associated with the imagery of John the Baptist. The galleries of the Currier will animate these elements through the experience of 3D modeling and art-making. Specially-themed ARTalks, educator, and family guides, and other outreach initiatives will examine the materials and tools used by some of the artists featured in the exhibition, alongside figurative sculpture classes for youth and adults alike.

Opening the ambitious exhibition will be a weekend of special events, October 13-14. A comprehensive one-day symposium, led by art history scholars from around the world, will focus on the transformation of Italian sculpture in the 16th century and the social, political, and spiritual context in Renaissance Florence. The dynamic weekend will culminate with a concert by the renowned, Boston-based, early music group, Il Furioso, “L’Aria di Fiorenza.” Drawn from songbooks used by courtly singers, the personal lute books of amateur Florentine musicians, Machiavelli poetry, and Medici ceremonial and court music heard at the Palazzo Pitti, the program will provide a panorama of Florentine music from the period of Giovanni Montorsoli’s John the Baptist (1530s) to the Florentine ‘new’ music of the early 17th century.

To help bring Giovan Angelo Montorsoli, John the Baptist, and Renaissance Florence to life, we graciously ask that you consider helping to underwrite *Myth and Faith in Renaissance Florence*. A gift of $10,000 would go a long way toward presenting this important exhibition to people throughout our region, while offering new insight into Renaissance art, and the corresponding ancient and contemporary narrative surrounding Montorsoli, the Baptist, and the Florentine context in its many forms.
Myth and Faith in Renaissance Florence:  
The Sculpture of Giovan Angelo Montorsoli and His Circle  
October 13, 2018 to January 21, 2019

Giovan Angelo Montorsoli, John the Baptist, 1530s. Terracotta, wood. 51 1/8 x 19 ½ x 13 ¾ in. Museum Purchase; The Ed and Mary Scheier Acquisition Fund and the Kimon S. Zachos Acquisition Fund.

Andrea del Sarto, John the Baptist, around 1517, oil on wood, transferred to canvas, Worcester Art Museum.

Giovan Francesco Susini, John the Baptist, around 1635, marble, National Gallery of Art, Washington.