

# RENAISSANCE

RAPHAEL • BOTTICELLI • BELLINI • TITIAN

15th & 16th century Italian paintings from the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo

## MEDIA RELEASE

8 December 2011

*Renaissance - a dazzling era of genius, invention and exploration, a golden age for the art of painting.*

The National Gallery of Australia today opened the first exhibition of Early and High Renaissance paintings ever held in Australia. The much anticipated **Renaissance: 15th and 16th century Italian paintings from the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo** exhibition is on display until 9 April 2012.

The exhibition features paintings by Italian Renaissance masters such as Raphael, Botticelli, Bellini and Mantegna – artists whose paintings have never been seen in Australia before.

‘This magnificent collection of Renaissance art from the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo has never left Europe before. We’re delighted to present this unprecedented exhibition of works on panel and canvas by some of the most celebrated artists of the Italian Renaissance right here in Canberra’, said Director of the National Gallery of Australia, Ron Radford AM.

‘The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of Italian art are the foundation of European painting. Although the genius of master artists Raphael, Botticelli, Bellini and Titian is well known, visitors to *Renaissance* will also discover the talents and significance of lesser known artists such as Vivarini, Carpaccio, Lotto and Moroni. Raphael’s teacher Perugino’s work is also featured in the exhibition,’ he said.

The National Gallery of Australia was only able to secure this exhibition because the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo is renovating its display spaces and is currently closed. The National Gallery of Australia has organised the exhibition in partnership with the City of Bergamo and its Pinacoteca Accademia Carrara. Bergamo is situated in the province of Lombardy in Northern Italy, near Milan.

The exhibition is supported through the Australian Government Exhibition Insurance Program and the ACT Government through ACT Tourism.

Arts Minister Simon Crean said the Australian Government was proud to support the Renaissance exhibition through the International Exhibitions Insurance Program.

‘Without this program, the high costs of insuring artworks would prevent major exhibitions, such as this one, from coming to Australia’, Mr Crean said.

‘There is no better place to display this exhibition than the National Gallery of Australia – an institution that has recognised the need for Australians to see for themselves significant artworks from international collections.’

The iconic Australian pasta company San Remo is the Exhibition Partner also assisting the Gallery to bring this significant Italian cultural event to Australia.

The exhibition features more than seventy paintings by artists whose names are synonymous with the Renaissance period. The cultural transformation that we call the Renaissance took place well over 500 years ago. Renaissance means rebirth or revival. It is rooted in the notions of a rebirth of civilisation in Europe at the onset of the modern era, beginning in certain independent Italian cities. A central element of the Renaissance was the revival of the appreciation of Classical Antiquity together with the self-conscious renewal, even the rivalling, of ancient Greco-Roman art, architecture and literature.

The paintings emanate from cities and courts of Renaissance high culture. In Florence, Venice, Bergamo, Milan, Padua, Ferrara and Sienna, the Church and private patrons commissioned religious scenes as well as magnificent portraits.

The Gallery is using timed ticketing for *Renaissance*. Visitors will be able to choose a time and day to visit the exhibition and, once they have entered, can view *Renaissance* at their leisure. Timed entry will minimise queues and ensure the best possible visitor experience. Tickets available from the front desk of the National Gallery of Australia or online at [www.ticketek.com.au/renaissance](http://www.ticketek.com.au/renaissance)

The Yulgilbar Family Activity Room designed for *Renaissance* evokes the harmony of classically inspired architecture combined with an interior domestic scene, *Birth of Mary* c 1502–04 by Vittore Carpaccio. Located within the exhibition, the room is designed for children aged 3-12 and offers them the opportunity to explore one-point perspective, to construct and place buildings in a Renaissance landscape and to draw themselves in the portrait styles of the period. Entry is free with exhibition entry and pre-booking is not required.

A selection of print quality images is available for download from [www.nga.gov.au/mediacentre](http://www.nga.gov.au/mediacentre)

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