

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

Information Officer, Deborah Ziska

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CONTACT: (202) 842-6353
Nancy Starr, Publicist

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART PRESENTS FIRST U.S. EXHIBITION
OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE MASTER
LORENZO LOTTO

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The first U.S. exhibition of paintings by Italian Renaissance master Lorenzo Lotto (c.1480 - 1556/1557) will be presented this fall at the National Gallery of Art. Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance, on view November 2, 1997 - March 1, 1998, will include fifty works by this fascinating artist, whose work is not sufficiently well known in the United States. Lotto's portraits, allegories, and religious paintings, with their brilliant color and arresting details, have an idiosyncratic character not usually associated with the Renaissance. Many of the paintings in the show are being lent by churches and museums in the picturesque locations in Italy where Lotto originally worked.

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, in association with the Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo, one of the premier repositories of Lotto's work. The National Gallery of Art will be the only venue in the United States. After its Washington showing, the exhibition will travel to the Accademia Carrara in

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Bergamo (April 2 - June 28, 1998), as part of the museum's 200th anniversary celebration, and to the Galeries nationales d'Exposition of the Grand Palais, Paris (October 12, 1998 - January 11, 1999). United Airlines is the official carrier for this exhibition, which is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

"Lotto's pictures never fail to intrigue viewers. Since Bernard Berenson's pioneering monograph on Lorenzo Lotto first appeared in 1895, the artist and his work have had a special appeal for twentieth-century sensibilities," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "These paintings will be new to many, who have yet to discover the beauties of Bergamo, Recanati, Jesi, and the other Lotto sites, which are off the beaten track for tourists." Also unfamiliar to some viewers will be two works by the artist being lent from Krakow, Poland, and Bucharest, Romania.

PORTRAITS

Lotto excelled in painting portraits and today he is most appreciated for their probing, psychological character. Outstanding examples shown in the exhibition include the likeness of the antiquities collector, Andrea Odoni (1527), lent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II; the strikingly bold Portrait of a Lady as Lucretia (c. 1533) from London's National Gallery; and the melancholic Portrait of a Young Man (c. 1530) from the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. These portraits of single individuals, surrounded by symbols in unusual settings, are complemented by a pair of extraordinary marriage portraits from the Prado Museum, Madrid, and from The State

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Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

ALLEGORIES AND RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS

Among the other masterworks included in the exhibition are the National Gallery of Art's Allegory of Virtue and Vice (1505) and Allegory of Chastity (c. 1506). These small works will be reunited for the first time in almost five hundred years with Lotto's portraits from Naples and Dijon, for which they originally served as covers. Similarly poetic is the Saint Jerome in the Wilderness (1506?) with its idyllic landscape from the Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Larger-scale religious compositions include the richly colored Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine (1523) from the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo; the sensitively painted Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Thomas (c. 1528-1530) from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; and the visionary altarpiece of the Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints (1521) from the Church of Santo Spirito, Bergamo. The last two works, among many others, have recently been conserved for the exhibition.

The intensely dramatic Christ Carrying the Cross (1526) from the Louvre and the Annunciation (c. 1534-1535) from the Pinacoteca Civica in the town of Recanati both reveal the depth of Lotto's religious feelings. An itinerant artist who forsook worldly pleasures, Lotto particularly identified with Saint Jerome, the reputed founder of Western monasticism, and no fewer than five of his depictions of this saint are included in the exhibition.

"LOTTO CARPETS"

Among the highlights of the exhibition are a so-called "Lotto carpet" and two other Oriental carpets with geometric designs of the type that the artist included in his paintings. Lotto's expert knowledge of carpets can be seen by comparing the exhibited carpets with similar examples, which appear in his paintings.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION

The curator for the National Gallery exhibition is David Alan Brown, head of the department of Italian Renaissance painting, National Gallery of Art, who co-organized the exhibition Titian, Prince of Painters, held at the Gallery and in the Palazzo Ducale, Venice, in 1990-1991. Other members of the organizing committee for Lotto are renowned Renaissance scholars Peter Humfrey, professor, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and Mauro Lucco, professor, University of Bologna, as well as Francesco Rossi, director, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo; Giovanna Nepi Scirè, superintendent of Fine Arts, Venice; and Carlo Bertelli, advisor to the city of Bergamo for the two-hundredth anniversary of the Accademia Carrara.

CATALOGUE

Accompanying the exhibition will be a fully illustrated catalogue, Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance, with color images of every painting in the show. The catalogue offers a comprehensive account of the artist's achievement with essays by a wide range of international experts along with detailed entries on the works exhibited. A comprehensive bibliography and a chronology are also included.

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The English edition of the catalogue will be published by the National Gallery of Art and distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London. An Italian edition will be published by Skira, Milan.

The National Gallery of Art, located on Constitution Avenue, between Third and Seventh Streets, N.W., is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free of charge. For general information, call (202) 737-4215; or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at (202) 842-6176; or visit the National Gallery of Art's Web site at <http://www.nga.gov>.

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