

PRESS RELEASE

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FLESH AND BLOOD: ITALIAN MASTERPIECES FROM THE CAPODIMONTE MUSEUM OPENS AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM OCTOBER 17, 2019

Rare opportunity to see major artworks by Artemisia Gentileschi, El Greco, Raphael, Jusepe de Ribera, Titian, and more



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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum presents *Flesh and Blood: Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum* (October 17, 2019–January 26, 2020), featuring 40 Renaissance and Baroque works of art (39 paintings and one sculpture) drawn from the collection of one of the largest museums in Italy. Traveling from the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte in Naples, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity to see works by significant Italian, French, and Spanish artists who worked in Italy including Artemisia Gentileschi, El Greco, Parmigianino, Raphael, Guido Reni, Jusepe de Ribera, Titian, and more.

The Capodimonte Museum is a royal palace built in 1738 by Charles of Bourbon, King of Naples and Sicily (later King Charles III of Spain). The core of the collection is the illustrious Farnese collection of antiquities, painting, and sculpture, formed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and inherited by Charles of Bourbon. Italian and Spanish masterpieces of the Baroque period, grounded in realism and produced in Naples, build on this foundation. The Farnese collection traces a century of creativity, inspiration, and a constant search for beauty, followed by masterpieces of the Baroque era characterized by grandeur, dramatic realism, and theatricality.

This exhibition marks the first time that this many works from the Capodimonte Museum will travel together at the same time. The New York Times called the museum an “under-visited treasure trove” with a “staggering collection of art” and Conde Nast Traveler called it “the most underrated museum in Italy.”

The paintings in *Flesh and Blood* center on the human figure, whether featured in portraits or mythological and religious scenes. They explore the intersection of physical and spiritual existence, with an emphasis on the human body as a vehicle to express love and devotion, physical labor, and tragic suffering.

“I am thrilled that we have the rare opportunity to see these incredible works in Seattle,” says Chiyo Ishikawa, SAM’s Susan Brotman Deputy Director for Art



and Curator of European Painting and Sculpture. "Epic and intimate, divine and brutally realistic, these paintings speak to the complexity of human experiences in a timeless way that will resonate with our visitors."

"This spectacular exhibition is a testament to the strong relationship between Italy and the United States and some of their greatest cultural institutions and associations," says Armando Varricchio, Ambassador of Italy to the United States. "The organizers all tirelessly endeavored to renew and strengthen the bonds of our friendship and deep cultural ties by bringing this unique glimpse of Italy to Seattle."

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

Flesh and Blood is presented chronologically, tracing a 200-year period from the 16th through the 18th centuries. Here are nine highlights:



Antea (1524–1527), Parmigianino

With the identity of the sitter a mystery, this striking portrait most likely represents a vision of idealized beauty typical of the Renaissance. Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola, known as Parmigianino (1503–1540), has his subject look directly out at the viewer, adorned with furs and jewelry that may have signified fertility or lust.

Pope Paul III (1543), Titian

Titian (1488/90–1576) established strong ties with the powerful Farnese family, beginning with Pope Paul III. In this official portrait, Titian delivers a vivid likeness that conveys both the elderly human being and the shrewd statesman.

Danaë (1544–1545), Titian

This overtly erotic painting is one of the most celebrated nudes of the Renaissance. It depicts the mythological princess Danaë, whose father locked her in a chamber so that no man could reach her. The God Zeus gained access by transforming himself into a golden cloud, showering down upon her. Painted for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, it probably portrays his mistress Angela as the goddess and was intended only for private viewing.

Boy Blowing on an Ember (1571–1572), El Greco

This painting by Doménikos Theotokópoulos (1541–1614), commonly known as El Greco, may reference an antique painting mentioned by the Roman writer Pliny the Elder. Depicting a boy blowing on an ember to light a candle, El Greco uses that as the work's sole source of light, illuminating the concentrated face of the boy.



Pietà (1599–1600), Annibale Carracci

Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) was one of the most influential painters and teachers in Bologna and Rome. This effective expression of maternal grief at the death of her son was inspired by Michelangelo's *Pietà* in Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

Judith and Holofernes (1612–1613), Artemisia Gentileschi

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653 or later) may be the most celebrated female painter of the Baroque period. In her work, she often painted dramatic scenes featuring women subjects from the Bible and mythology. With this painting, she

depicts the story of the Jewish heroine Judith slaying the Assyrian general Holofernes, who was threatening to destroy her village. Gentileschi's decision to focus on the violent act has been associated with her traumatic experience in 1611, when she was raped by the painter Agostino Tassi.



***Atalanta and Hippomenes* (ca. 1620-1625), Guido Reni**

The influential Baroque painter Guido Reni (1575–1642) was known for both Biblical and mythological subjects. In this painting, he depicts the story of Atalanta, who had taken a vow of chastity. Under pressure from her father, she agreed to marry the first man who could outrun her in a footrace. Hippomenes won by distracting her with three irresistible golden apples given to him by Venus.



***Drunken Silenus* (1626), Jusepe de Ribera**

This unusual depiction of a classical bacchanal centers on Silenus, companion to the wine god Dionysus. Ribera (1591–1652) renders his rotund body with loaded, vital brushstrokes typical of his naturalistic style. Painted for a private collector, this reclining, unglamorous male nude seems to send up the physical beauty and erotic appeal of Renaissance Venuses.

***Saint Jerome* (1626), Jusepe de Ribera**

Saint Jerome is one of Ribera's most frequently painted subjects. In this monumental altarpiece, the emaciated, aged hermit is startled by the angel that appears in the upper right blowing the trumpet of the Last Judgment. The saint's withered body, which reflects the divine light above, dominates the composition and is as palpable as human flesh.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A 160-page illustrated softcover exhibition catalogue will be available for purchase in SAM Shop (\$30). Also titled *Flesh and Blood: Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum*, it features essays by Sylvain Bellenger, General Director, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte; James P. Anno, American Friends of Capodimonte Curatorial Fellow; and Christopher Bakke, American Friends of Capodimonte Curatorial Fellow.

RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

In conjunction with the exhibition, SAM will present a dynamic lineup of programming, including Art Beyond Sight and docent tours and a series of public programs. Highlights include a free community opening celebration on October 17, free drop-in art workshops, and an in-gallery response space.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For each major exhibition, SAM convenes a group of advisors from the community to take part in its planning. The *Flesh and Blood* advisory committee is Lia Chiarelli, Dr. Amish J. Dave, Tamasha Emedi, Klara Glosova, Corinna Laughlin, Estelle Lingo, Stuart Lingo, and Elisabetta Valentini.

TICKETING INFO

Museum Hours

- Closed Monday and Tuesday
- Wednesday 10 am–5 pm
- Thursdays 10 am–9 pm
- Friday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm

Daily Prices

- \$29.99 Adult
- \$27.99 Senior (65+), Military (with ID)
- \$19.99 Student (with ID), Teen (15–18)
- FREE for children (14 and under)
- FREE for SAM Members

First Thursday Reduced Ticket Prices

- \$9.99 Adult
- \$7.99 Senior (65+), Military (with ID)
- \$4.99 Student (with ID), Teen (15–18)
- FREE for children (14 and under)
- FREE for SAM Members

Special exhibition ticket prices are reduced by more than 65% on the first Thursday of the month. Tickets to SAM Collections and Installations are free.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples, the Seattle Art Museum, the Kimbell Art Museum, and MondoMostre.



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ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994. The building is currently undergoing a renovation and expansion with a scheduled reopening in fall 2019. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.

ABOUT MONDOMOSTRE

Over the last 20 years, MondoMostre has partnered with museums around the world providing exhibition planning services. Offices in Rome, Milan, Moscow, Beijing, Tokyo, Boston, and Mexico City provide services including support for concept development, production, registration, insurance, shipping, publication services, marketing, advertising, exhibition placement, and exhibition strategy consulting. MondoMostre has put its expertise to the service of museums everywhere to help them create world-class exhibitions in its broad international network.

As of now, the company counts 162 exhibitions organized with 83 institutions located in 47 cities, generating a total of 25 million visitors worldwide. Some of the more important exhibitions have been: Botticelli; Caravaggio; Leonardo; Hokusai; Hiroshige and Kuniyoshi; Picasso, Dali, Frida Kahlo, and Diego Rivera; Manet; Vermeer; Rembrandt. Some partner institutions have been the Uffizi; the Capitolini; the Vatican; the Capodimonte Museum; the Pushkin Museum in Moscow; the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg; the National Museum of China; the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo; and the Musée Picasso-Paris.