

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART CELEBRATES THE 1999 HOLIDAY SEASON

Washington, D.C. -- The National Gallery of Art celebrates the 1999 holiday season with the opening of the National Gallery of Art's Sculpture Garden Ice Skating Rink, the first major survey in almost 70 years of the work of German master sculptor Tilman Riemenschneider, and free holiday programs that include caroling, gallery talks, and Sunday concerts.

The atmosphere is heightened by the Gallery's traditional display of holiday plants and greenery. Beginning Tuesday, December 14, 400 poinsettia, 200 cyclamen, and eight Christmas trees will decorate the West Building's Rotunda and Garden Courts.

Visitors will enjoy works depicting holiday themes in the exhibition, Tilman Riemenschneider: Master Sculptor of the Late Middle Ages, on view through January 9 in the West Building. This exhibition presents more than 50 virtuoso examples of late Gothic carving in a variety of media, including elements from altarpieces, independent figures, objects for private devotion, and models.

The Gallery Shops offer seasonal items and art-related gifts, and the restaurants provide a selection of holiday delights from around the world. The seasonal activities, open to the public free of charge, are described below. For more information, call (202) 737-4215.

TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY POSTAGE STAMP - This year's U.S. Postal Service's new holiday stamp commemorates a masterwork of art from the Gallery's Samuel H. Kress Collection, with the illustration of a detail of the painting Madonna and Child (c. 1475) by Venetian artist Bartolomeo Vivarini. The tempera on panel painting can be seen in gallery 13 on the main floor of the West Building. The U.S. Postal Service's holiday stamp greeting card is available in the Gallery Shops and by visiting the Gallery's Web site.

GALLERY TALKS - "The Christmas Story in Art." Join a Gallery lecturer on a 50-minute tour of works with holiday themes in the permanent collection. Gallery talks begin in the Rotunda of the West Building.

December 9, 10, 11, and 14
1:00 p.m.

December 16
12 Noon

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Fourth Street at Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20565

(202) 842-6353, *Facsimile* (202) 842-2403

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HOLIDAY CAROLING - Visitors are invited to sing along with holiday caroling by local ensembles, which takes place in the Rotunda of the West Building at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. on December 11, 12, 18, and 19. Guest ensembles for each date are:

December 11
Howard County
Public School System Employee Choir
Columbia, MD

December 18
The Encore Singers
Potomac, MD

December 12
The Gaithersburg High School
Chamber Singers
Gaithersburg, MD

December 19
The Chancel Choir & Bell Choir
Metropolitan Memorial
United Methodist Church
Washington, DC

CONCERTS - Audiences will be admitted on a first-come, first-seated basis, starting at 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. The Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue entrance to the West Building remains open until 7:00 p.m., and the Garden Café is open until 6:30 p.m. for concertgoers. Concerts take place in the West Garden Court, West Building. Performances begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at approximately 8:30 p.m.

December 5
Holiday Concert
Carmen Balthrop, soprano
José Cáceras, pianist

January 9
Gala Viennese New Year Concert
National Gallery Orchestra

December 19
Traditional Christmas Concert
Washington Men's Camerata

SKATING RINK - Glide into the winter season on our new ice skating rink in the Gallery's Sculpture Garden at 7th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W. The hours for the ice skating rink are Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. -10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-11 p.m.; and Sunday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m., weather permitting. There are small admission and skate rental fees. For more information, call (202) 289-2666.

GENERAL INFORMATION - The National Gallery of Art, located on the National Mall at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, 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. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. Admission is free. For general information, call (202) 737-4215, or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the National Gallery of Art's Web site at www.nga.gov. To receive the Gallery's free bimonthly Calendar of Events, call (202) 842-6662.

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