

# WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FEBRUARY 3, 2012

CONTACT  
ANGIE LOWRIE  
DIRECTOR, MARKETING & SALES  
216-721-5722 X1405  
[alowrie@wrhs.org](mailto:alowrie@wrhs.org)

## ITALIAN AMERICAN SCULPTOR GIANCARLO CALICCHIA OPENS EXHIBIT AT WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*"Domare: The art and history of Italian stone carving in Northeast Ohio" is a collaboration of the world-renowned artist and the WRHS Italian American Archives*

**History Center - 10825 East Boulevard - Cleveland, OH 44106**

CLEVELAND, OH -- The contemporary work of world-renowned Italian American sculptor Giancarlo Calicchia is juxtaposed with the rich history and impact of Italian immigrant master stone carvers in this region in the new exhibit, *"Domare: The art and history of Italian stone carving in Northeast Ohio,"* opening February 24 at the Western Reserve Historical Society History Center in University Circle. The exhibit is presented in partnership with the Consulate of Italy in Detroit, and continues through September 8, 2012.

The installation explores the past and present of Italian stone carving in the region, drawing connections between area landmarks, such as monuments in Lake View Cemetery, carvings on the Hope Memorial Bridge and the great sandstone formations of Berea, with current work from Calicchia's Cleveland studios.

The Italian term *"Domare"* was chosen by the artist because it symbolically represents both the actual work of the Italian stone carvers, as well as their settlement in, and adjustment to America. *"Domare"* means to domesticate," says Calicchia, "but more than that, it implies control, mastery, judgment, even fate. It is an integral part of the processes of transformation. It is the essence of most artistic processes."

Italian immigrants brought to Northeast Ohio an innate passion for the arts, architecture, and craftsmanship, according to Pamela Dorazio Dean, WRHS Associate Curator for Italian American History and exhibit curator, which is still very much relevant and present these days. "Many Italians expressed this passion through carving and sculpting stone utilizing skills acquired over the centuries in their homeland. They profoundly impacted the region with a unique aesthetic beautification."

The first component of the exhibit focuses on the early history of Italian stone carving and carvers in the region. The story will be told through artifacts and manuscripts from the WRHS Italian American Collection. Visitors will learn about Giuseppe Carabelli, his company, and the monuments he created in Lake View Cemetery. They will see the tools of Loreto Petti, one of the stone carvers who worked on the Hope Memorial Bridge.

The second component of the exhibit teaches about the entire process of working with stone, beginning with the quarrying. Northeast Ohio has a rich history written in stone: the great sandstone

formations of Berea, Amherst and Holmes County are the finest sandstones anywhere and were once exported throughout the world. Visitors will be able to see actual footage of stones being quarried, cut, and sculpted.

The third component of the exhibit will feature the master works of Giancarlo Calicchia, a sculptor who carries on the ancient Italian artistic traditions while working out of his studios in Tremont and on Carnegie Avenue. As such, he has continued to carry the legacy of the first Italian stone carvers in Northeast Ohio. "I would be seriously remiss had I not presented to the WRHS the opportunity for this collaboration project, that so perfectly ties together a significant portion of the past and current artistic contributions of our Italian American community to Ohio," points out Dr. Serena Scaiola, Vice Consul of Italy in Cleveland.

Born in Veroli, Italy in the Apennine Mountains near Rome in 1946, Calicchia moved to Rome, New York in 1957 at the age of 11 as part of a new wave of Italian immigration to the New World. After formal education and training in America, Italy, Haiti, Canada and Mexico, Giancarlo chose sculpture -- rather, as he is quick to point out -- sculpture chose him for his life's passion.

Calicchia's arrival in Cleveland in 1979 ushered a construction revolution not seen since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The skyline of Cleveland was transformed and the artist's mastery of architectural stone was a pivotal part of every major building built in Cleveland from 1981 to 1994, including Tower City, The Ritz Carlton Hotel, The Skylight Office Tower, North Point, the former Sohio Building and many others throughout North America and Europe. Photographs of his work on these structures will be displayed in the exhibit. Some of the pieces being displayed in the exhibition will reflect the influence of Calicchia's larger world-view, with those carved from Mexican onyx, Italian marbles, and African granites.

"My work celebrates living on our magical Earth," Calicchia says. "Carving and shaping for me is as important as the results. I was trained by hardened survivors of the ancient traditions of wood, stone and bronze. I am unable to compromise or forget. I live for what I do. I look for projects that challenge my passion for touching and elevating all the elements of our Earth."

Calicchia Sculpture & Design Studios, located in Cleveland, specializes in sculpture, public art and design, and has completed major landmark projects both locally and internationally.

The WRHS Italian American Collection preserves and documents the heritage of Italian Americans and their families, organizations, and businesses in Northeast Ohio. It is one of the major collections of community history at Western Reserve Historical Society. The collection, founded in 2006, is a more recent addition to the 145-year-old Historical Society.

---

*Founded in 1867, Western Reserve Historical Society is one of the oldest and largest nonprofit regional historical societies in the nation. WRHS inspires people to discover the American experience by exploring the tangible history of Northeast Ohio.*

*WRHS receives public support with local tax dollars from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, to preserve and enrich our region's artistic and cultural heritage.*

###