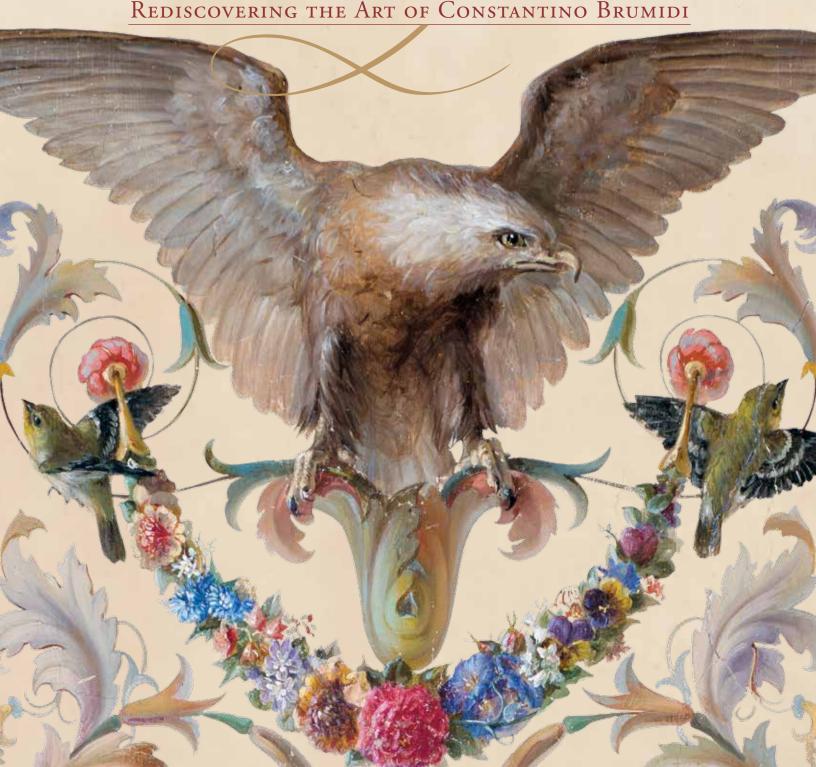
Make Beautiful the Cap

REDISCOVERING THE ART OF CONSTANTINO BRUMIDI



200



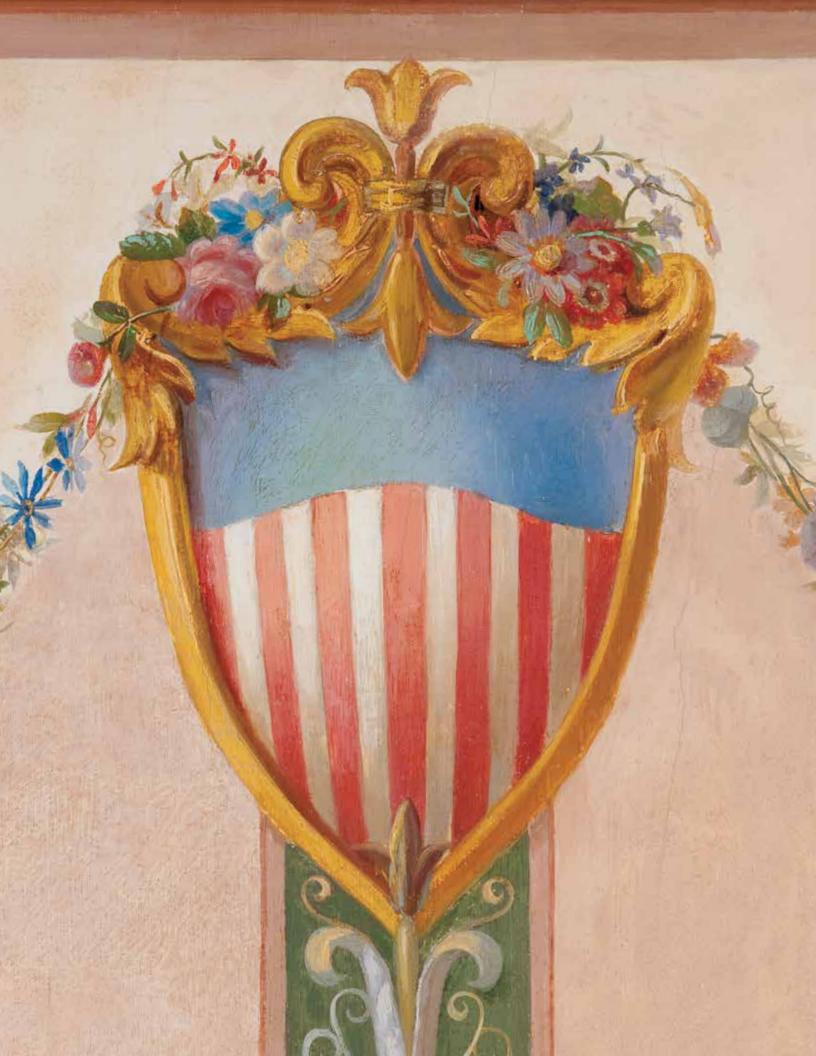
Make Beautiful the Capitol

Rediscovering the Art of Constantino Brumidi











Compiled by
Amy Elizabeth Burton

Prepared under the direction of the U.S. Senate Commission on Art

U.S. Senate Commission on Art

Chairman:

Harry Reid, Nevada

Vice Chairman:

Mitch McConnell, Kentucky

Patrick J. Leahy, Vermont Charles E. Schumer, New York Pat Roberts, Kansas

Executive Secretary: Nancy Erickson

Curator:

Diane K. Skvarla

Works of art illustrated are by Constantino Brumidi unless otherwise noted. Illustrations are from the records of the Office of Senate Curator except where other collection or photography credits are provided.

Principal photography by James Rosenthal, courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol. Photography credits appear on pages 130–31. Images have been used with the consent of their respective owners.

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

To make beautiful the Capitol: rediscovering the art of Constantino Brumidi / compiled by Amy Elizabeth Burton. – 1st [edition].

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

- "Prepared under the direction of the U.S. Senate Commission on Art."
- 1. Brumidi, Constantino, 1805–1880--Criticism and interpretation. 2. United States Capitol (Washington, D.C.)
- 3. Mural painting and decoration, American—Washington (D.C.)—19th century. 4. Mural painting and decoration—Conservation and restoration—Washington (D.C.) I. Burton, Amy Elizabeth. II. Cunningham—Adams, Christiana. III. Skvarla, Diane K., 1957–IV. Wolanin, Barbara A. (Barbara Ann) V. Ritchie, Donald A., 1945–Engineer and the artist. VI. United States. Congress. Senate. Commission on Art.

ND237.B877T6 2013

759.13--dc23

2013362000

Cover: Eagle and garland of flowers, Brumidi Corridors (Patent Corridor). Architect of the Capitol.

Frontispiece: Patriotic shield, Brumidi Corridors (West Corridor).

Contents

Foreword x

THE HONORABLE NANCY ERICKSON

Introduction xii

Amy Elizabeth Burton

The Engineer and the Artist: Montgomery C. Meigs, Constantino Brumidi, and the Capitol Frescoes 2

Donald A. Ritchie

The Unlikely Significance of Brumidi's Motmot 18

Amy Elizabeth Burton

Uncovering the Historic Roots of Brumidi's Decorations 34

An Interview with Conservator Christiana Cunningham-Adams

The "Most Practicable" Route: Brumidi's Landscapes and the Transcontinental Railroad 52

Amy Elizabeth Burton

A Collection of Brumidi Sketches: Artistic Process and Patriotic Endeavor 68

DIANE K. SKVARLA

Continuing Conservation of Brumidi's Murals in the U.S. Capitol 86

Barbara A. Wolanin

Appendices 110

A. Floor Plan of the Brumidi Corridors, Senate Wing, U.S. Capitol

B. Map of the Pacific Railroad Survey Routes Indicating Locations Depicted in Constantino Brumidi's Landscape Medallions

Acknowledgments 114

About the Authors 118

Notes 120

Selected Bibliography 126





"I have no longer any desire for fame or fortune. My
one ambition and my daily prayer is that I may live long
enough to make beautiful the Capitol of the one country
on earth in which there is liberty."

Brumidi;

