

Basic Detail Report

**Title**

Saint Francis Adoring the Cross

Artist

Jacopo Ligozzi

Date

1596

Dimensions

35 1/4 × 25 in. (89.5 × 63.5 cm)

Medium

Oil on canvas

Classifications

Paintings

Credit Line

Gift of The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Foundation

Object number

2020.38

Label Text

A versatile talent, Jacopo Ligozzi worked as a painter, draftsman, illuminator, printmaker, and designer of

decorative objects. Known to have been a devout Catholic, he frequently depicted the subject of the life of Saint Francis. Founder of the Franciscan Order of monks and nuns, Francis of Assisi (about 1182–1226) is represented as intensely adoring a crucifix. His left hand shows stigmata—the wounds suffered by Christ when he was nailed to the cross. Francis miraculously received these wounds in a religious vision. A halo is visible above his head, signifying his sainthood. In the lower left, a skull rests on a stump, a reference to the theme of memento mori (remember death). In the painting's context the skull is also an allusion to the transience of life on Earth juxtaposed with the life everlasting promised by Roman Catholicism (the same meaning is found in the Pendant Rosary with Skull in the nearby display case, which was used to count devotional prayers in the Catholic Rosary service). Saint Francis Adoring the Cross presumably was commissioned for a patron's private devotions, to encourage the viewer to emulate the extreme religious conviction of the saint. The restricted, monochromatic palette augments the painting's emotional intensity.

Not On View