

Released: February 2008



Sandro BOTTICELLI
The Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child, c.1485

MATERNITY: IMAGES OF MOTHERHOOD

15 March – 22 June 2008

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART, Belford Road, Edinburgh

Admission free

A fascinating exhibition, based on images of the mother and child from across the collections of the National Galleries of Scotland, will open at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art this spring. Organised by the NGS Education Department, *Maternity* will explore the theme of motherhood in art, and consider how it has been interpreted and re-interpreted by artists over the past 500 years. The exhibition, which was recently shown at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, will comprise eleven very different works, ranging in date from the early Renaissance to the present day. Highlights will include paintings by Sandro Botticelli, George Romney, William Quiller Orchardson, and Pablo Picasso.

The image of mother and child is iconic in European culture. A central theme in Christian imagery, it signifies the birth of Jesus as saviour of the world and the selfless love of his mother Mary. It also celebrates and underlines the importance of the family in Western society, and has parallels in other and earlier cultures.

Maternity will feature one of the most touching examples of the theme in Western painting, Botticelli's fifteenth-century masterpiece *The Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child*.

Acquired by the National Gallery of Scotland in 2000, this celebrated painting, which is the earliest work in the display, combines a complex theological narrative with a very human depiction of a young mother and her baby. In contrast, one of the most recent works on show, Moyna Flannigan's challenging painting *Just like Daddy*, subverts tradition by replacing the mother with the father in the composition. Other highlights of *Maternity* will include Domenichino's *Adoration of the Shepherds* of 1606-8; a *Mother and Child* from Picasso's pre-Cubist 'Blue Period'; and Christine Borland's *Twin, Hand-Made, Child-Birth Demonstration Model* of 1997.

Robin Baillie, Senior Outreach Officer at the National Galleries of Scotland, who has organised the show at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, said: "This exhibition demonstrates the richness of the National Collection and its ability to present a thematic interpretation of one of life's primary experiences. Drawn from all eras, the important works of art in this selection can be compared and contrasted to reveal how the 'old masters' and contemporary artists have depicted motherhood."

Maternity was first shown at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery from 10 November 2007 until 12 January 2008, where it was presented in partnership with Highland 2007 and The Highland Council. The partnership underlines one of the Galleries' core aims – to extend its activities to embrace a truly national role, and to make the nation's art collection accessible to the widest possible number of visitors.

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**For further information on any of these exhibitions, please contact the Press Office on 0131 624 6325/314/332/247 or pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org
www.nationalgalleries.org**