

Sculpted Heritage: Marble Works and Architectural Fragments at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Carrara

Academic Supervision

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Project Overview

Palazzo Cybo-Malaspina, the current seat of the **Accademia di Belle Arti di Carrara**, is one of the most significant sites for understanding the city's **artistic, educational, and cultural history**. Since its foundation in **1769**, the Academy has been the primary centre for artistic training and a vital hub for local, national, and international cultural life. These characteristics have consolidated its role not only as an institution of **Higher Artistic Education**, but also as a **custodian of the city's and region's artistic heritage**.

The Academy's holdings include an important collection of **marble works from different periods**: ancient marbles, primarily of Roman date; **medieval and Renaissance sculptures**, many originating from the **Cathedral of Sant'Andrea**; and works by prominent sculptors who have worked in Carrara. This collection developed thanks to bequests from **distinguished local families**—such as the **Del Medico, Sarteschi, and Lazzoni**—made in **September 1861**. Through these donations, **Palazzo Cybo-Malaspina** became the city's foremost centre for the preservation of artistic heritage.

The Palazzo is also of great **architectural interest**. Originally conceived as a **defensive structure in the early Middle Ages**, it later became one of the

residences of the Cybo-Malaspina family. These successive changes in use brought about significant expansions and alterations to the building's plan and structure, traces of which remain visible today in the surviving **capitals, bas-reliefs, vaults, furnishings, and commemorative plaques.** The building is therefore the product of a **stratification of interventions** extending into the early twentieth century, reflecting the evolving functional needs of each period.

This research and enhancement project is grounded in **historical and critical investigation**, focusing on a selection of artefacts that bear witness to the Academy's **rich collecting tradition**—serving both as study models for young artists and as evidence of its enduring role as the **city's conservation centre.**

Actions

- Conduct a **mapping survey** of the marble elements incorporated into the architectural structure of **Palazzo del Principe / Castello Cybo-Malaspina**, and a first identification of **sculptures, architectural marble artefacts, and commemorative plaques** that have not yet been inventoried, including those documented but now missing.
- Create an **inventory and relational catalogue** of artistic and decorative marble works connected to the various construction phases of the Palazzo, from the foundation of the medieval tower to the **renovation and restoration works** carried out between the **two World Wars.**
- In a subsequent phase, proceed with the **cataloguing of works not included in the ICCD OA records**, using the **expedited ministerial form (MIDV)** or another model agreed upon with the lead institution. The data will be entered into the **SIGeCWeb platform**, while a **small, selected group of records**—chosen for their **historical and documentary significance**—will be published in **enhanced form on the IartNET database.**