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## Leonardo in London

Art lovers, make a note in your diary: starting November 9th, London's National Gallery is hosting the most comprehensive exhibition ever held of the paintings of the Italian Renaissance genius, Leonardo da Vinci.



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Lady with Ermine | © Princes Czartoryski Foundation



Under the title *Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan*, the exhibition draws together paintings from collections around the world in **an unprecedented display of the rare surviving works of the Italian master**. Over 60 works - paintings and drawings by Leonardo and his followers - will be on display at the **National Gallery from November 9th until February 5th 2012**.

In the past, exhibitions have focused on different aspects of the work of the Renaissance genius such as his role as inventor, scientist and draughtsman, but **this exhibition is dedicated to the aims and techniques of Leonardo as a painter**, and concentrates on the work produced during his time as court painter to Duke Ludovic Sforza in Milan in the late 1480s and 1490s.

Among the works on display will be **the National Gallery's own recently restored *Virgin of the Rocks*** alongside the sister piece on loan from the Louvre. Other works brought to London for the exhibition include *La Belle Ferroniere*, also from the Louvre, the *Madonna Litta*, from the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, and *Saint Jerome*, from the Vatican.

One of the jewels of the exhibition is **the renowned portrait of Cecilia Gallerani (*Lady with Ermine*)**, painted between 1488 and 1490 and considered **the first modern portrait**, whose pose, expression and gaze directed somewhere mysteriously outside of the picture frame, transmit a sense of the inner life and psyche of the subject.

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Advertisement for Mira Showers. The image shows a shower head with water spraying. The text 'mira SHOWERS' is at the top, and 'keeps an eye on the temperature,' is at the bottom.

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*Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist I* © National Gallery, London



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*Virgin of the Rocks I* © National Gallery, London

with the **legendary Venice Simplon Orient Express** to offer a **nine-day tour to Milan and Florence** in May, 2012. **In the company of a National Gallery expert**, the trip promises to be the ultimate cultural experience. Prices start around £6,500 per person, and the tour begins in **London** on May 16th with a **private viewing at the British Museum** of selected drawings by the two masters.

An overnight journey in the **period splendour of the sumptuously restored train** will take travellers to Verona and then on to Milan for three nights, with a further three nights in Florence. Highlights of the tour include visits to the **Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, which houses the famed Last Supper**, the Ambrosian Library and the **Uffizi Gallery in Florence**. Hotel accommodation is included in the exclusive Goring Hotel in London, the Hotel Principe di Savoia in **Milan** and the Villa San Michele in **Florence**.

#### **Further information:**

[National Gallery](#)

[Venice Simplon Orient Express](#)

As painter at the court of Milan, Leonardo took advantage of his position, and the good salary which came with it, enjoying the freedom to **explore ways to capture and record proportions, expressions and human anatomy** as well as numerous forms of plants and animals. The research undertaken by the Renaissance artist at this time led to **extraordinary paintings which show the artist's aspiration for the ideals of beauty** and carefully balance the real and the ideal, the natural and the divine. The exhibition at the National Gallery examines this **constant search for perfection** in the representation of the human figure.

The final part of the exhibition features a **near-contemporary, full-scale copy of Leonardo's famous Last Supper**, on loan from the Royal Academy, presented **alongside all the surviving preparatory drawings made by Leonardo**, which promises to give visitors an insight into the design and execution of such a large-scale painting.

For art-lovers who want to **learn yet more about the secrets of the life and works the great Italian Renaissance artists Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo**, the National Gallery has teamed up