

# Hidden in Plain Sight

BY TIFFANY PARKS

Tourists and art lovers line up for hours outside the Vatican to see frescoes by Michelangelo and Raphael, book their tickets months in advance to gaze upon works by Caravaggio and Bernini at the Borghese Gallery, and scour the Capitoline Museums to study ancient Roman statuary. But these big-ticket sites aren't the only place to find important works of art. True masterpieces are hiding—all but unknown—in minor museums and unexplored churches all over Rome.

## ▣ **Raphael's Galatea ②**

This splendid fresco in Villa Farnesina, a small private museum in Trastevere, is a whirlwind of sea nymphs, tritons, and putti, all in movement. The twisting nude form of Galatea reveals Raphael's deep knowledge of the anatomy of the human body, as well as his influence by Michelangelo.

## ▣ **Michelangelo's Risen Christ**

Many tourists walk past Santa Maria sopra Minerva church near the Pantheon, but few venture inside to explore. Little do they know that a statue by Michelangelo is hiding within, to the left of the high altar. The marble sculpture depicts Christ holding the cross, standing in a *contrapposto* position that harkens back to the classical statues of antiquity.

## ▣ **Bramante's Tempietto**

Built in 1502, this miniscule shrine inside the courtyard of San Pietro In Montorio is an exquisite example of Renaissance architecture. It incorporates ideal proportions, pure lines, and uses the circular structure in an attempt to imagine the perfection of the divine.





### The Galatian Suicide ❸

This moving marble sculpture group at the National Roman Museum at Palazzo Altemps captures the dramatic moment after a conquered Gaul has stabbed his wife to save her from the vengeance of the enemy and is about to turn the knife on himself. Be sure to observe it from all sides.

### Caravaggio's Madonna of the Pilgrims

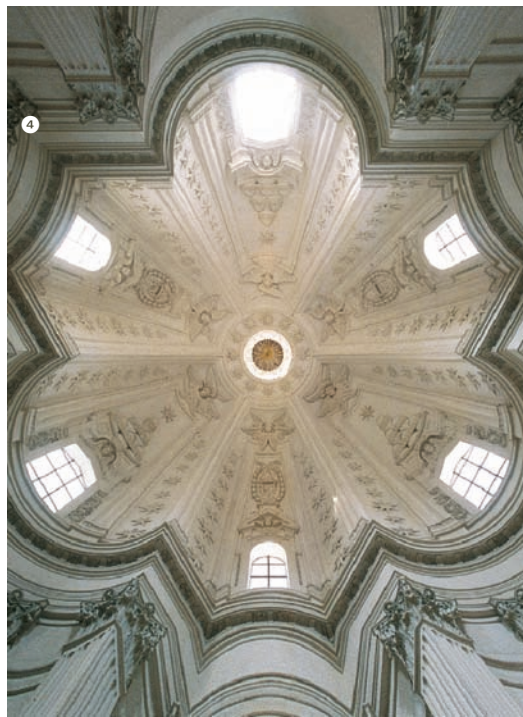
One of Caravaggio's most profound paintings can be found in the rarely visited church of Sant'Agostino. The Virgin greets two exhausted but awed pilgrims at her doorstep, an intimate and poignant encounter that depicts Mary as simultaneously human and divine.

### Bernini's Blessed Ludovica Albertoni ❹

Despite being a religious work, this marble sculpture located in San Francesco a Ripa church is the quintessence of religious passion. The work's subject is in the throes of spiritual ecstasy as she experiences a mystical communion with God.

### Shrine of San Zenone

Every inch of this tiny chapel inside Santa Prassede church is covered with spectacular Byzantine mosaics dating to the 9th century. The shimmering gold and brightly colored glass mosaics feature portraits of Christ, the pope, his successor, saints, and angels.



### Borromini's Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza ❹

The pinnacle of this exquisite church shakes up Rome's skyline of traditional domes with its distinctive spiraling steeple. Inside, the shape of the dome that, like the Star of David, consists of two superimposed triangles, is stunningly complex. The mesmerizing series of concave and convex undulations nevertheless results in perfect symmetry.

### The Garden of Livia ❶

This painted garden, which once adorned a room of the ancient Villa of Livia at Prima Porta, depicts a staggering 23 varieties of trees, fruits, plants, and flowers, and 69 species of birds. Upon their discovery in 1863, the frescoes were restored, painstakingly removed in sections, and transferred to the National Roman Museum at Palazzo Massimo.

### Oratory of San Silvestro

Dubbed the Sistine Chapel of the Middle Ages, this oratory within the Santi Quattro Coronati monastery was frescoed by anonymous artists (most likely of Venice extraction) in the 13th century. The remarkably well-preserved works provide a rare example of late medieval frescoes, considering the majority of Roman works from this period were destroyed to make way for later decorations.

## Where to Find Them

### ❶ Villa Farnesina

Via della Lungara, 230.

[villafarnesina.it](http://villafarnesina.it)

Open Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm. €6 (€3 reduced).

### ❷ Santa Maria sopra Minerva

Piazza della Minerva, 42.

[santamariasopraminerva.it](http://santamariasopraminerva.it)

Open Mon–Fri, 6:40am–7pm; Sat, 6:40am–12:30pm and 3:30–7pm; Sun, 8am–12:20pm and 3:30–7pm. Free.

### ❸ Bramante's Tempietto

Piazza di San Pietro in Montorio, 2. [sanpietroinmontorio.it](http://sanpietroinmontorio.it)

Open Tue–Sun, 10am–6pm. Free.

### ❹ National Roman Museum at Palazzo Altemps

Piazza Sant'Apollinare, 46/48.

Open Tue–Sun, 9am–7:45pm. €7 (€3.50 reduced).

### ❺ Sant'Agostino

Piazza di Sant'Agostino, 80.

Open daily, 7:30am–12pm and 4–7:30pm. Free.

### ❻ San Francesco a Ripa

Piazza di San Francesco d'Assisi, 88. Open daily, 7am–1pm and 2–7:30pm. Free.

### ❼ Santa Prassede

Via di Santa Prassede, 9a.

Open daily, 7:30am–12pm and 4–6:30pm. Free.

### ❶ Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza

Corso del Rinascimento, 40.

Open Sun, 9am–12pm. Free.

### ❷ National Roman Museum at Palazzo Massimo

Largo di Villa Peretti, 1.

Open Tue–Sun, 9am–7:45pm. €7 (€3.50 reduced).

### ❸ Santi Quattro Coronati

Via dei Santi Quattro, 20.

Open Mon–Sat, 10–11:45am and 4–5:45pm; Sun, 4–5:45pm. Free.