



Large
Print

The Renaissance Nude

The Sackler Wing of
galleries

Rooms 1 and 2

Do not remove from gallery

The Renaissance Nude

Royal Academy of Arts

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

3rd March - 2nd June 2019

Contents

Page 5 Room 1 - Introduction

Page 7 The Nude and Christian Art

Page 20 Room 2

Page 22 Humanism and the Expansion of
Secular Themes

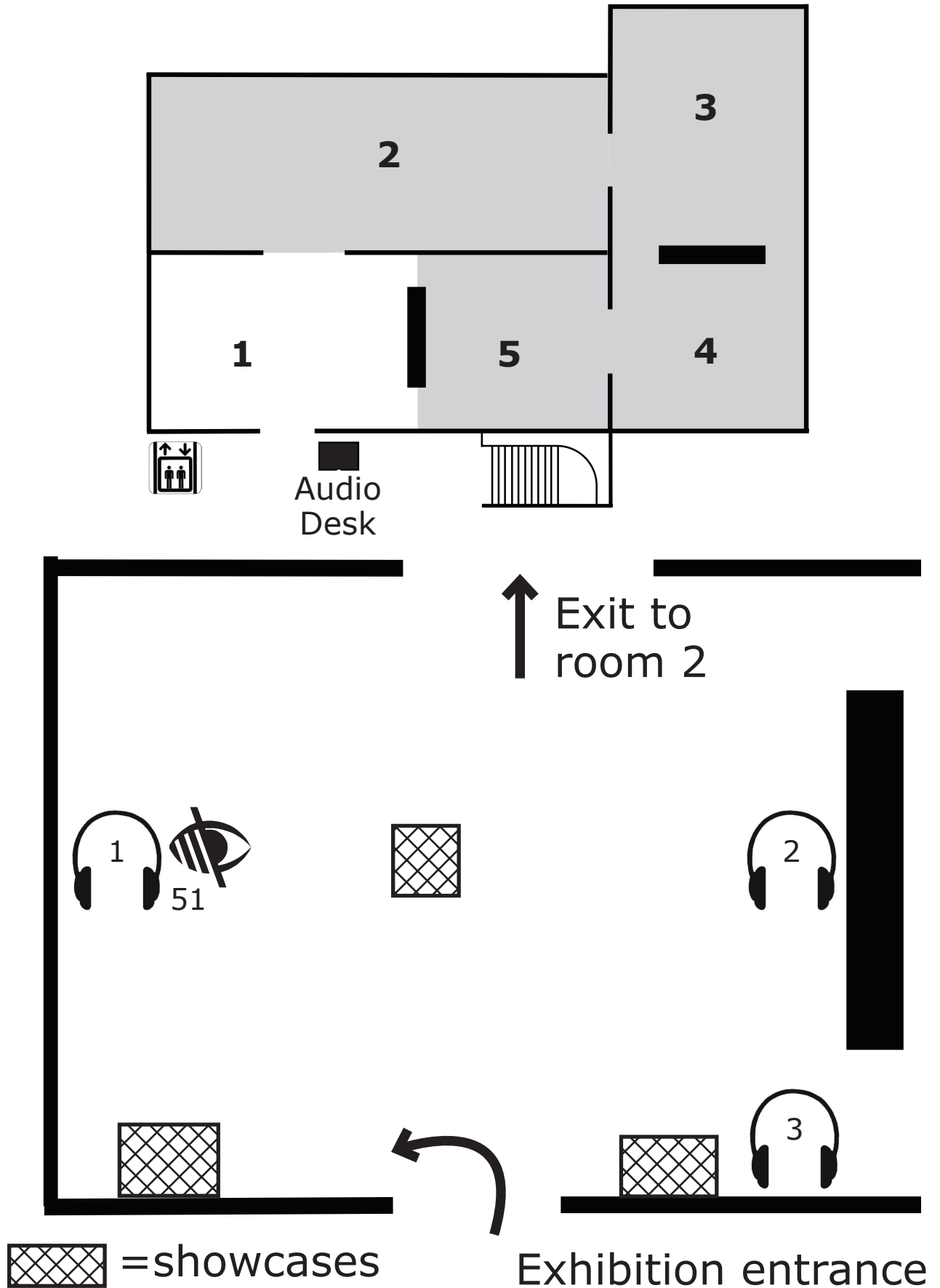
Exhibition supported by

The Thompson Family Charitable Trust

Peter & Geraldine Williams

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

You are in room 1



Multimedia tour room 1



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



Introduction



Jan Gossaert, Christ on the Cold Stone, c. 1530



Dirk Bouts, The Way to Paradise;
The Fall of the Damned, 1468-69



Jean Bourdichon, Bathsheba Bathing,
Hours of Louis XII, 1498/99

Room 1

The Renaissance Nude



When Michelangelo finished his 'Last Judgement' in 1541, the monumental wall painting in the Sistine Chapel was celebrated as a triumph. The mural's vast array of nudes, however, soon proved to be so controversial that, shortly after the artist's death in 1564, Pope Pius IV ordered concealing draperies to be painted over some of the figures.

Until then, the nude had flourished in Renaissance Europe. Even in the face of objections and consternation, it had achieved an increasingly dominant role in the visual arts across the continent, with artistic training itself closely focused on the study of the unclothed body.

(continued over)

It appeared in sacred and secular contexts, from small, intimate objects to monumental decorative programmes filling church interiors and stately palaces.

This exhibition explores the developments that elevated the nude to play a pivotal role in art from 1400 to the 1530s.

Organised thematically, 'The Renaissance Nude' juxtaposes works in a variety of media and from different regions of Europe to demonstrate the similarities and contrasts in form and meaning conveyed by the nude figure, both north and south of the Alps.

The Nude and Christian Art

Religion and artistic production were inextricably linked during the Renaissance. A number of episodes from the Old and the New Testament – from Adam and Eve to the Passion of Christ – provided artists with the opportunity to depict the nude figure, making Christian subjects more realistic and therefore more accessible.

The nude or partially nude bodies of saints, such as Saint Sebastian, and biblical heroes and heroines played a similarly didactic role in religious observance and private devotion, their torture and martyrdom seen as a testament to their unwavering Christian faith.

Room 1 list of works (clockwise in order of hang)

**Donatello
(Italian, c. 1386–1466)**

The Martyrdom of Saint
Sebastian, c. 1445–50

Bronze, partially gilt

Institut de France, Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris

Moderno

(Italian, 1467–1528)

Virgin and Child with Saints
George and Sebastian, c. 1510

Cast silver with gilding

Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer

Martin Schongauer

(German, 1440s–1491)

The Baptism of Christ, mid-1470s

Engraving

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1928

Jan Gossaert (Flemish, c. 1478–1532)



Christ on the Cold Stone, c. 1530

Oil on panel

Museo del Patriarca, Real Colegio Seminario
de Corpus Christi, Valencia

Christ is shown stripped before being scourged, his anxious and weary expression foreshadowing his impending physical ordeal and death.

At the same time, his idealised body, with its sharply defined musculature modelled on antique prototypes, exudes a youthful radiance, alluding as much to Christ's resurrection as his suffering.

Hans Baldung Grien (German, 1484/85– 1545)

Ecstatic Christ, c. 1510–11

Pen and black ink over black chalk on paper

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Robert Lehman Collection, 1975

In this highly unusual scene, Christ – the wounds from his crucifixion visible on his hands and feet – appears thoroughly alive and yet vulnerable as he lies on the ground, wrenching his body back to look heavenward, reaching for his groin.

Martin Schongauer (German, 1440s–1491)

Saint Sebastian, c. 1480–90

Engraving

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Rosenwald Collection, 1943

Cima da Conegliano **(Italian, c. 1459–1517)**

Saint Sebastian, 1500–02

Oil on panel

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg

Saint Sebastian suffered a violent death at the hands of Roman soldiers, who bound him to a stake and shot him with arrows. The story of his heroic martyrdom was popular with artists, offering them the opportunity to experiment with the male nude.

This idealised depiction of the saint can be associated with deities from antiquity, whose physical beauty conveyed their heroic status.

Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471–1528)

Adam and Eve, 1504

Engraving

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,
Art Museum Council Fund

One of the iconic images of the Renaissance, Albrecht Dürer's 'Adam and Eve' depicts a moment from the Book of Genesis, after God had created the Garden of Eden but just before Eve succumbed to temptation and ate the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge – thus condemning humanity to labour, physical frailty and, ultimately, death.

Though Adam and Eve are shown unashamed of their nudity, their genitalia are prudently obscured by leaves.

Dirk Bouts (Netherlandish, c. 1415–1475)



The Way to Paradise, 1468–69

Oil on panel

Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille

The Fall of the Damned, 1468–69

Oil on panel

On deposit from the Musée du Louvre, Paris,
to the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille, 1957

These two panels were once the wings of a triptych devoted to the Last Judgement. While the saved are shown discreetly clothed, the condemned – tumbling into the infernal landscape – are entirely nude.

The origins of shame for the naked body can be traced to the story of the Fall of Man, when God forbade Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge.

Jean Colombe (French, active 1463–91)

Bathsheba Bathing

Hours of Guyot II Le Peley,
Use of Troyes, c. 1480

Tempera and gold paint on vellum

Virginia M. Schirrmeister, New York

Jean Bourdichon (French, 1457–1521)



Bathsheba Bathing

Hours of Louis XII, 1498/99

Tempera and gold paint on vellum

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Master of Petrarch's Triumphs (French, active 1490–1510)

Bathsheba Bathing and The Penitent David

Hours of Claude Molé, Use of Rome, c. 1500–05

Tempera and gold paint on vellum

The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1908

Jean Colombe (French, active 1463–91)

Bathsheba Bathing

Hours of Anne of France,

Use of Rome, c. 1473

Tempera and gold paint on vellum

The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

Purchased by J.P. Morgan in 1923

‘Bathsheba Bathing’ tells a moralising story about the evils of adultery: the married Bathsheba’s seduction of King David. The same story could be illustrated quite differently depending on the patron.

This manuscript, commissioned for Anne of France, daughter of King Louis XI, shows King David rushing down to the garden while Bathsheba is still dressed.

In books of hours for men, Bathsheba was usually shown completely nude, the seductress not only of King David but also the male viewer.

Showcase centre of room

Unknown Artist
possibly designed by
Hans Holbein the Elder
(German, c. 1465–1524)

Reliquary of Saint Sebastian,
1497

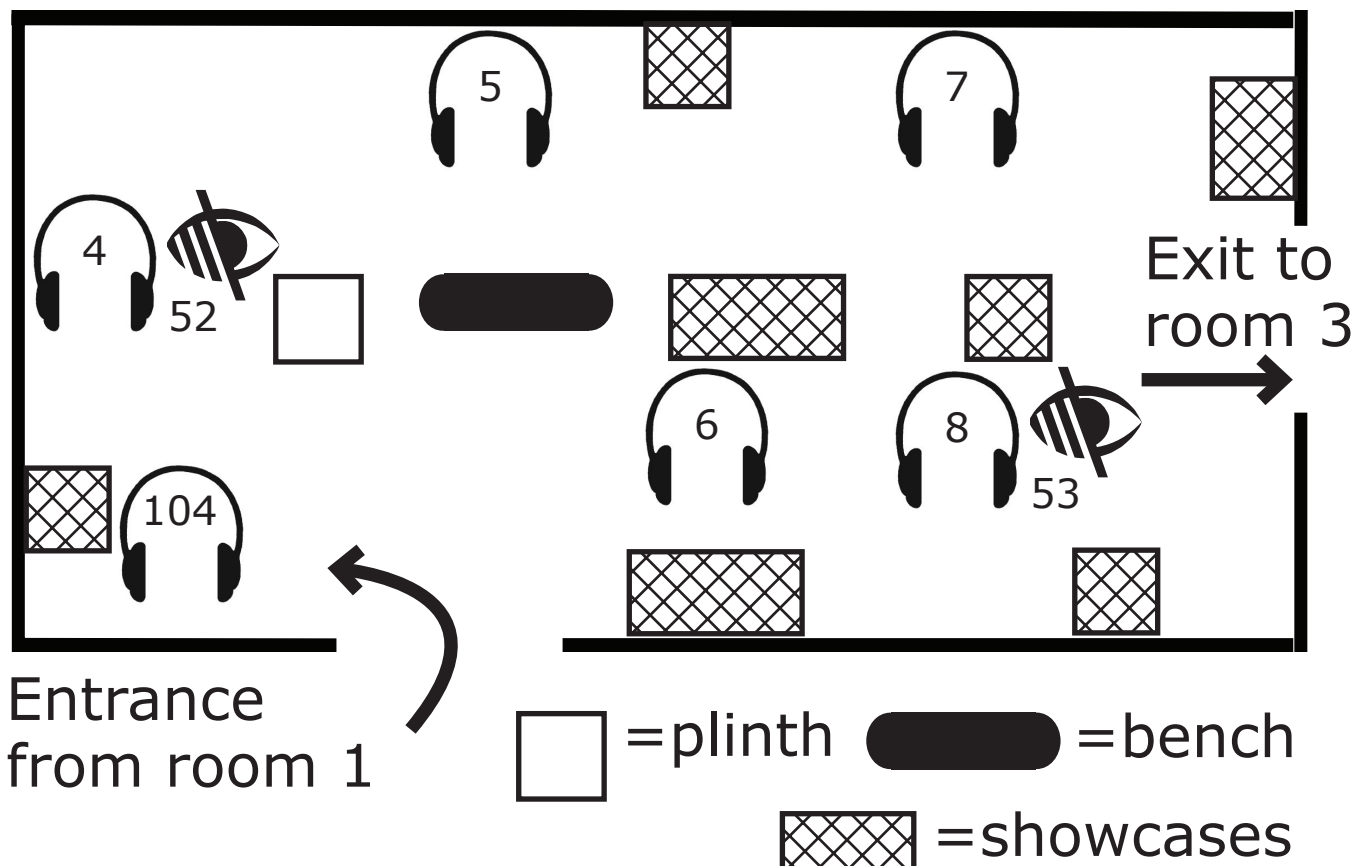
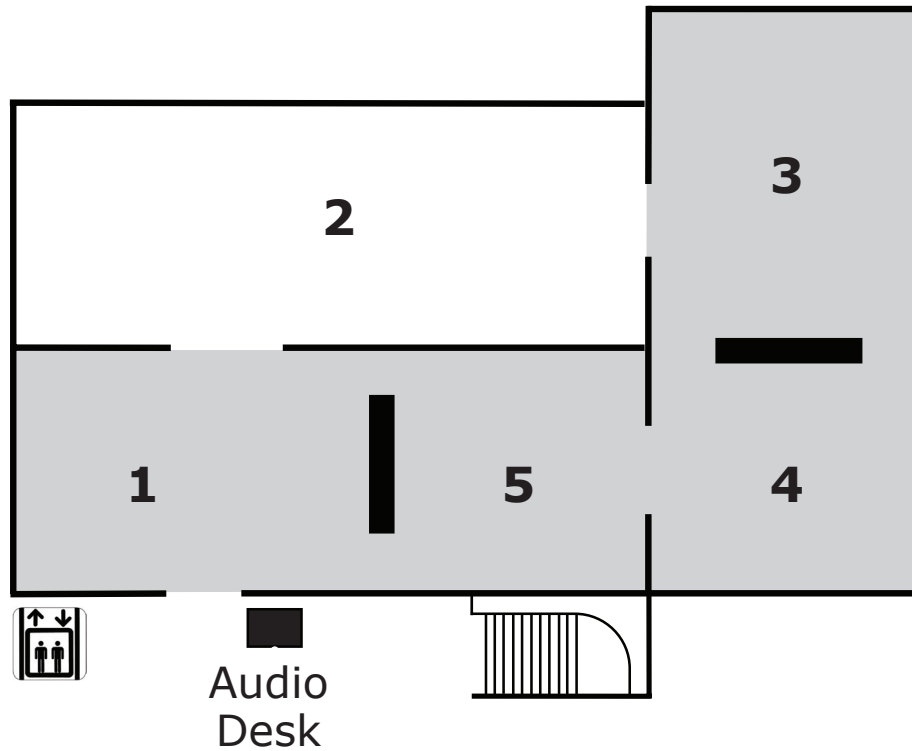
Silver, parcel-gilt, hammered, cast, and engraved;
set with glass, pearls, sapphires and rubies

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Purchased with the assistance of the National
Heritage Memorial Fund and Art Fund

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

You are in room 2



Multimedia tour room 2



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



Dosso Dossi, A Myth of Pan, 1524



Attributed to Benedetto Bordon, Fountain with a Sleeping Nymph, Francesco Colonna, 'Hypnerotomachia Poliphili' (The Dream of Poliphilus), 1499



Titian, Venus Rising from the Sea ('Venus Anadyomene'), c. 1520



Giovanni Bellini, Allegories of Fortune: Prudence; Fortune; Sloth; Calumny, before 1500



Hans Baldung Grien, Aristotle and Phyllis, 1513



Antonio Pollaiuolo, Hercules and Antaeus, c. 1470s

Room 2

Humanism and the Expansion of Secular Themes

As humanists applied Classical modes of thinking to philosophy and the writing of history and poetry, there was also a growing taste for the antique in the visual arts. Classical literature and Greek and Roman mythology inspired artists to explore the nude.

Apollo, one of the most important Olympian deities, had long been celebrated for his ideal beauty, but no figure from ancient art and literature held more appeal for Renaissance artists, both north and south of the Alps, than Venus, the Roman

goddess of Love. While representations of Venus often had a sophisticated intellectual rationale, they all celebrated her ravishing beauty and erotic charm.

The adventures of the Greek and Roman gods – with their stories of adultery and lust, drunkenness, debauchery and deception – provided artists with opportunities to explore human impulses often condemned by the Christian Church.

Within humanist culture, much art created around the nude was erotic, exploring themes of seduction, the world of dreams, the power of women and same-sex desire.

Room 2 list of works (clockwise in order of hang)

**Piero di Cosimo
(Italian, 1462–1522)**

**A Satyr Mourning over a
Nymph, c. 1495–1500**

Oil on panel

The National Gallery, London. Bought 1862

Inspired by Ovid and Giovanni Boccaccio, this pastoral elegy was probably once set into the panelling of a room in the palace of a wealthy Florentine citizen.

Piero's moving scene is palpably silent, the nymph's song stilled by a wound piercing her throat.

Attributed to Benedetto Bordon (Italian, c. 1450–1530)



Fountain with a Sleeping Nymph

Francesco Colonna, 'Hypnerotomachia Poliphili'
(The Dream of Poliphilus), 1499

Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young
Research Library, UCLA

The so-called 'Hypnerotomachia Poliphili', published in Venice in 1499 by Aldus Manutius, is a prose romance, recounting the erotic dream of a lovelorn hero named Poliphilus.

The woodcuts accompanying the text inspired a great number of artists, such as Dosso in 'A Myth of Pan' (shown nearby).

Dosso Dossi **(Italian,** **c. 1486–1542)**



A Myth of Pan, 1524

Oil on canvas

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Giulio Campagnola **(Italian, c. 1482–after** **1515)**

Nude Reclining in a Landscape,
c. 1508–09

Engraving

The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Gift of the Print Club of Cleveland

Lucas Cranach the Elder (German, 1472–1553)

A Faun and His Family with a Slain Lion, c. 1526

Oil on panel

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Cranach's tender depiction of a faun and his family seems to be inspired by both Classical and native German literary sources.

The savageness suggested by the slain lion is countered by the mother's calm demeanour and her child's tender gesture.

Albrecht Dürer **(German, 1471–1528)**

Satyr Family, 1505

Engraving

Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Gift of Herman and Ruth Engel in honour of the museum's 40th anniversary, the 40th anniversary of the Graphic Arts Council and Herman Engel's 100th year

Lucas Cranach the Elder **(German, 1472–1553)**

The Penance of Saint John
Chrysostom, 1509

Engraving

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Jacob H. Schiff Fund, 1925

According to an apocryphal account, Saint John Chrysostom lived as a hermit in the desert when he encountered the daughter of an emperor. Having succumbed to desire, he was so ashamed that he threw her over a precipice.

Only years later, he found out that she was still alive and had borne a child. Cranach here shows the emperor's daughter, nude, caressing her child, while the saint can be seen in the background, crawling through the foliage.

Titian (Italian, c. 1488/90–1576)



Venus Rising from the Sea
(‘Venus Anadyomene’), c. 1520

Oil on canvas

National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax by HM

Government (hybrid arrangement) and allocated to the Scottish National Gallery, with additional funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation) and the Scottish Executive, 2003

The story of the birth of Venus from the sea goes back to Pliny the Elder, who had described a painting of the same subject by the most famous painter of antiquity, Apelles. The scene became popular in the Renaissance, not least through the version painted by Sandro Botticelli in the 1480s.

Titian shows the goddess of Love, close-up, as she emerges from the water sensuously wringing her hair.

Jan Gossaert (Flemish, c. 1478–1532)

Venus, c. 1521

Oil on panel

Pinacoteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, Rovigo

Stepping off her pedestal towards the viewer, Venus – surrounded by luxurious objects – admires herself in a mirror. This picture may have been painted for Philip of Burgundy, one of Gossaert's most learned patrons, who acquired numerous depictions of Venus, having developed a taste for them from the humanist collectors he had encountered in Italy.

Conrad Meit **(German, c. 1480–1551)**

Lucretia, c. 1510–15

Boxwood

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917

Albrecht Dürer **(German, 1471–1528)**

The Dream of the Doctor,
c. 1498

Engraving

Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Gift of Ebria Feinblatt and Ronn Marvin,
in memory of Isaac Feinblatt

A scholar dozing by a warm stove is beset

by an apparition of the nude Venus and her son Cupid. Dürer's depiction of Venus seems menacingly real, evoking the Christian belief that erotic dreams had diabolical origins.

Marcantonio Raimondi (Italian, c. 1480–before 1534)

The Dream ('The Dream of
Raphael'), 1507–08

Engraving

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Pisanello

(Italian, c. 1395–c. 1455)

Luxuria, c. 1426

Pen and brown ink on prepared paper

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Pisanello's 'Luxuria' (Lust) is an unusually early example of a sensual, reclining female nude, a motif that would become popular towards the end of the fifteenth century, particularly in northern Italy. Full of self-confidence, she gazes directly at the viewer.

Hans Baldung Grien **(German,** **1484/85–1545)**



Aristotle and Phyllis, 1513

Woodcut

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

According to medieval texts, the Greek philosopher Aristotle castigated his pupil, Alexander the Great, for spending too much time with his lover, Phyllis.

Arousing Aristotle's sexual interest, Phyllis sought revenge and demanded a jaunt around the philosopher's garden while riding on his back, ensuring his humiliation by arranging for Alexander to witness the spectacle.

Jan Gossaert **(Flemish, c. 1478–1532)**

Hercules and Deianira, 1517

Oil on panel

The Henry Barber Trust,

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham

Hercules killed the centaur Nessus (who had abducted and raped Deianira) with poisoned arrows. As Nessus was dying, he gave Deianira his tunic, now covered with poisoned blood, claiming it would ensure Hercules's fidelity.

She gullibly presented it to her lover, inadvertently killing him. Gossaert evokes the tragic passion of the couple, with their loving gaze and intertwined legs, by including the tunic in Deianira's grasp.

Marco Dente

(Italian, active 1515–27)

Nymph and Satyr (Pan and Syrinx), c. 1516

Engraving

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Sexually provocative or arousing images were very popular in humanist circles during the sixteenth century. Prints were used to circulate not only religious content but also erotica.

In the engraving 'Nymph and Satyr', Marco Dente depicts Pan as an aroused satyr who slyly watches the nymph Syrinx as she bathes.

Barthel Beham

(German, 1502–1540)

Death and Three Nude Women, 1525–27

Engraving

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

The three nude women are shown at three different ages, alluding to the transience of life.

Beham complicates this conventional theme, depicting not only Death's fixation on the young maiden but also sexual attraction as expressed by the woman in the foreground, who extends her hand towards the young woman to the right.

Master of Margaret of York

(Flemish, active 1460s–70s)

The Bathhouse

Valerius Maximus, *Faits et dits mémorables*,
c. 1470–80

Tempera and gold paint on vellum

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Introducing a chapter entitled 'On Luxury and Lust', this miniature features men and women interacting provocatively with one another as they bathe and dine in a large bathtub or withdraw to one of the beds.

The clothed onlookers in the doorway hint at the viewer's own role as voyeur.

Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471–1528)

The Bathhouse, c. 1496

Woodcut

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

George Khuner Collection,

Bequest of Marianne Khuner, 1984

Dürer's male bathers are seen drinking and making music, and the meaningful exchange of glances – notably between the two men in the foreground – suggests that the public bathhouse was an environment charged with erotic tension.

Pietro Perugino

(Italian, 1445/48–1523)

Apollo and Daphnis, c. 1495

Oil on panel

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Peintures

Apollo is shown in a bucolic landscape next to the mythic shepherd Daphnis (said to be the inventor of pastoral poetry), who plays the flute. The incipiently erotic languor of mythological pictures like this was cherished by humanist collectors in Florence and Venice.

Marcantonio Raimondi (Italian, c. 1480–before 1534)

Apollo and Admetus, 1506

Engraving

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Gift of Felix M. Warburg and his family

Limbourg Brothers (Netherlandish, active c. 1385/88–1415/16)

The Procession of Flagellants

Belles Heures of the Duke of Berry, c. 1405–08/09

Tempera, pen and brown ink and gold leaf on vellum

The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

The Cloisters Collection, 1954, New York

This unusual private prayer book, the so-called 'Belles Heures' of the Duke of Berry, presented a new role for the nude in religious art.

The image shown here depicts ritual self-mortification, an extreme devotional act often regarded with scepticism. The Limbourg brothers emphasised the unblemished beauty of the young male flagellants and eroticised their behaviour.

Antonio Pollaiuolo

Italian, 1431/32–1498)

Battle of the Nudes, 1470s

Engraving

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Designed to rival antiquity, Pollaiuolo's imposing 'Battle of the Nudes' features the artist's signature in Latin, inscribed on a tablet hanging from a tree. His bronze statuette of Hercules vanquishing Antaeus can be seen nearby.

Andrea Mantegna **(Italian, 1431–1506)**

Battle of the Sea Gods, before 1481

Engraving

(left) National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Alisa Mellon Bruce Fund, 1984

(right) The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

George Khuner Collection, Bequest of Marianne
Khuner, 1984

Mantegna's thorough understanding of ancient art and culture earned him accolades from fellow humanists. This print was inspired by antique models such as the friezes on marble sarcophagi.

Master of the Cité des Dames and workshop (French, active c. 1405–15)

Actaeon Surprising Diana at
Her Bath

Christine de Pisan, *Epître Othéa*
(Letter of Othea to Hector), c. 1410–14

Tempera and gold leaf on vellum

The British Library, London

Master of the Prayer Books of around 1500 (Flemish, active c. 1485–late 1510s)

Zeuxis Painting Five Nude Models

Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun,
Roman de la rose (Romance of the Rose),
c. 1490–1500

The British Library, London

In France, tales by Ovid and Pliny the Elder were translated and retold, as in the immensely popular 'Roman de la rose', an allegorical poem about one man's journey on the quest for love.

This scene goes back to a tale by Pliny the Elder, in which the painter Zeuxis could not find a woman beautiful enough to pose as Helen of Troy, so he studied the finest features of five different models to ultimately capture her physical beauty.

Circle of Donatello **(Italian, c. 1386–1466)**

Sprite, c. 1432

Gilt bronze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Purchase, Mrs. Samuel Reed Gift, Rogers Fund,
by exchange, and Louis V. Bell Fund, 1983

Hans Memling **(Flemish, c. 1440–1494)**

Earthly Vanity and Divine
Salvation: Armorials of the
Loiani;

Death at Graveside; Vanitas/
Luxuria; Hellmouth with Devil;
Salvator Mundi; Memento Mori,
c. 1485–90

Oil on panel

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg

These panels were probably once hinged, forming a 'book', with the patron's coat of arms (the Loiani family from Bologna) and a memento mori (a skull) on its outer covers.

The inside would have featured two pairs of figures facing each other: Death next to Vanitas (Vanity) or Luxuria (Lust), and the Devil next to the Salvator Mundi.

Giovanni Bellini **(Italian,** **1431/36–1516)**



Allegories of Fortune:
Prudence; Fortune; Sloth;
Calumny, before 1500

Oil on panel

Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

Bellini's 'Allegories' may have originally formed part of the decoration of a mirror stand with shelving for the storage of objects used in dressing and grooming.

Their moral seems to be that, through the rule of Prudence, men are able to handle the perils of Fortune, Sloth and Calumny. For the painting of Prudence, Bellini may have been inspired by Flemish works, such as the panels by Memling on the other side of this case.

Antonio Pollaiuolo



(Italian, 1431/32–1498)

Hercules and Antaeus, c. 1470s

Bronze

Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence



Large
Print

The Renaissance Nude

The Sackler Wing of
galleries

Rooms 3, 4 and 5

Do not remove from gallery

The Renaissance Nude

Royal Academy of Arts

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

3rd March - 2nd June 2019

Contents

Page 5 Room 3 - Artistic Theory and Practice

Page 22 Room 4 - Beyond the Ideal Nude

Page 34 Room 5

Page 36 Personalising the Nude

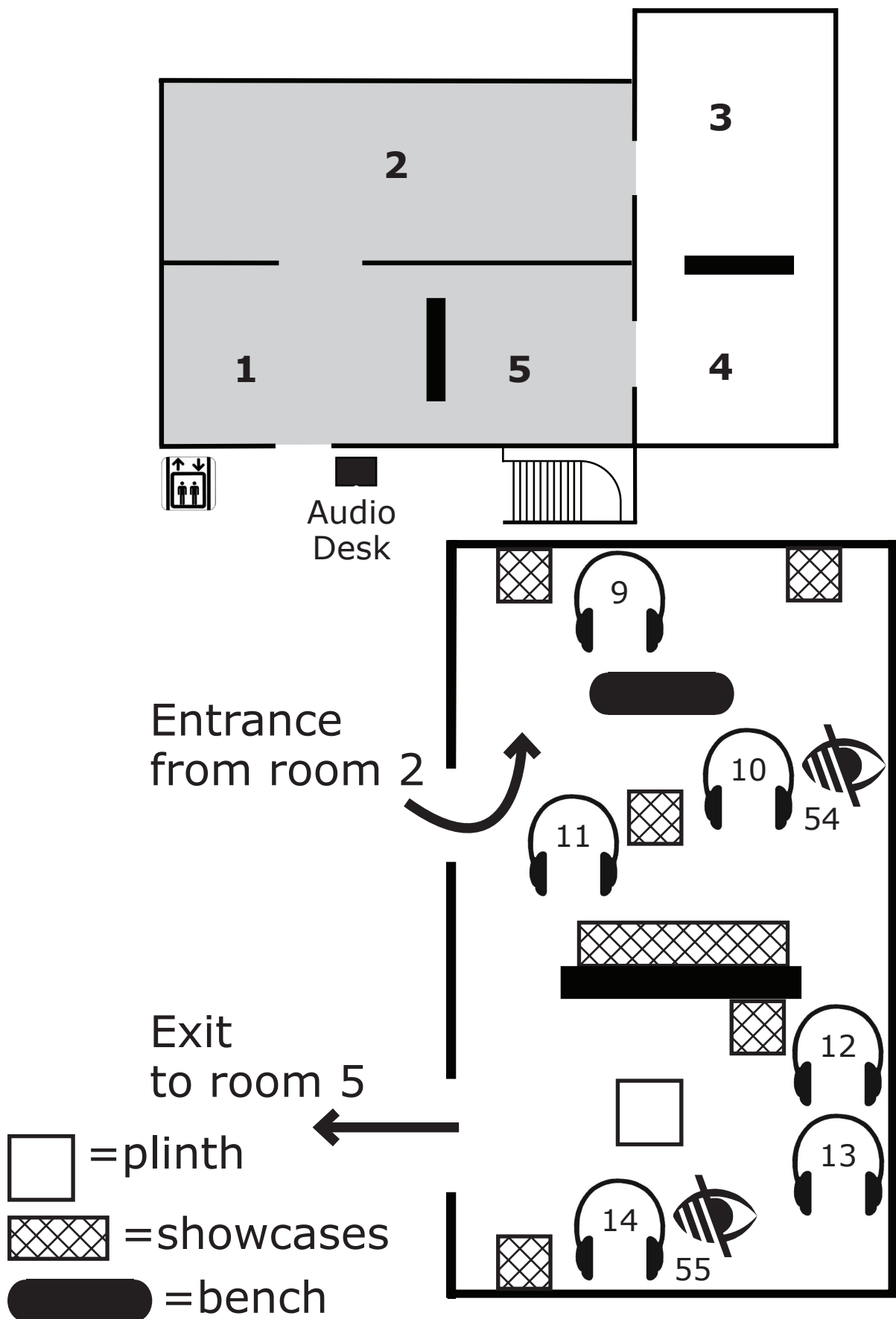
Exhibition supported by

The Thompson Family Charitable Trust

Peter & Geraldine Williams

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

You are in rooms 3 and 4



Multimedia tour

rooms 3 and 4



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



Luca Signorelli, Figures in a Landscape: Two Nude Youths; Man, Woman and Child, c. 1490



Raphael, The Three Graces, c. 1517–18



Leonardo da Vinci, The Anatomy of the Shoulder and Neck, c. 1510–11



Unknown artist (German), Elderly Bather, c. 1480



Hans Baldung Grien, The Witches' Sabbath, 1510



Workshop of Hans Leu the Elder, The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand, c. 1508–9

Room 3

Artistic Theory and Practice

The rediscovery of works of art as well as treatises from antiquity inspired a new interest in the ideal proportions of the human figure. Artists closely studied Classical sculpture – such as the so-called ‘Spinario’ (Boy with Thorn), or the ‘Laocoön’ and the ‘Apollo Belvedere’, both of which had only recently been excavated.

At the same time, artists started studying the human figure from life, working with models in the studio. By the early sixteenth century, the making of life drawings, often in preparation for specific compositions, had become a standard workshop practice.

Some artists also attempted to pass on their newly acquired knowledge.

While Leonardo da Vinci's extraordinary series of highly finished drawings made in preparation for a treatise on human anatomy remained unpublished, Albrecht Dürer's 'Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion' (Four Books on Human Proportion) was published posthumously in 1528.

Room 3 list of works (clockwise in order of hang)

**Baccio Bandinelli
(Italian, 1493–1560)**

Study after the 'Laocoön',
1520–24

Red chalk on paper

Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle
Stampe, Florence

Jan Gossaert (Flemish, c. 1478– 1532)

Studies after the 'Spinario' and Other Sculptures, c. 1509

Pen and brown ink on paper

Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden

Gossaert travelled to Rome with his patron, the humanist and diplomat Philip of Burgundy, where he was asked to make copies of ancient sculptures.

This sheet shows a variety of works, including the famous antique bronze known as the 'Spinario' (Boy with Thorn), which the artist drew from a low vantage point. Gossaert's study of ancient sculpture completely transformed his approach to depicting the human body.

Workshop of Severo da Ravenna (Italian, active 1496– 1525/38)

Spinario, c. 1500–25

Bronze

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Samuel H. Kress Collection

Luca Signorelli (Italian, c. 1440/50–1523)



Figures in a Landscape:
Two Nude Youths;
Man, Woman and Child, c. 1490

Oil on panel

Toledo Museum of Art.

Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment.

Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey

Signorelli was much admired for his mastery of representing the nude figure. In these panels, which originally formed part of an altarpiece, the motif of the young man seen from behind is particularly striking.

The pose of the youth seated next to him recalls that of the so-called 'Spinario' (Boy with Thorn).

Antico **(Italian, c. 1460–1528)**

Apollo Belvedere, c. 1490

Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung,
Frankfurt am Main

Re-discovered in 1489, the so-called 'Apollo Belvedere' was installed in the Belvedere courtyard of the Vatican and quickly became one of the most celebrated antique sculptures in Rome, inspiring a great number of Renaissance artists.

The goldsmith Antico became famous for his precious, small-scale versions of famous works from antiquity, which were extremely sought-after at the time.

Pisanello

(Italian, c. 1395–c. 1455)

Four Studies of a Female Nude,
an Annunciation and Two
Studies of a Woman Swimming,
mid-1420s–early 1430s

Metalpoint and pen and brown ink on vellum

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
(former Koenigs Collection)

Albrecht Dürer

(German, 1471–1528)

Eve, c. 1504

Pen and brown ink on paper

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Presented by Chambers Hall, 1855

Dürer made multiple preparatory drawings for his celebrated engraving 'Adam and Eve' (shown at the beginning of this exhibition). The vertical line seen in this sketch hints at the artist's obsession with the geometric construction of the human body.

He would eventually bring together his thoughts on the subject in his 'Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion' (Four Books on Human Proportion).

Raphael (Italian, 1483–1520)



The Three Graces, c. 1517–18

Red chalk on paper

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Presumably going back to life studies from the same model in different poses, Raphael here arranges the three female nudes in relation to each other, carefully modelling some areas while leaving others unresolved.

This study subsequently served as a model for the Three Graces in the 'Feast of the Gods' at the Villa Farnesina in Rome.

Raphael

(Italian, 1483–1520)

Studies for the 'Disputa',
1509–11

Pen and brown ink on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Very different in nature from the nearby study for the Villa Farnesina, this is an early design for one of the philosophers in the 'Disputa' at the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican. The nude figure is still visible underneath the quickly-sketched drapery.

Fra Bartolomeo

(Italian, 1473–1517)

Study for the Central Group of
a Lamentation (Pietà), 1511–13

Red chalk on paper, squared

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
(former Koenigs Collection)

Pontormo

(Italian, 1494–1557)

Study of a Nude Boy, c. 1518

Red chalk on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Parmigianino

(Italian, 1503–1540)

Reclining Male Figure, c. 1526–27

Pen and brown ink and wash heightened with white
on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

In preparation for an altarpiece (now at the National Gallery, London), Parmigianino studied the pose of Saint Jerome from a nude model, even though the saint appears partially clothed in the painting.

Francesco di Giorgio (Italian, 1439–1501)

Human Proportions as the Basis for Church Plans

Trattato di architettura civile e militare
(Treatise on Civil and Military Architecture),
1477/80–84

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence

The rediscovery of 'De architectura' (On Architecture) by Vitruvius – a treatise from Classical antiquity that linked the proportion of temples and their symmetry to the human body – inspired a new and continuously expanding preoccupation with approaches to the ideal proportions of the human figure.

Cesare Cesariano **(Italian, 1475–1543)**

The Vitruvian Man

Vitruvius, *De architectura* (On Architecture), 1521

Library Special Collections,

Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles

Albrecht Dürer **(German, 1471–1528)**

Figure of a Woman in Motion

Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion

(Four Books on Human Proportion), 1528

Library Special Collections,

Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles

Michelangelo Buonarroti (Italian, 1475–1564)

A Male Nude with Proportions Indicated, c. 1515–20

Red chalk on paper

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Like Leonardo, Michelangelo was fascinated by human anatomy. Despite their shared interest in the musculature of the human body, Michelangelo seems to be more interested in its pictorial representation.

The annotations and sketches in the margins suggest that this sheet may have served a didactic purpose.

Showcase centre of room

Leonardo da Vinci **(Italian,** **1452–1519)**



The Anatomy of the Shoulder and Neck, c. 1510–11

Pen and brown ink and wash over black chalk on paper

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Leonardo dissected bodies on numerous occasions and made a series of detailed drawings in preparation for a treatise on human anatomy.

This double-sided sheet is devoted to the anatomy of the shoulder and the neck, containing different views as well as detailed annotations, added by the artist in his characteristic mirror script.

Room 4

Beyond the Ideal Nude

While showing great interest in the idealised male and female nude, artists also looked towards the vulnerability of the human condition, not least in the bloodied figure of the persecuted Christ. Pious Christians derived meaning from engaging with the frank terms of Christ's corporeal sacrifice.

The martyrdom of saints similarly acted as a metaphor for heroism in the face of torture, and vivid detail emphasised the pain suffered at the hands of their persecutors.

Saint Jerome became frequently depicted, his gaunt physical state acting as a stark visual reminder of religious commitment and the denial of material needs.

Artists also created haunting depictions of subjects such as witches and furies. Particularly popular was Hans Baldung Grien's 'Witches' Sabbath', which presented women as demonic nudes, rather than as beauties to be desired.

Room 4 list of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Rosso Fiorentino (Italian, 1494–1540)

Judith with the Head of
Holofernes, 1520s

Red chalk on paper

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,
Dalzell Hatfield Memorial Fund

According to a story from the Old Testament, Judith saved her people by decapitating Holofernes – an Assyrian general who had laid siege to her hometown – after he attempted to seduce her.

Rather unusually, both Judith and her maidservant are shown naked, drawing attention to the contrast between the youthful and the ageing body, a subject more common in northern Europe.

Unknown Artist (German)



Elderly Bather, c. 1480

Boxwood with polychromy

Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung,

Frankfurt am Main

**Attributed to Jan
Wellens de Cock
(Netherlandish, active
c. 1490–1527)**

The Temptation of Saint
Anthony, c. 1520

Oil on panel

Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Hans Baldung Grien



**(German, 1484/85–
1545)**

The Witches' Sabbath, 1510

Chiaroscuro woodcut

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

Baldung's frenzied nocturnal scene, an unsettling visualisation of the diabolic powers of witchcraft, encapsulates the irrational fears and obsessions of theologians and demonologists at the time.

This chiaroscuro woodcut was widely circulated and quickly became one of Baldung's most popular prints.

Albrecht Dürer **(German, 1471–1528)**

Composition with Five Figures
(‘The Desperate Man’),
c. 1515–16

Etching

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

One of Dürer’s most enigmatic compositions, this scene shows a male nude seated on the ground, head bowed, with his arms and legs bent awkwardly. He scratches or pulls at his hair, as if in a state of anguish.

A dreamlike assembly of figures crowds around him: a sleeping nude woman approached by a pensive satyr holding a tankard; a middle-aged, fashionably dressed man in profile; and a craggy older man, lurking in the shadows.

Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio (Italian, c. 1500/05– 1565)

Fury, c. 1524–25

Engraving

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The Elisha Whittlesey Collection,

The Elisha Whittlesey Fund

Caraglio's engraving after a design by Rosso Fiorentino depicts a howling figure riding a dragon-like monster, his left hand wrapped with a snake and clutching a skull.

Rosso, inspired by the recently excavated 'Laocoön', appears to be reacting against Michelangelo's athletic, heroic nudes on the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

Workshop of Hans Leu



the Elder (Swiss, active 1470–1510)

The Martyrdom of the Ten
Thousand, c. 1508–09

Tempera on panel

Swiss National Museum, Zurich

According to a legend, Emperor Hadrian ordered for a large group of Roman soldiers, who had converted to Christianity, to be tortured until they renounced their decision.

This panel depicts the martyrs being impaled on thorn bushes, calling to mind Christ's own suffering.

Simon Bening (Flemish, c. 1483– 1561)

The Flagellation of Christ

Prayer Book of Albrecht of Brandenburg, c. 1525–30

Tempera, gold paint and gold leaf on vellum

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Attributed to Konrad von Vechta (German, c. 1380–c. 1440)

Saint Barbara's Escape from
Her Father; The Torture of
Saint Barbara by Knife and
Scourge, c. 1430–35

Kalanti Altarpiece

Tempera on panel

The National Museum of Finland, Helsinki

One of the wings of the so-called Kalanti Altarpiece, this panel depicts two episodes from the life of Saint Barbara.

Escaping from her father, who had threatened to kill her because of her Christian faith (above), she is eventually caught and tortured by knife and scourge (below).

Saint Barbara's innocent, unblemished beauty is juxtaposed with the unsettling and graphic representation of her suffering.

Plinth centre of room

Donatello

(Italian, c. 1386–1466)

Saint Jerome, 1460s

Polychromed wood

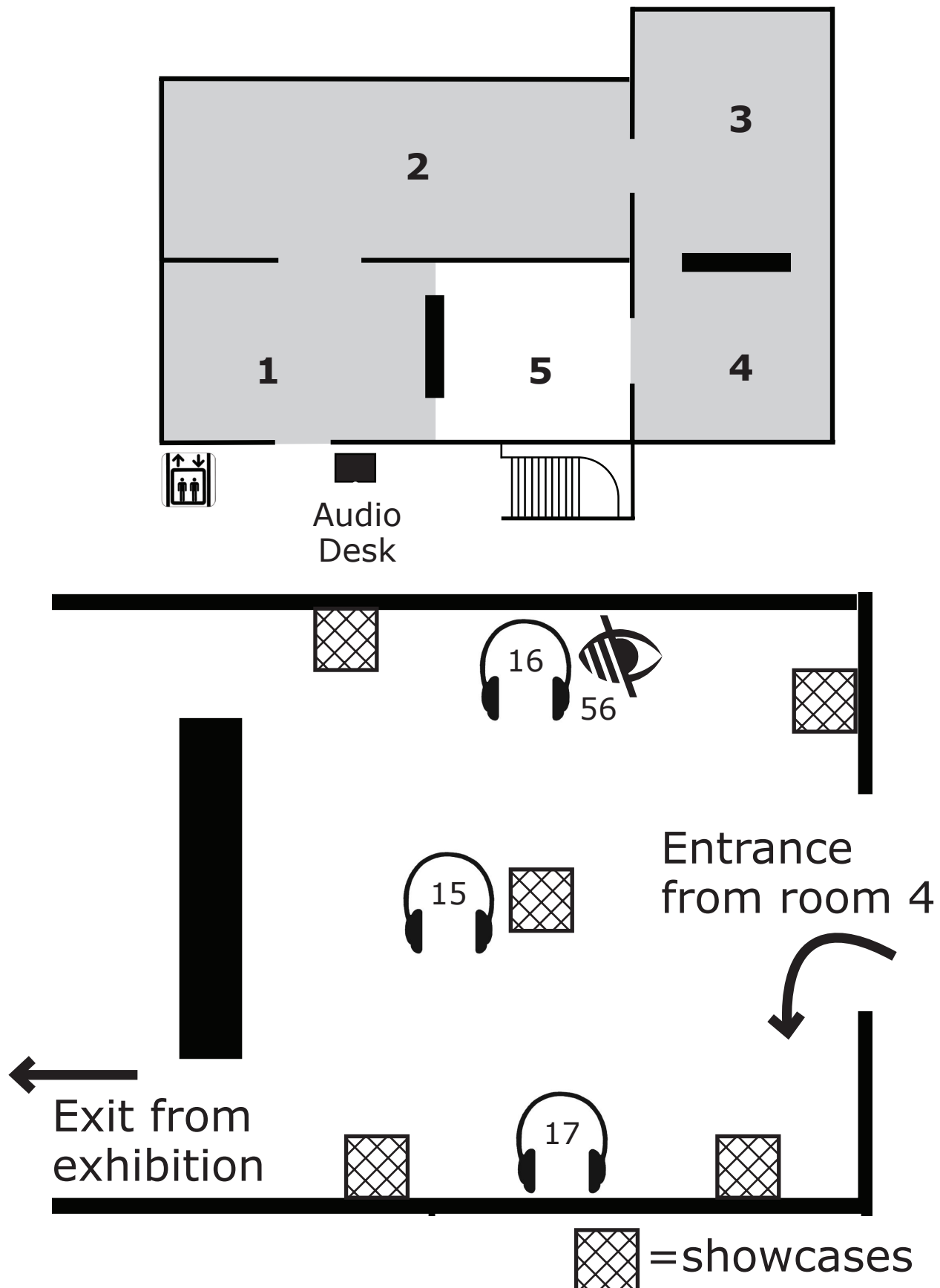
Pinacoteca Comunale di Faenza

The penitent Saint Jerome is shown scourging himself with a rock to quell carnal desire, his body reflecting long-term exposure to the desert.

This wood sculpture is indebted to Donatello's celebrated depiction of another ascetic body, the penitent Mary Magdalene, commissioned for the Baptistry in Florence.

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

You are in room 5



Multimedia tour room 5



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



Jacometto Veneziano or close follower,
Portrait of a Man; Lovers in an Interior,
before 1497



Pietro Perugino, Combat between
Love and Chastity, 1503-05



Agnolo Bronzino, Saint Sebastian,
c.1533

Room 5

Personalising the Nude

The broad appeal of the nude extended to the novel and personal ways in which Renaissance patrons sought to incorporate it into the works of art they commissioned.

These ranged from commemorative medals – featuring the patron's portrait on one side and allegorical nude figures on the other – to elaborate decorative schemes for their palaces, including paintings as well as sculptures.

Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, was one of the few female patrons of the time, and the nude was a recurring subject in her collection. From 1492, she commissioned a series of allegorical paintings for her illustrious 'studiolo' – a

room designated for study and contemplation – first from her court artist, Andrea Mantegna, and later from Perugino, whose 'Combat between Love and Chastity' can be seen here.

Room 5 list of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Simone Bianco (Italian, c. 1475–c. 1553)

**Bust of a Young Woman,
c. 1520**

Marble

Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Idealised portraits such as this – known at the time as ‘belle donne’ (beautiful women) – were particularly popular in Venice in the early sixteenth century.

Their meaning remains somewhat ambivalent: a bared breast could be deliberately sensual, while also symbolising sincerity and love.

Agnolo Bronzino



(Italian, 1503–1572)

Saint Sebastian, c. 1533

Oil on panel

Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Bronzino's notably sensual 'Saint Sebastian' differs from earlier depictions of the same subject. The saint, no longer tied to a tree but casually seated, is shown close-up and half-length, much like in a portrait.

By blurring the boundary between the sacred and the secular, the painting remains intriguingly ambiguous.

Antico

(Italian, c. 1460–1528)

Bust of a Young Man, c. 1520

Leaded bronze with partial silvering

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

This copy of an ancient Roman marble bust is probably one of several such works commissioned by Isabella d'Este from Antico between 1519 and 1522.

They were installed in her 'grotta' in the Gonzaga palace in Mantua, as was Antico's bronze statuette of Hercules and Antaeus (shown nearby).

Dosso Dossi

(Italian, c. 1486–1542)

Allegory of Fortune, c. 1530

Oil on canvas

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

The young man clasping a bundle of lottery tickets (Isabella d'Este's personal emblem) represents Chance, while the young woman with the cornucopia – seated on a bubble that could burst at any time – is Fortuna.

This allegory would have acted as a reminder that even powerful ruling families relied on good fortune.

Antico

(Italian, c. 1460–1528)

Hercules and Antaeus, model
created by 1511, cast 1519

Bronze

Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer

Pietro

Perugino

(Italian, 1445/48– 1523)



Combat between Love and
Chastity, 1503–05

Tempera on canvas

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Peintures

This is one of several mythological paintings commissioned by Isabella d'Este for her celebrated 'studiolo' at the Castello di San Giorgio in Mantua. In numerous letters, Isabella had provided minute instructions for this allegory.

The overall symmetry of the composition is markedly at odds with the unsettling violence of the scene, which features the fight between Venus (right) and Diana (left) at centre stage.

Unknown Artist (French, fifteenth century)

Constantine the Great on
Horseback; Fountain of Life
with Christian Allegory, after
casts 1402–13

Copper alloy

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Gift of Mr and Mrs. Alain Moatti, 1988

Portrait medals, an adaptation of Roman coins, were an innovation of the Renaissance. The earliest, from fifteenth-century France, commemorated the first Christian emperors.

In Italy, medals with portraits of contemporary rulers, such as the Este of Ferrara, were popularised by the artist

Pisanello. Owners exchanged them as tokens of friendship and patronage. The reverse side commonly shows an allegorical scene alluding to the sitter.

Pisanello **(Italian, c. 1395–c.** **1455)**

Leonello d'Este;
Allegory of Prudent Council,
1444–50

Copper alloy

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Samuel H. Kress Collection

Pisanello

(Italian, c. 1395–c. 1455)

Cecilia Gonzaga;
Allegory of Chastity, 1447

Lead alloy

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Samuel H. Kress Collection

Giovanni Boldu (Italian, active c. 1454–77)

Self-portrait all'antica;
The Artist, a Genius and Death,
1458

Copper alloy

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Samuel H. Kress Collection

Showcase centre of room

Jacometto Veneziano or close follower (Italian, active 1472– 97)



Portrait of a Man;
Lovers in an Interior, before
1497

Oil on panel

Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

This portrait was probably commissioned in Venice by a merchant from northern Europe.

The nude couple on the back of the panel, an unashamed celebration of sensual temptation, is seen through an illusionistic window frame, turning viewer into voyeur.

Your feedback, please

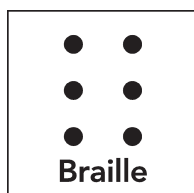
As we are committed to access for all, we would like your feedback on our large-print provision. Feedback forms are available from the Information Desk on the ground floor.

We also offer one-to-one audio descriptive tours of the exhibitions with trained volunteer audio describers.

Wheelchair users can also benefit from our volunteers, who can assist with taking you around the galleries so you can enjoy our exhibitions at your leisure. With prior notice we can arrange these at a time that fits in with your schedule. Contact me for further information.

Thank you.

Molly Bretton, Access Officer



InTouch  **at the RA**

Typography & layout: Portugal Prints; Brent, Wandsworth
and Westminster Mind www.bwwmind.org.uk

© Copyright Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2019