



Gemäldegalerie
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



News Release

Botticelli Reimagined

Sponsored by Societe Generale

5 March – 3 July 2016

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For the first time, a major new exhibition at the V&A will explore the variety of ways artists and designers from the Pre-Raphaelites to the present have responded to the artistic legacy of Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), assembling 150 works from around the world.

Botticelli is now recognised as one of the greatest artists of all time. His celebrated images are firmly embedded in public consciousness and his influence permeates art, design, fashion and film. However, although lauded in his lifetime, Botticelli was largely forgotten for more than 300 years until his work was progressively rediscovered in the 19th century.

Telling a story 500 years in the making, *Botticelli Reimagined* will be the largest Botticelli exhibition in Britain since 1930. Including painting, fashion, film, drawing, photography, tapestry, sculpture and print, the exhibition will explore the myriad of ways that artists and designers have reinterpreted Botticelli. It will include over 50 original works by Botticelli, alongside works by artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, René Magritte, Elsa Schiaparelli, Andy Warhol and Cindy Sherman.

Martin Roth, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, said: *“Sandro Botticelli is one of the greatest artists of the Renaissance and 500 years after his death his celebrated imagery has come full circle to represent a contemporary ideal of beauty. This ambitious exhibition considers his legacy and shows how and why it has suffused into our collective visual memory. The V&A’s renowned collections and expertise provide the broader context for understanding Botticelli as a design phenomenon and we are delighted to partner with Gemäldegalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin on this exhibition, to trace the resurgence of his reputation.”*

Michael Eissenhauer, Director General of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, said: *“While the early-19th century revival of interest in Botticelli was still in its infancy, Berlin’s Gemäldegalerie already held an impressive number of works by the master and significantly shaped their renaissance in the decades to come. Today our Botticelli collection of eight paintings and 86 drawings ranks as one of the most important outside Italy, and we are delighted to host the first stage of our joint exhibition, opening in Berlin on 24 September.”*

Ian Fisher, UK Country Head, Societe Generale, said: “It was Botticelli’s sense of innovation, one of the core values for Societe Generale Group, which inspired us to be lead sponsor of this exhibition. Our sponsorship is part of a decade-long relationship with the V&A and goes hand-in-hand with our long-term support for the arts, dating back 150 years. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Societe Generale Collection and our commitment to championing contemporary art, we are delighted to partner with the V&A on this exhibition exploring how artists and designers have reinterpreted Botticelli from the mid-19th century to the present day.”

Botticelli Reimagined will be divided into three major sections, entitled: *Global, Modern, Contemporary; Rediscovery* and *Botticelli in his own Time*.

Global, Modern, Contemporary will show how Botticelli’s imagery attained its present level of acclaim. This section is dominated by *The Birth of Venus*, depicting the naked Venus emerging from a shell on the seashore, which cannot leave its permanent display in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Andy Warhol’s *Details of Renaissance Paintings (Sandro Botticelli, Birth of Venus, 1482)* (1984) accommodates the face and flowing hair of Botticelli’s icon in his signature flat style and bold palette, while Yin Xin’s *Venus After Botticelli* (2008) reinterprets Venus with an Asian appearance. The familiar pose of Botticelli’s figure can be seen in David LaChapelle’s saturated and artificial *Rebirth of Venus* (2009), and Reineke Dijkstra’s *Beach Portraits* (1992) show adolescents as monumental figures against the water’s edge. A dress and trouser suit of patchwork panels from *The Birth of Venus* from Dolce & Gabbana’s S/S 1993 collection will be shown with two Elsa Schiaparelli evening dresses (1938) ornamented with embroidered foliage, inspired by *Pallas and the Centaur*. Botticelli’s influence on film includes the sequence of Ursula Andress emerging from the sea clasping a conch shell from *Dr No* (1962) and an excerpt from *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1988) in which Uma Thurman re-enacts *The Birth of Venus*. Functioning like the large-scale frescoes he studied in Italy, Bill Viola’s *Going forth by Day* is a digital image cycle inspired by Botticelli’s inventions. In *5th surgery performance - Operation opera* (1994) ORLAN has plastic surgery to mimic Botticelli’s Venus as part of a performance series rewriting Western art through her own body. This section will also include Tamara de Lempicka’s trompe-l’oeil *Painting with a Botticelli* (1946) which presents Botticelli as the key to art, as well as key works by Robert Rauschenberg, René Magritte and Maurice Denis.

Rediscovery will trace the impact of Botticelli’s art on the Pre-Raphaelite circle during the mid-19th century. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Ruskin and Edward Burne-Jones all collected Botticelli’s work, and his aesthetic was reinterpreted in Rossetti’s *La Ghirlandata* (1873) and Burne-Jones’ *The Mill: Girls Dancing to Music by a River* (1870-82). The Florentine master’s celebrated *Primavera* haunts this section, as is shown by William Morris’ *The Orchard* (1890), a tapestry depicting medieval ladies in a bountiful scene, Evelyn De Morgan’s *Flora* (1894) illustrating the nymph of flowers, and the only surviving film of Isadora Duncan dancing (c.1900). Copies of *The Birth of Venus* by Edgar Degas and Gustave Moreau (1859) as well as Etienne Azambre’s *Two Women copying Botticelli’s fresco of Venus and the Graces* (1894) demonstrate the vogue for copying his

work. Botticelli's European influence is manifest in major paintings by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Arnold Böcklin and Giulio Aristide Sartorio.

The final section of the exhibition arrives at *Botticelli in his Own Time*. This will show that Botticelli was both a supremely skilled artist *and* a designer of genius who ran a highly successful workshop. Exhibits will include his only signed and dated painting *The Mystic Nativity* (1500), three portraits supposedly of the legendary beauty Simonetta Vespucci, and the exquisitely detailed *Pallas and the Centaur* (1482), travelling to London for the first time. A number of variations on the Virgin and Child thematic in different formats will illustrate Botticelli's creativity as a designer, while a spectacular group of his rare graphic corpus including five of his drawings of Dante's *Divine Comedy* reflect his skill as a draughtsman. The show will close with two monumental full-length paintings of Venus, reprising the heroine of *The Birth of Venus*, and will also feature the V&A's *Portrait of a Lady known as Smeralda Bandinelli* (c. 1470-5), formerly owned by Rossetti and restored especially for this exhibition.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

- Tickets will go on sale in September 2015. Admission £15 (concessions available). V&A Members go free. Advance booking is advised – this can be done in person at the V&A; online at www.vam.ac.uk/Botticelli; or by calling 0800 912 6961 (booking fee applies).
- The V&A exhibition is co-curated by Mark Evans, Senior Paintings Curator at the V&A, and Ana Debenedetti, Curator of Paintings at the V&A
- The exhibition is organised by the V&A and the Gemäldegalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. A version of the exhibition will open first in Berlin from 24 September 2015 – 24 January 2016; before arriving at the V&A on 5 March 2016
- To accompany the exhibition, the V&A will publish *Botticelli Reimagined* edited by Mark Evans and Stefan Weppelmann (£40, hardback)

Corporate support for the V&A is more vital than ever. Please help us by acknowledging the exhibition sponsor Societe Generale.

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About Gemäldegalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

The Gemäldegalerie displays one of the world's most significant collections of European paintings from the 13th through 18th centuries. Masterpieces from all epochs of art history, including works by van Eyck, Brueghel, Dürer, Raphael, Titian, Caravaggio, Rubens, Rembrandt and Vermeer are exhibited here.

www.smb.museum

For further PRESS information about the exhibition, please contact Elizabeth Barrett or Nina Sandhaus in the V&A press office on 020 7942 2502 or email elizabethjvbarrett@gmail.com / n.sandhaus@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from <http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk>

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