MAGNIFICENZA

FROM PAGE BI

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went on to influence all the
painters, sculptors, draftsmen.
Michelangelo had a great
impact on art the next 100
years.

Lush oils, magnificent porcelains and sculpture illustrate
the significant contributions as
well of the first four Grand
Dukes, who ruled Tuscany
from 1537 to 1631. Coslimo I,
his sons Francesco I and
Ferdinando I, and grandson
Cosimo II recognized the ability of the arts to paint a picture
of power. Originally a family of
bankers and merchants, the
Medici knew in order to maintain control over the citizens of
Tuscany they must be seen as
patrons of the arts. tain control over the citizens of Tuscany they must be seen as patrons of the arts. Commissions for new build-ings and the treasures to fill them kept artists and archi-tects profitably engaged. At the same time, opulen portraits of duchesses such as Eleonors of Toledo, Cosimo 1s wife, sym-bolized the wealth and domi-nance of the Medici dynasty.

PATROHAGE

"Even though the Medici reign began in the 1400s and lasted into the 17th century, we wanted to narrow it down, to show the birth of their patron-



The rise of Baroque painting can be seen in Cristofano Allori "Judith and Holofernes" from Palazzo Pitti,

age and through the most impressive period of the Medici dynaxty supporting the arts." Darr said. We anchored the show with Michelangelo. There are three sculptures including a crucifis, one of his last works. Michelangelo was elevated in his lifetime to a place of respect. He was celebrated as divine and teacher of all artists." As Darr walks through the 17 galleries one by one, the story of Late Renaissance Florence evolves. Bronzino, Vasari, Giambologna and Cellini were all major artists of the period. The first dramatically showcases the DIAs own magnificent painting of Eleonorn of Toledo against a burgundy

wall. Nine works from the collection are shown in the exhibit. One of the most impressive is a porcelain Euro-purchased in 2000.

Bronzino's Young Man with a Letter on the catalog cover shows influence of Michelangelo, Darr said.

There are 150 works.
Drawings rotate each venue.
We've got wonderful drawings.
Darr has arranged the galleries to cover subjects such as Cosimo I and his support of the arts, a form of propaganda he used to legitimize the family's rule. The signage in Gallery One tells the interesting story of his rise to power from the young age of 17.

Each of the galleries focuses on a specific area — sculptors and painters at the Medici Court, tapestry production, the waning of the Renaissance and rise of Baroque, and followers of Michelangelo.

FIRSTS

"Cosimo I and Michelangelo co-founded the First Academy of Art, where students were instructed to study drawings of Michelangelo," Darr said. The Medici reign saw a number of firsts. They were the first in Europe to refine techniques for porcelain production, the first to establish a major tapestry manufactory in Italy."

Paintings on copper, inlay work including a cabinet with drawer fronts featuring animals crufted from stone, and a moving painting of St. George and the Dragon are among the treasures created under the patronage of the Medici. During the Late Renaissance in Florence the family spent a fortune on paintings for the Studiolo of Francesco I — a vaulted room filled with art, and stunning sculptures of Hercules and Venus for the gardens at Medici Villa. Darr covers them all in the exhibition. Gallery 13 focuses on the story of Christine and Ferdinando. Here paintings tell of soccer games where teams were his and her colors, and a wedding celebration that lasted two weeks. A mock sea battle in a flooded street and a variety of banquets, bulls and theatical events brought costs for the royal nuptials to \$7 million in today's money.

Magnificenzal showcases

tials to 57 million in todays money. Magnificenza! showcases marvelous works too numerous to mention, including Michelangelos recently discovered drawing of a candelabra thought to be designed for a royal tomb. It will be unveiled Sunday, March 16, when the exhibit opens in Detroit. Until then, Darr's keeping the fragile work hidden from light.

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LECTURES

- Study Day and exhibition preview 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 15, in the Auditorium. For information, call (313) 833-1720
- 2 p.m. Sunday, March 16, in Auditorium, Cristina Acidini Luchinat, superintendent of Opificio delle Pietre Dure and Laboratori di Restauro in Florence, presents new research on cleaning of Michelangelo's David sculpture and Medici Chapel
- 2 p.m. Sunday, March 23. Shelley Perlove, art history professor at University of Michigan Dearborn, discusses Jacques Callot's drawings of the Medici court
- 📰 2 p.m. Sunday, April 6. William Wallace, chairman and professor of art history at Washington University. St. Louis, talks about Michelangelo and the challenges of writing a modern biography on the Renaissance artist
- 🔳 2 p.m. Sunday, May 18. Cristina Aschengreen Piacenti, director of Museo Stibbert in Florence, lectures on The Medici Grand Ducal Family: Court Jewelry and Symbols of Power

From small things... comes great power. WILLARD STARTS FRIDAY, MARCH 10 HANGIONU IN-





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Behind the scenes of Magnificenza

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN

STAFF WRITER
Visitors to Magnificenza might not realize the years of planning and work that goes into organizing an exhibit of

this scope.
Eleven days before the open-Eleven days before the open-ing, couriers streamed in one by one with pieces for the exhibit at the Detroit Institute of Arts. In the galleries crews installed sculpture and paint-ings amidst works waiting to be unpacked from large crates. Project director Alan Dar seemed calm in the midst of all the preparations. He'd begun

planning for this moment in 1995 with Marco Chiarini, former director of the Pitti Galler, in Florence. Together they approached the Art Institute of Chicago and Larry Feinberg, curator of European painting, who agreed to join the project to present Magnificenza! The Medici, Michelangelo and The Art of Late Renaissance Florence in Florence, tally, Chicago and Detroit. An exhibit of this scoperquires an enormous amount of funding. Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and National

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Endowment for the Arts made the exhibit possible, along with major sponsorship from Bank One Foundation, a natural fit since the Medici were bankers

before coming to power.

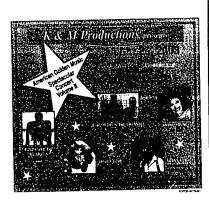
"Particularly at this time "Particularly at this time with budget cuts, this a relevant exhibit. The Medici's patronage of the arts kept them alive," said Darr, who fell in love with many of the exhibits works while studying for his doctorate in Europe. Darr joined the staff of the DIA in 1978.

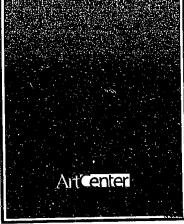
1978.
"We wanted to do something that hasn't been done before,

focus on a period that's not been studied much in English literature. Detroit has a long-standing relationship with Florence since the 1966 flood when Detroit sent aid. The DIA also has one of the best Italian art collections outside of Europe.

"The Italians wanted to focus on a narrower period of time, but I didn't want it to be too scholarly. You don't have to be a scholar to appreciate the beauty and power represented by these artists."

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