

Type of Object: Mural paintings (*affreschi*)  
Support: Plastered Walls

Subject: **Mythical Figure, Romanticized Landscapes and cherubs**

Author: Unknown

Owners of Property: Family Becheroni-Balloni

Date: Probably 15th to early 16th Century

Original Location: Villa '*La Ragnaia*', Carraia, Comune di Calenzano, FI, Italy

Present Location: Ibid.

Dimensions: **The room is 3.80 m. wide, 3.75 m. deep and 3.40 m. high**

Owners of Property: Family Becheroni-Balloni

Support: Plastered Walls

Restorers: Prof. Lorenzo Casamenti, Assistant Lisa Pastore, Jennifer Tobits, Sara Kalinoski,  
Nikki Nita, Giovanna Raffa, Johanna Schwabl, Mackenzie Fairchild, London  
Rideaux, Dany Filio

### **Iconographic Research:**

There are no official documents on the mural paintings and there is no information available on the artwork or the artist. This means that there is little historical and iconographical information. However, the theme of the fresco provides us the date that these murals might have been painted, during the 15th to early 16th Century.

The ceiling painting was not done in the *grotesque style* but there are certain aspects that make it similar such as mythical figures, stylistic and geometric forms and the fantasy like landscapes. One of the mythical figures, the cherubs, are floating across the vaulted ceiling and behind them is a blue and pink sky with clouds. There is also a naked woman in the middle of the ceiling that could either be a Roman goddess or muse. On both opposing walls there are romanticized landscapes with ruins, overgrown vegetation and framed by curling vines and geometric decorations.

**Abstract:**

The fresco on the vaulted ceiling of the second room on the second floor is at its final stage of intervention which consists of aesthetic restoration. The ceiling fresco is still severely damaged from being white washed. The ceiling painting and other wall paintings in the villa were uncovered in previous intervention which also included cleaning and consolidation of the walls and fresco paintings.

The aesthetic restoration of the ceiling painting is done by using a traditional restoration technique that will not disregard the historical context of the fresco painting. This technique requires the use of water colors and clean water. The colors that are used when retouching the fresco are one tone lighter from the original color. If the wrong color is used when retouching, the fresco can easily be removed with water. Also no white pigment will be used because it will make the missing parts of the fresco look opaque. The colors need to be transparent and help the eye see the whole picture.

Some retouching has been done on the ceiling painting by past students of the Institute Lorenzo de'Medici, who were supervised by professor Lorenzo Casamenti and his assistant Lisa Pastore.

**The Process:**

The wall paintings were whitewashed and wherever there were large parts missing they were filled in with plaster. Some of the wall paintings were varnished in the past but there is no record of previous restoration. Most of the paintings are missing large amounts of color layer and intonaco layer.

The previous intervention by past students from the Institute Lorenzo de'Medici, was the removal of the white wash and varnish. The removal of the white wash was done by moistening the wall and then mechanically scraping the layer off with spatulas or scalpel. The varnish is then cleaned with cotton balls that are soaked in acetone.

The present intervention that was done on the ceiling painting is the aesthetic restoration which included retouching the bottom, geometric-patterned border and the sky. When doing this type of intervention, it can't disregard the historical context of the fresco painting. This is done by using watercolors and clean water and they need to be a tone lighter than the original color. This makes

the retouched parts of the fresco unnoticeable from the original colors by pushing it back so that it can better blend with the original design of the fresco. (See Doc 1 and 2)

The color that was used for the geometric pattern was a color that the Prof. Lorenzo Casamenti mixed for the other restores and it was a dark green, blue. This color is then watered down to a point, depending on what is missing each part that was being filled in. (See Doc. 1 and 2)



**Photos 1 and 2 to illustrate the application of color to reconstruct the pattern.**

For the sky, there were three colors: pink, lilac and light blue. These colors were very simple to make; only need to use a very watered down primary red and blue. These two watered down colors make the lilac color in the sky.