

Press release

Exhibition

**September 26, 2008 –
January 5, 2009**

Napoléon Hall

This exhibition is organized by the Louvre and the Réunion des musées nationaux.



Prayer in the Garden (1457-1459, detail)
Transferred from wood to canvas and then glued to wood. H. 71.1 cm; W. 93.7 cm.
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tours; inv. 803-1- 24
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MANTEGNA 1431 - 1506

In September 2008, the Louvre opens a major retrospective of the work of one of the great masters of the Italian Renaissance: Andrea Mantegna. For the first time in France, this exhibition will allow visitors to explore the full range of the achievements of this influential figure in Western painting and to discover the environment in which his career was nurtured. French museums are home to a number of remarkable masterpieces by Mantegna, by far the largest grouping of his works outside Italy. The exhibition, whose highlights also include a number of exceptional loans from public and private collections worldwide, will attempt to trace, through works exemplifying a wide variety of techniques, the major phases in Mantegna's career as an artist, his influence on his contemporaries and the early dissemination of his works throughout Europe.

Renowned for his indomitable personality, Mantegna was an avid antiquarian who moved in sophisticated humanist circles, for whom he embodied the Renaissance ideal in northern Italy as early as the mid-15th century. Mantegna's characteristically severe style, which applied a rigor and consistency never seen before his time, emerged from an enthusiastic admiration for classical antiquity, the artist's vast ornamental vocabulary and his cherished ideal of virtue, the scrupulous reproduction of nature by way of an exacting—and often bold—use of perspective, but also found inspiration in Flemish painting and evinced a genuine fascination with sculpture. Throughout his lifetime, Mantegna resolutely adhered to the principles developed in the early years of his career, endowing his oeuvre with a very particular stylistic harmony. He brought the same seeming effortlessness, the same inventive spark to works executed in several distinct art forms, sometimes experimenting with new techniques in order to convey his ideas and artistic aspirations with the greatest precision possible.

The considerable size of this retrospective, which will offer visitors the opportunity to view some 190 works by Mantegna and contemporary artists, is therefore complemented by the extraordinary visual range of the works on display. Although the exhibition focuses primarily on the artist's painted works, a number of drawings, engravings, sculptures and decorative art objects will also be presented. Considering the rarity of surviving works from this period, this retrospective will certainly stand as a watershed event, as it will bring together an exceptional number of works on French soil by an artist of great significance, and especially since many of these works are essential elements in the artist's oeuvre, representing a wide range of art forms and executed at many different stages of his life, thus allowing us to reconstruct in a very compelling fashion the career of this genius. This monographic exhibition, in a presentation designed by Richard Peduzzi and Cécile Degos, offers visitors a new perspective on these masterpieces. Among Mantegna's greatest works, some are quite spectacular in their dimensions and their breathtaking use of perspective, while others are characterized by an extreme refinement in execution or find inspiration in the more intimate scenes of everyday life. Here we have the paradox of this artist of great austerity, laying on his antiquarian erudition sometimes a bit too thickly, but at the same time unable to obscure an authentic sensitivity, an astonishing talent for observation, a poetic vein, often tinged with melancholy and sometimes humour as well.

Exhibition curators: Dominique Thiébaud, Curator in Charge, Department of Paintings, Musée du Louvre and Giovanni Agosti, Professor of Modern Art History, Università Statale di Milano.

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The exhibition is organized essentially along chronological lines, divided into the key phases of Mantegna's career. However the conception of the retrospective also embraces several specific themes that will draw the attention of visitors: the relationship that existed between the painter and his brother-in-law Giovanni Bellini, his activity as a supplier of models and designs for engraving, decoration projects and decorative objects, the dissemination of his inventions and, more generally, the transmission of his art to succeeding generations.

I - Padua in Artistic Ferment (1440–1460)

Andrea Mantegna was the second son of a carpenter named Biagio and was born in 1431 in Isola di Carturo, located between Padua and Vicenza in the Republic of Venice. When just ten years old, he arrived in Padua as an apprentice to the painter Francesco Squarcione and also became the latter's adoptive son in 1442. Padua was then a city in artistic ferment, stirred by several generations of artists, patrons and writers. Against this backdrop, a new generation of scholars enamoured of the past found a champion in Mantegna's rediscovery of antiquity. The early accolades showered on Mantegna celebrated the strongly sculptural nature of his paintings, produced in a school where it was customary, as was often the case at this period, to ensure proficiency in all forms of artistic practice. Squarcione is known to have made available to his students his collection of antiquarian artefacts, highly appreciated in a city whose many humanists pursued a passionate engagement with archaeology. Among the one hundred and thirty-seven students known to have passed through Squarcione's school, many were also attracted to the modern approach informing his teaching. For instance, Squarcione introduced his disciples to the works of Florentine masters having worked in the Republic of Venice beginning in the 1430s, in particular Donatello (1386–1466), who was active in Padua between 1443 and 1453. The figures and reliefs, characterized by a vigorous style and a heavy dose of pathos, created by the sculptor of the altar of the Basilica Sant'Antonio (called the Basilica del Santo) in Padua had a definite impact on Mantegna, as the young artist was fiercely opposed to the sophistication of the international Gothic style. Thus, in contrast to Pisanello, one of this style's most illustrious exponents, Mantegna began to apply, with an innovative rigor, the laws of perspective codified by the architect and theoretician Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472).

In 1448, Mantegna separated himself from Squarcione. His first work as an independent master, today lost, was an altarpiece intended for the Church of Santa Sofia in Padua. That same year he was commissioned, along with Nicolò Pizola and two Venetian painters, Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alamegna, to decorate the Cappella Ovetari of the Chiesa degli Eremitani (Church of the Hermits) also in Padua, which was almost completely destroyed by an Allied bombing raid in 1944. This first major work, which he completed on his own, already explores two themes that would preoccupy the artist throughout his entire career: illusion and antiquity. It also reveals another of the artist's abiding fancies: the introduction of purely decorative figures, not actively involved in the scene at hand, which had sparked the imagination of Marcel Proust. By recreating an ancient world, filled with pride and seriousness of purpose, in order to juxtapose aesthetic narrative and historical fact, Mantegna, a Renaissance painter, became a history painter and thus cemented his place in history.

II - Giovanni Bellini and Mantegna

In 1453, Mantegna married Nicolosia, the daughter of Jacopo Bellini, thus becoming the brother-in-law of the painters Giovanni and Gentile Bellini and forging ties with the most prominent studio in Venice. The *Saint Justina* from the polyptych created by Mantegna for the church of the Santa Guistina convent in Padua and completed in early 1455, reflects the influence of his new Venetian family. This particular work has a delicacy and tenderness in its forms and colors that resonates with the finesse and sensibilities of the earliest works by the artist's brother-in-law Giovanni Bellini. A lively exchange of influences between the two artists took root later in the 1450s, which can be seen in Mantegna's *Madonna and Child with Saints* in the Musée Jacquemart-André and other works of this period. Conversely, in the predella relating scenes from the life of Saint Drusiana, it is the Venetian who is clearly under the influence of his Paduan brother-in-law. It is therefore not surprising that research has prompted some changes in attributions: for example, the *Death of the Virgin* in the Prado was for many years considered to be a work by Bellini. This same problem of attribution is raised, in a more complex fashion, for several of the drawings illustrating the theme of the Pietà.

III - On the San Zeno Altarpiece

The monumental triptych painted by Mantegna for Basilica San Zeno Maggiore in Verona was most likely commissioned by the protonotary apostolic Gregorio Correr, abbot of the San Zeno convent, in late 1456. The *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints*, today still intact within its original sumptuous frame, was returned to Verona after having been removed by Napoleon, while the panels depicting the *Crucifixion* (Musée du Louvre) and the *Prayer in the Garden* and the *Resurrection* (both in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Tours) together constituted the base of the altarpiece and have exceptionally been reunited in their original presentation for the exhibition. Created by Mantegna in his Paduan studio between 1456 and 1459, this stupendous triptych is one of the greatest expressions of the artist's genius and exerted a powerful influence on painting throughout Northern Italy. It may be considered as the first altarpiece truly in the Renaissance style owing to its composition and its architectural vocabulary, which seek inspiration in classical antiquity, the unified conception of the lower space, its masterful application of perspective, and the monumentality and dignity conveyed by the figures, which clearly show the lessons gleaned by Mantegna in studying the works of Donatello.

Demonstrating the full application of illusionistic principles, here Mantegna intimately combines the fictive architecture of the Holy Community with the actual structure of the frame. The careful design of the elaborate gilt frame, the meticulous attention to detail in the landscapes, the garments and the faces of the figures reveal the artist's admiration for Flemish masters such as Jan van Eyck or Rogier van der Weyden. Given the interest in effects of light and backlighting, seen here for the first time in the artist's oeuvre, the elegance and restrained quality of the figures despite an intense emotive force, this work might also bear witness to the influence of the artist's brother-in-law, Giovanni Bellini.

IV - Mantegna in Mantua between 1460 and 1470

In the spring of 1460, following the installation of the San Zeno Altarpiece in Verona, Andrea Mantegna finally decided to accept the invitation offered some four years earlier by the Marquis Ludovico Gonzaga of Mantua. From then until his death in 1506, Mantegna would serve as the official court painter of the Gonzagas, working successively under Ludovico (1444–1478), Federico (1478–1484), Francesco II (1484–1519) and the latter's demanding Ferrara-born wife Isabella d'Este (1474–1539). His first major commission was the decoration of the chapel of the Castello di San Giorgio, adjacent to the ducal palace, which Ludovico had adopted as his residence in 1458. Mantegna designed the ornamentation of the painted panels and the woodwork encrusted with precious stones, as well as the architecture. Unfortunately, drastic alterations made during the Cinquecento largely disfigured this masterpiece. It has been suggested that certain elements of this decoration project could be discerned in several esteemed paintings: the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Circumcision* and the *Ascension*, today in the Uffizi Gallery, the *Death of the Virgin* in Madrid, and the *Christ with the Virgin's Soul* in Ferrara. These paintings are remarkable for their accuracy worthy of a miniaturist. However, despite the monumental spectacle on view in these works, particularly in the *Circumcision*, it is also important to recognize the lyrical realism that emanates from certain details such as the scalpel, the pouting child or, in the *Death of the Virgin*, the landscape in the background with the view of the lake of Mantua. Mantegna's masterpiece of the Mantua period, nine years in the making, occupying the artist from 1465 to 1474, is the series of frescoes covering the walls of what is known today as the *Camera degli Sposi* (The Spouses' Room) representing the various members of the Gonzaga family busy with their daily tasks. With this work, Mantegna reached the pinnacle of his illusionist creativity: the painted oculus on the ceiling, bringing to mind a great circular opening to the sky, with clouds floating by, lends a three-dimensional quality to the figures depicted. Typically dated from about 1470–1475, the *Saint Sebastian* in Vienna has Mantegna giving free rein to his passion for epigraphy, inscribing his signature in the stone in Greek letters. We also note in this work an anthropomorphic cloud—an innovation that also surfaces in the ceiling of the *Camera degli Sposi* and the *Minerva* in the Louvre. These symbolic details, combined with the morbid dignity suffusing the face of the saint in agony, made this painting and its creator a beacon for the international culture of decadence of the late 19th century.

V - On the Aigueperse Saint Sebastian (1478–1490)

The immense *Saint Sebastian* on canvas, which arrived at the Sainte Chapelle d'Aigueperse in Auvergne on the occasion of the marriage of Chiara Gonzaga with Gilbert de Bourbon, Count of Montpensier (1481), appears as a typical example of Mantegna's genius: his persistent fascination for ancient ruins, the play of perspective and *trompe l'oeil* by way of a frame in painted porphyry, perceptiveness and exactitude of observation, encompassing both figures and landscape, the contours of bodies treated as if they were actually reliefs, and finally an exacerbated pathos. As was the case for the *Saint Sebastian* in Vienna, this work also enjoyed a cult following among the surrealists. In 1488, Mantegna was commissioned by Pope Innocent VIII to decorate a chapel in the Vatican's Villa Belvedere with frescoes. As these works were destroyed by Pope Pius VI between 1775 and 1780, our knowledge of them is based on the highly detailed descriptions that have survived, marveling at the ways in which these works constituted a genuine repository of Mantegnesque solutions. This stay in Rome does not seem to have instilled in Mantegna a more scholarly approach to antiquity; instead, he continued to seek inspiration in his fantasies and to idealize antiquity in his subsequent works. *The Christ Seated on a Sarcophagus and Supported by Two Angels* in Copenhagen, whose fine condition allows us to better appreciate the refinement of execution in the treatment of light and certain almost microscopic details, may have been painted during this same period.

VI - Mantegna "invenit"

As a court painter, Mantegna was not allowed to sell his works, as every commission needed to receive the go-ahead from the Gonzagas. It was not unusual for the ruling family to refuse commissions, even when these requests were issued by other powerful nobles. However, the Duchy of Mantua often used the works of Mantegna as diplomatic offerings. The Gonzagas also required the artist to submit designs for different types of objects. This activity, pursued concurrently with his painting, certainly contributed to the reputation of his art beyond Mantua. Furthermore, as the artist was well aware of his own talent and the possibilities for dissemination offered by engraving, he quickly devoted himself to mastering this new technique, examples of which he was able to see in Florence, Padua and especially Venice, where Dutch and Flemish prints were already making their appearance.

Engraving allowed Mantegna to further explore the possibilities of draftsmanship, the veritable foundation of his art. However, scholars are not certain as to whether he actually ever manipulated a burin himself. Mantegna's engravings treated sacred subjects, such as the *Madonna of Humility*, but this new technique also enabled him to give free rein to his fantasies and to create idealized mythological scenes inspired by his vision of antiquity with moral undercurrents, such as the *Battle of Water Deities* where an old woman with sagging breasts embodies Envy. These surprising inventions would be abundantly copied and transferred, even during the artist's lifetime, between different media.

VII - The *Madonna della Vittoria* and the Painted Reliefs (1490s)

The atmosphere of extreme tension created by the *Saint Sebastian* contrasts with the more genteel and serene ambiance of Mantegna's *Madonna della Vittoria* (Madonna of the Victory) commissioned by Francesco II to celebrate his supposed victory over French forces in the battle of Fornovo in 1495. Installed the following year in the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Mantua erected as a votive offering to the Madonna and built, in the words of Vasari, "by order and according to plans conceived by Andrea", this altarpiece depicts the grateful marquis, kneeling at the feet of the Virgin, with the warrior saints Michael and George raising her mantle to shield Francesco, accompanied by the two patron saints of the city of Mantua, Longinus and Andrew, Saint Elizabeth and the young Saint John the Baptist. The scene takes place not in the apse of a church, a theme favored by the Venetians, including Giovanni Bellini, but rather in front of a festive lattice bower, teeming with flowers, exotic birds and fruit with light beaming through: a lyrical invention that would later be taken up by a number of other artists in Northern Italy, notably Correggio. The base of the throne, decorated with trompe l'oeil reliefs, reflects Mantegna's abiding passion for creating the illusion of sculpture. This passion is also evident in a series of illusionist paintings imitating stone or bronze, such as the remarkable *A Sibyl and a Prophet* in the Cincinnati Art Museum, a work on canvas that would lead one to believe it is actually a relief.

VIII - The *Studiolo* of Isabella d'Este (1491–1502)

The first work commissioned by the newly minted marchioness Isabella d'Este for her *studiolo* at the Castello di San Giorgio—references to which may be found as early as November 1491—appears to have been Mantegna's painting *Mars and Venus* known as *Parnassus*, which was completed in 1497. Painted on canvas, as was the case for the other works commissioned for the *studiolo*, it celebrates the illicit love affair of Mars and Venus whose union resulted in the birth of Cupid. In the eyes of several contemporaries, the allusion to Francesco II and Isabella was obvious: the exceptional virtues of the princely couple were portrayed to explain the remarkable blossoming of the arts at the court of Mantua. It is not known whether or not a full decorative and symbolic plan for the entire *studiolo* existed at its creation. In any event, for five years, Mantegna's *Parnassus* was the only painting displayed. Isabella's letters lead us to conclude that the marchioness had wanted to commission paintings that would be "fraught with meaning" from the most celebrated painters of the time: she tried in vain to obtain the collaboration of Giovanni Bellini, Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) and Francesco Francia (around 1450–1517). By 1502, Mantegna had completed the second painting in the series, *Minerva Banishing the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*. His philosophical intent, embodied in very personal inventions, remains extremely complex, despite a multitude of inscriptions designed to elucidate his purpose. At the request of Isabella almost twenty years later, on the occasion of her decision to move her *studiolo* to the Corte Vecchia, Correggio would provide a response to Mantegna in his *Allegories of Vices and Virtues*. The exhibition brings together all of the paintings displayed in the second *studiolo*, as all seven works are in the Louvre's collections. For more than thirty years, the decoration of her *studiolo* was a prime concern for Isabella, and she was always careful to adapt its presentation to the new sensitivity of the court, an ideal of literary and sentimental humanism. In order to cleave to these more lyrical tastes, Mantegna was compelled to leave behind his archaeological and austere approach, bending his imagination to the moralizing allegories then in fashion. Despite his efforts, Isabella seemed to prefer the tender and sentimental work of Perugino and the Ferrara native Lorenzo Costa, who arrived in Mantua in 1506 to succeed Mantegna as court painter.

IX - The *Triumphs of Caesar* (1486–1506)

After having completed the Vatican commission, Mantegna returned to Mantua and progressively retreated into his own private world, devoting himself to the creation of what must certainly be seen as one of the major works of his career, *The Triumphs of Caesar*, which he had already begun in 1486. Scholars remain uncertain as to the origin of the commission or the intended destination for this grandiose series. Ambitious in their dimensions—the nine nearly square canvases measure almost three meters on each side—but also in their subject and approach: the portrayal of a significant event in Roman antiquity, inspired by written accounts and artefacts in the collections of the court of Mantua. In fact, they served as an inexhaustible source of visual references until the 19th century for the characterization of the customs of antiquity. For these canvases, Mantegna developed remarkable optical procedures to give the illusion of movement, and the procession depicted, a genuine panorama of humanity, is bathed in the glow of twilight. For several centuries, this series was repeatedly reproduced, especially in the form of engravings. Part of the British royal collection since their acquisition by Charles I in 1631, these canvases, some of which are in very poor condition, have virtually never left Hampton Court Palace, where they are displayed today. The loan of these works by Queen Elizabeth II in honour of this retrospective at the Louvre is therefore truly an exceptional event.

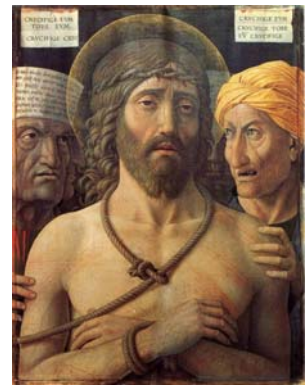
X - Advent of the “Maniera Moderna”

Mirroring the first section, devoted to the artistic effervescence in Padua, the exhibition will close with a presentation of its legacy. The aim is to show how, despite the emergence of a more tender and sentimental sensibility, the adherence of a number of painters to what has come to be known as the “maniera moderna”, including Raphaël and Michelangelo, and the influence of Leonardo da Vinci, some artists, chief among them Correggio, remained faithful, at least in the earlier phases of their careers, to Mantegnesque types and themes and for even longer to some of the old master’s tremendous spatial innovations and illusionist techniques. It is in the context of this containment of a burgeoning sentimentality that we can situate the *Ecce Homo* of the Musée Jacquemart-André. This canvas, which made use of a glue binder and is exceptionally well preserved, demonstrates Mantegna’s loyalty to the aesthetic principles of his youth, exemplifying restrained austerity. This last phase of the artist’s career also includes the *Adoration of the Magi* held in the Getty Museum of Los Angeles, whose composition of half-length figures is inspired, once again, although at a distinct remove, by the work of Donatello.

Beginning in 1504, near the end of his life, Mantegna worked on his own funerary chapel in the Basilica Sant’Andrea in Mantua, the most striking evidence of the social status attained by the artist. His renown had already earned him the admiration of Albrecht Dürer who, during a visit to Venice, set out to meet the master, but Mantegna died in Mantua on September 13, 1506, several days before Dürer’s arrival. The wave of appreciation for Mantegna’s work, already begun during his lifetime, only came to be further enhanced over the centuries, particularly in France. For instance, in 1499, the Cardinal Georges d’Amboise, archbishop of Rouen and a minister under Louis XII, saw Mantegna as “the world’s greatest painter” and had one of the artist’s Triumphs of Caesar copied onto the facade of his Norman château in Gaillon. The artist’s prestige continued into the 16th and 17th centuries—from the Fontainebleau School to Poussin and Stella—while in the 19th century Gustave Moreau and Degas were his champions and Proust was to sing his praises several times in Swann’s Way.



Adoration of the Magi
Ca. 1495-1500. Canvas. H. 54.6; W. 70.7 cm
Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 85 PA 417
© The J. Paul Getty Museum



Ecce Homo
ca. 1500. Canvas. H. 54; W. 42 cm
Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris, inv. 1045
© Institut de France / Musée Jacquemart-André

Visitor information

Press opening: Tuesday, September 23, 2008, from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., Napoleon Hall.

Hours: Open daily except Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and until 8 p.m. on Saturdays and 10 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Admission fees: Mantegna exhibition only: €9.50. Permanent collections + Mantegna exhibition: €13; €11 after 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. Free admission for youths under 18, the unemployed, and holders of the “Louvre Jeunes”, “Louvre Professionnels”, “Louvre Enseignants”, “Louvre Etudiants Partenaires” or “Amis du Louvre” cards.

Further information: +33 (0)1 40 20 53 17 / www.louvre.fr

Related events and publications

Publications:

Exhibition catalogue, *Mantegna*, edited by Giovanni Agosti and Dominique Thiébaud, 480 p., 400 illustrations, about €45.

Exhibition album, *Mantegna*, 48 p., 60 illustration, €8.

The publication of these works was made possible thanks to the generous support of ArjoWiggins.

Récit de Mantegna by Giovanni Agosti, 148 p., 1 color insert, 14 cm x 21 cm, about €19.

Co-published by Musée du Louvre Editions and Hazan.

Educational activities: information.enseignants@louvre.fr

Visitor’s guides: a multimedia guide available in French, English and Italian and a special family-oriented itinerary through the exhibition (more information may be found on the page devoted to the exhibition at www.louvre.fr).

Special evening event with the participation of the exhibition’s curators and designers on Friday, October 17 at 7 p.m.

Visits for teachers (guided tour of the exhibition followed by a presentation of educational objectives) on Wednesdays, October 1 and 8, at 2:30 p.m.

Conference in the Auditorium du Louvre for high-school and university students on Wednesday, October 22.

A pair of events in the series *Voices of Youth* within the exhibition by the students of Université de Paris X Nanterre on Fridays, November 21 and December 5 in the evening from 6 p.m. and on Wednesday, December 17 from 4 to 7 p.m.

Guided tours of the exhibition: +33 (0)1 40 20 52 63 / www.louvre.fr

Conferences and films in
the Auditorium du Louvre
related to the exhibition

MANTEGNA 1431-1506

Wednesday, September 24 at
12:30 p.m.

Presentation of the exhibition

by Giovanni Agosti, Università Statale di Milano and
Dominique Thiébaud, Musée du Louvre, with the participation
of Richard Peduzzi, architect and exhibition designer.

Conference series « Primo pittore del mondo »

This series of conferences attempts to place this major Italian
Renaissance painter within a broad context. The study of the
art and personality of Mantegna will serve as the starting point
for reflections on humanistic values and the issues raised by
the understanding of classical antiquity, whose original
message has often been distorted by modern reinterpretations
and perspectives.

Monday, September 29 at 6:30
p.m.

Mantegna: The Invention of a Humanist Painter

by Keith Christiansen, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New
York

Monday, October 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Andrea Mantegna and the Frescoes of the Chapel in the Church of the Hermits in Padua

by Alberta de Nicolò Salmazo, Università di Padova

Monday, October 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Mantegna, Mantua and the Image of the Roman Empire

by Stephen J. Campbell, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

Monday, October 20 at 6:30 p.m.

The Modern Destiny of Mantegna

by Alessandro del Puppo, Università di Udine

Monday, October 27 at 6:30 p.m.

Ancients and Moderns in the Art of Mantegna

by Jacques Darriulat, Université Paris IV - Sorbonne

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Minerva Banishing the Vices from the Garden of Virtue
Department of Paintings, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 371 © RMN / Gérard Blot

Monday, October 13 at 12:30
p.m.

Films on art / Films by artists

Au commencement l'eau et le lait

by Sarkis (France, 2001, 10 min., color)

After the *Crucifixion* by Mantegna (Louvre)

The Paris-based artist Sarkis takes as his inspiration the polyptych from the San Zeno Altarpiece by Mantegna as the subject of three films. The last of these, *Au commencement l'eau et le lait*, based on the *Crucifixion*, which he deconstructs, depicts the instant preceding its creation. Though this act of reminiscence, he seeks to re-iconify the original work.



The Triumphs of Caesar: The Vase Bearers
After 1490 and before 1506
Canvas. H. 2.66; W. 2.78 m
Hampton Court, The Royal Collection
© 2008, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Mantegna: The Triumphs of Caesar

by Dudley Shaw Ashton (Great-Britain, 1973, 24 min., color, English with French subtitles)

The Triumphs of Caesar, painted between 1486 and 1506, have been considered as Mantegna's greatest work. Cleaned and restored, these canvases reveal a Renaissance-style idealized reconstruction of a triumph in Roman antiquity. The commentary is written and narrated by Sir Anthony Blunt (1907-1983), the eminent British art historian.

La camera degli sposi

by Anna Zanoli (Italy, 1988, 30 min., color, Italian with simultaneous translation). Series: Restored Masterpieces.

Monday, December 15 at 8:30
p.m.

Reading

Andrea Mantegna, from the Lives of the Most Eminent Italian Architects, Painters and Sculptors by Giorgio Vasari (in French), edited in 1550 and 1568. Italian text and new French translation by Louis Frank, curator at the Graphics Arts department, published by Officina Libraria.

Auditorium du Louvre

- General entrance via the Louvre pyramid or the Carrousel arcade
- Priority entrance via the Passage Richelieu

Further information

- 00 33 (0)1 40 20 55 55,
- Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- www.louvre.fr