

PRESS RELEASE

BOTTICELLI. *Lamentation over the Dead Christ.*

Part of the *L'Ospite illustre (The Illustrious Guest)* initiative

Gallerie d'Italia – Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano
Intesa Sanpaolo museum complex in Naples
22 June 2019 - 29 September 2019

Naples, 21 June 2019 – Today sees the presentation at **Gallerie d'Italia – Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano** (the Intesa Sanpaolo museum complex in Naples) of the exhibited work by **Botticelli, *Lamentation over the Dead Christ***, usually housed in the **Poldi Pezzoli Museum** in Milan.

The exhibition, curated by Alessandro Cecchi, will be open to the public from 22 June to 29 September 2019.

The arrival of Botticelli's masterpiece from Milan marks the ninth **edition of the *L'Ospite illustre (The Illustrious Guest)* event**, which lets visitors admire a major work of art on temporary loan from prestigious Italian and foreign museums in Intesa Sanpaolo's exhibition venues (the Gallerie d'Italia and the 36th floor of the Turin skyscraper).

Michele Coppola, Executive Director of Art, Culture and Historical Heritage for Intesa Sanpaolo, said: "*A new 'illustrious guest' is welcomed to our Gallerie d'Italia complex in Naples, thanks to the relationship based on exchange and collaboration that we have built with the Poldi Pezzoli Museum - a masterpiece by a great master of the Italian Renaissance, Sandro Botticelli. The extraordinary piece *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* from the renowned Milan museum is further elevated by the interplay created between the work and a painting by Pedro Fernández, on loan from the Capodimonte museum. The ninth edition of the event thus strengthens the collaborative partnership of Intesa Sanpaolo with two major national museums, providing confirmation that the *Illustrious Guest* initiative is an opportunity to admire works of exceptional beauty and discover more about Italian art, keeping perfectly in line with the goals of our bank's Progetto Cultura project.*"

Botticelli's painting *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* portrays an extraordinarily moving moment in which Jesus' body, having been taken down from the cross on Calvary, is about to be laid in the tomb. Christ's inert body lies in the foreground, in the lap of Mary who, overcome by suffering, has fainted and is being supported by St John the Apostle. Among the three pious women, Mary Magdalene, wrapped in a red robe and with her eyes closed, embraces the Saviour's mutilated feet. The second woman, standing, holds Jesus' head in her hands, while the third woman stands off to the left, crying inconsolably, with her face hidden by her cloak. Joseph of Arimathea appears at the top and reveals to the sky the Instruments of the Passion – the crown of thorns and three nails taken from the cross and Jesus' body.

Dating back to the early sixteenth century, this painting, one of the best examples from Botticelli's mature body of work, was originally on an altar of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Florence, having been traced back thanks to a description from 1568 by Giorgio Vasari. It was purchased on 12 March 1879 by Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli, the aristocratic collector who founded the Milan house-museum.

Echoing the close relationship between the cities of Florence and Naples in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, a work with a similar theme to Botticelli's *Lamentation* and painted in the same era is also on display, from the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte museum in Naples. This painting in question is *Christ carried to the Tomb* by **Pedro Fernández**, who, despite working in a different genre of figurative art, still achieves, through the sense of agitation in the shapes and the sorrow borne by the figures, an intensity which resembles that achieved by the Florentine master.

The painting forms the central panel of the predella for the huge two-level polyptych that, until the mid-eighteenth century, adorned the main altar of the Santa Maria delle Grazie church in Caponapoli. When the polyptych was dismantled following the Napoleonic dissolution, in 1811 the piece became part of the Bourbon art collection and was later moved from there to the Capodimonte museum.

In previous editions of the *Illustrious Guest* initiative, the Gallerie d'Italia complex of Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano in Naples hosted four masterpieces: *Portrait of a Man* by Antonello da Messina loaned from Palazzo Madama in Turin (2015-2016), *Harlequin with a Mirror* by Picasso from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid (2016), *The Musicians* by Caravaggio from the Metropolitan Museum in New York (2017), and *Head of a Woman* by Leonardo Da Vinci from the Monumental Complex of Pilotta in Parma (2018). Meanwhile, the Gallerie d'Italia of Palazzo Leoni Montanari of Vicenza hosted *La Trasfigurazione (The Transfiguration)* by Bellini from the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte museum in Naples (2016). In the last two editions, the Intesa Sanpaolo skyscraper in Turin exhibited *Ritratto del conte Antonio da Porcia (Portrait of Count Antonio da Porcia)* by Titian from the Pinacoteca of Brera in Milan (2017), *Madonna con il Bambino (Madonna and Child)* by Bronzino from the Capodimonte museum (2017-2018) and the *Adoration of the Shepherds* by Spanish painter Juan Bautista Maíno from the State Hermitage Museum of St Petersburg (2018-2019).

The exhibition catalogue for *Botticelli. Lamentation over the Dead Christ* is published by Marsilio Editore and contains essays by curator Alessandro Cecchi and a contribution from Riccardo Naldi.

Photos of the painting at <https://bit.ly/2HOWzJS>

CAPTIONS:

Sandro Botticelli
Florence c.1445 - 1510
Lamentation over the Dead Christ
1501 - c.1505
Tempera grassa on panel, 106 x 71cm
Milan, Poldi Pezzoli Museum



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CREDITS: © Opificio delle Pietre Dure e Laboratori di Restauro (*Workshop of Precious Stones and Restoration*), Florence

EXHIBITION INFORMATION:

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 22 June 2019 - 29 September 2019

LOCATION: Gallerie d'Italia – Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano – 185 Via Toledo, Naples

OPENING HOURS: From Tuesday to Friday, 10am-7pm (last entry at 6.30pm); Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 8pm (last entry at 7.30pm), closed Mondays

SPECIAL OPENINGS:

Thursday 15 August (Ferragosto bank holiday): from 10am to 8pm | free admission

FURTHER INFORMATION: freephone number 800.454229; info@palazzozevallos.com; www.gallerieditalia.com

TICKET PRICES: full-price 5 euro, reduced 3 euro

PRESS INFORMATION

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