The Pazzi Chapel

- **Small domed chapel**
- Commissioned by the Pazzi family to serve as a Franciscan chapel and meeting space.
- **Italian Renaissance** style, with its expressive interplay of solids and voids, was the first step toward an architecture that led eventually to the baroque.
- The building has a central dome plan and a narthex or porc, recalling early Christian configurations.

**Who**

- Andrea Pazzi, of the notorious Pazzi family, promised the monks that he would build a chapter-house with an adjoining chapel, where he reserved the right to have his family buried.
- Appointed architect Filippo Brunelleschi to design and construct the chapel.
  - Florentine architect, one of the initiators of the Italian Renaissance.
  - Born in Florence in 1377.
  - Trained as artisan in silver and gold.
  - Worked here from 1442 until his death four years later.

Madison Poon 2005
Cappella dei Pazzi
the Pazzi Chapel

when
- 1429 to 1461
  - Design commenced in 1429
  - Chapel was begun after 1442 although an agreement with Brunelleschi was made more than a decade earlier
  - Brunelleschi died four years later in 1448
  - Final dome completed the construction in 1461

where
- Florence, Italy
  - in the grounds of the Florentine Church of Santa Croce

overview

significant
"This small, brilliant structure represented a high point in early Renaissance style. Cerebral, rational, and serene, it was a marked contrast to the dynamics of Gothic architecture."
Main Structure:

- A **hemispherical dome** covers a **central square**, which is extended on either side so that the square forms the centre of a rectangle.

- The minor spatial compartment, opening off a third side of the main square, is a corresponding square **apse** covered by a dome and containing the altar.

Dome:

- Completed after Brunelleschi’s death following his plans.

- Cylindrical cupola with its delicate **lantern** was added to the top of the chapel only in 1461.

- Twelve-ribbed hemispherical dome on pendentives above a square.

Apse: a semicircular projecting part of a building, especially the east end of a church that contains the altar.

Pendentives: A triangular section of vaulting between the rim of a dome and each adjacent pair of the arches that support it.
Portico:
- The portico was built after Brunelleschi's death corresponds to his design.
- The portico serves to "filter" the light coming in from the outside, which merges with the light from the dome (the light from the heaven), creating a uniform illumination.
- The enamel terracottas surrounding the dome are by Luca della Robbia.

Arch:
- The central round arch of the porch frames the main door of the chapel, set deeply into the shadows.
- added dimension of the recessed niches on each side.
- references the Roman framed arch motif - a round arch flanked by columns that support an entablature - in a rational, clear spatial arrangement.

Facade:
- slender Corinthian columns support an entablature that is regularly divided into squares.

Niche: a recess in a wall, especially one made to hold a statue.

Entablature: in classical architecture, the section that lies between the columns and the roof.
Materials:
- severely restrained, made of the gray stone called *pietra serena* and white plaster, unrelieved by color
- The harmonious *pietra serena* grey stone pilasters, oculi, dome ribs and corbels *contrast* coolly with the white stuccoed walls

**Interior:**
- a **low bench** runs along the walls of the room; opposite the entrance a smaller altar chapel, square and domed, opens from the eastern wall
- wall surfaces are divided into **panels** based on the module of the square
- Corinthian **pilasters** serve to unite the four walls to the side bays
- The **floorplan** is in the form of a rectangle surmounted by a central cupola
- **Ratio** of length to width is 1:2, the altar recess is 1:1

**Pilaster:** a vertical structural part of a building that projects partway from a wall and is made to resemble an ornamental column by adding a base and capital