

SAN DOMENICO DI NICCOLÒ DELL'ARCA

This book, the third in the “Hidden Treasures” series, is illustrated by photographs by Luigi Spina and is accompanied by a critical commentary by Vittorio Sgarbi. For the first time we present to enthusiasts of art history and photography a visual monograph focusing on a single, exceptional piece of sculpture: Niccolò dell'Arca's bust of St Dominic, dating from 1474.

Made of terracotta, the sculpture depicts the founder of the order in a solemn, rigorously frontal pose whose expressiveness is riveting in its force. St Dominic is portrayed hieratically poised and seemingly motionless, but his hands convey his spiritual authority and his face eloquently suggests the great energy that lies within. His robe sweeps down in geometric folds and his tunic protects him like armor.

The work was made during Niccolò dell'Arca's period in Bologna, where, after completing the tomb of St Dominic — begun almost two centuries before by Nicola Pisano with the aid of Arnolfo di Cambio — the artist developed close ties to the Dominican order in the city. Over a period of around twenty years, he sculpted two busts portraying St Dominic: one, the subject of this book, belongs to the Cavallini Sgarbi Foundation in Ro Ferrarese; the other is in the museum of the Basilica of St Dominic in Bologna.

Luigi Spina's talent enables readers to admire the sculpture in the round, to pick out its subtle detail and to appreciate the depth of the saint's expression and the masterly technique displayed throughout.

Luigi Spina is a photographer. His work depicts amphitheatres and the civic dimension of the sacred and explores the links between art and faith, the search for ancient cultural roots, and the physical impact of classical sculpture. His published works include *L'Ora incerta* (2014), *The Buchner Boxes* (2014), *Hemba* (2017), and *Mythical Diary* (2017). Spina has collaborated with Valeria Sampaolo and 5 Continents Editions to create the series *Oggetti rari e preziosi* al Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, whose titles to date are *Memorie del Vaso blu* (2016), *Amazzonomachia* (2017), *Centauro* (2017), *Sette sapienti* (2018), and *Zefiro e Clori* (2018), as well as the Hidden Treasures series, which now includes *The Farnese Cup*. He has also published *The Dancers at the Villa of the Papyri* for 5 Continents Editions' Tailormade series.

Vittorio Sgarbi is an art critic, the curator of exhibitions with international relevance, a refined collector, and the author of several popular volumes on the importance of culture and art. Among his most recent publications, *Dall'ombra alla luce. Da Caravaggio a Tiepolo*; *Dal mito alla favola bella. Da Canaletto a Boldini* (La Nave di Teseo, 2019), installments of the “Treasures of Italy” series. He is also a politician and an independent free thinker.