Between 1600 and 1650 a surprisingly novel kind of art evolved in Rome. The favourable economic situation – Catholic reform was on the advance, ensuring plentiful commissions from ecclesiastical quarters – attracted artists from other regions of Italy as well as from France and the Low Countries. Within a very short space of time the papal city transformed itself into an artistic centre of almost irresistible influence. The art of this time was marked by a hitherto unprecedented visual munificence, a lively mixture of realism and imagination, and not least by a highly emotional character.

It all began around the year 1600, when the Milanese artist Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610) created a furore with his paintings in Rome. With their thrilling naturalism, dramatic use of light and shade (chiaroscuro) and powerful narrative structure, Caravaggio’s works represent a caesura in the history of European painting. A younger generation of artists with an international outlook – today referred to as the Caravaggists – adopted his radical style of painting, disseminating it across large parts of Italy and the rest of Europe. Only a few years after Caravaggio’s death the Neapolitan-born artist Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) entered the Roman art
scene, quickly rising to become its new star. His figures were imbued with passionate movement from the start. He visualized even invisible forces, not least those of the psyche, by painterly use of light and moving drapery. His extensive oeuvre encompassed lifelike sculptures and busts, richly decorated chapels, monumental architecture and even paintings.

Caravaggio and Bernini both displayed a novel interest in depicting as well as evoking strong feelings and passions. How can they be explored and rendered in art? What formal strategies are particularly suited to this task? These questions interested not only Caravaggio and Bernini but also a number of other painters and sculptors, including the classicist masters Nicolas Poussin and François du Quesnoy, – and not least the poets and composers of the time. This art is also invariably about an intellectual examination of states of emotion: as the distinguished art historian Erwin Panofsky noted, people in the age of the Baroque ‘not only feel, but are also aware of their own feelings’.

The exhibition is divided into sections according to concepts that were common in contemporary discourse about art: meraviglia & stupore (wonderment & astonishment), orrore & terribilità (horror & the terrifying), amore (love), moto & azione (motion & action), vivacità (liveliness), passione & compassione (suffering & compassion), visione (vision), and scherzo (jest, joke, hoax). In contrast to the name ‘Baroque’ that was only later applied to this epoch, these terms were familiar to the artists presented here and their contemporaries. They show one possible manner of interpretation without excluding any others. Today – a time in which emotions once again loom large – they can serve to sharpen our eyes not only to an earlier visual culture but also to the present day.
1 Piazza del Popolo
2 Piazza di Spagna
3 Santa Maria della Vittoria
4 Palazzo Barberini
5 Fontana di Trevi
6 Santa Maria sopra Minerva
7 Pantheon
8 San Luigi dei Francesi
9 Palazzo Giustiniani
10 San Pietro
11 Piazza Navona

Artist’s Houses
1 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1643–1680
2 Caravaggio, c. 1603–1606

Art Works (see booklet numbers)
14 Bernini, *The Ecstasy of St Teresa of Ávila*
24 Carracci, *St Sebastian Thrown into the Cloaca Maxima*
25 Poussin, *The Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Titus*
27 Bernini, *David*
29 Bernini, *Triton*
30 Bernini, *Elephant and Obelisk*
47 Mochi, *St Veronica*
48 Caravaggio, *The Crowning with Thorns*
49 Guercino, *Mary Magdalen with Two Angels*
53 Bernini, *Four Grotesque Heads of Men*

Like many artists of his time, Caravaggio was drawn to Rome by the favourable art market. There the public commissions he executed made him famous virtually overnight. In 1606, having inflicted a fatal wound on his rival in a swordfight, he fled to Malta, where he hoped to rehabilitate himself by being accepted into the Order of the Knights Hospitaller. Forced to flee once more after another fight, he subsequently painted major religious works in Sicily and later Naples. In 1610 he fell ill and died before he could reach Rome and receive a papal pardon.

The son of a sculptor, even as a young artist, Bernini was capable of creating astonishingly lifelike portrait busts and sculptural groups that were full of movement. As an architect he left his mark on Rome’s cityscape with his remodelling of St Peter’s Square. His patrons included members of the aristocracy as well as popes and cardinals. Bernini was uniquely adept at exploiting their favour and flattering his clientele with his polished manners – and also at outbidding his fellow-artists in vying for commissions.
Gallery 1

Meraviglia & Stupore (1–4)
Orrore & Terribilità (5–9)
1

Francesco Mochi (1580–1654)

**YOUTH (ST JOHN THE BAPTIST OR THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL?)**
c. 1605/10, marble
Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago

The dreamy gaze and parted lips of this youth imbue him with a highly expressive character, as does his pose, turned sharply to the left. Mochi's powerful creation gives the youth himself a sense of wonderment. Often identified as John the Baptist, the figure's forceful sideways look makes it more likely that it represents the Archangel Gabriel. Together with a bust of Mary as its pendant it probably formed part of an Annunciation group in a small chapel.

2

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610)

**NARCISSUS**
c. 1600, canvas
Rome, Gallerie Nazionali d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini

The young and handsome Narcissus cold-heartedly rejected all attempts to gain his affection. As punishment, the goddess Nemesis made him fall in love with his own reflection in a pool. Completely entranced by his own image, Narcissus can no longer tear himself free. With his left hand he caresses the surface of the water, as if trying to seduce his own image. In Caravaggio's painting, looking into the water has caused initial wonderment to turn into an ill-fated love.

3

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680)

**MEDUSA**
1638–1640, marble
Rome, Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori

The mythical figure of Medusa, whose hair was transformed into a nest of serpents, turned anyone who looked at her to stone. Avoiding this deadly power with the aid of a polished shield, the hero Perseus succeeded in beheading Medusa. Bernini carved the writhing snakes out of the stone with consummate mastery. With her open mouth and the tensed, sinuous curve of her eyebrows, Medusa's facial expression strikingly conveys fear and terror at her imminent demise.

4

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610)

**BOY BITTEN BY A LIZARD**
c. 1597/98, canvas
Florence, Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi

Reaching for the succulent cherries in front of him, a handsome youth is surprised by a lizard which darts out of the shadows and bites him. In shock he snatches back his hand, emitting a small cry of pain and astonishment. Caravaggio concentrates the action into a brief, intense moment: desire for the fruit, the bite and the boy's immediate reaction are almost simultaneous happenings. With the subject's direct gaze and the confined field of view, the picture demands that the viewer empathize with the boy's fright.
Alarmed at reports of the newborn Jesus being ‘king of the Jews’, King Herod of Judea ordered the slaying of all infant boys under the age of two. Reni uses stark contrasts to depict the story in his painting, framing the animated dramatic events at the centre of the picture with two calmer zones. Two putti with palm fronds – symbols of the martyr's death suffered by the innocent children – look down on the gruesome scene and the pallid, lifeless bodies lying on the ground. The horrified faces of the mothers and children graphically express the terrifying nature of the scene (terribilità) and their horror (orrore) at it. The imminent threat of death culminates in the dagger at the centre of the composition that simultaneously emphasizes the symmetry of the picture.

Guido Reni's painting was commissioned by the merchants Ercole and Agostino Berò as an altarpiece for their family chapel in the church of San Domenico in Bologna. Reni painted it in Rome, where the art of the late Caravaggio continued to be influential. Reni himself, however, was a representative of the classicistic movement exemplified by the Carracci (nos. 24, 43, 44), who even when rendering drastic subject matter such as this were intent on achieving a harmonious and ‘beautiful’ composition.

The beautiful Judith freed the besieged Jewish town of Bethulia by beheading the Assyrian commander Holofernes, who had succumbed to her charms and the effects of his overindulgence in wine. With an almost imperceptible smile, Saraceni’s Judith holds up his head like a trophy before it disappears into the already open sack. The shadows cast by the flickering candlelight emphasize the soft features of the young heroine, the wizened skin of her serving maid, and the face of Holofernes, frozen in his death-cry. It has been suggested that the latter's features are a self-portrait of the artist.

Carlo Saraceni came to Rome from Venice in 1598, remaining in the city until 1619. As one of the first ‘Caravaggisti’, he was extremely successful, as the numerous versions of this painting attest.
The biblical account relates how the shepherd boy David felled Goliath in single combat with a blow from his sling before decapitating him with his own sword. When the Philistines saw that their strongest warrior had been vanquished they fled the field of battle. As a result, David rose in the favour of the king of the Israelites.

Caravaggio’s David holds out the disfigured head of Goliath to the viewer. He has exchanged his sling for the giant’s sword, which he shoulders like a shepherd’s staff. The pose and the shadow cast by the sword on David’s bare neck recall the stroke of the sword that severed head and trunk and which lingers in the blood still dripping from Goliath’s neck. The bruised brow also recalls the preceding duel. With his dramatic lighting Caravaggio contrasts movement and stasis, life and death, beauty and horror.

Tanzio makes David’s triumph plain by anchoring Goliath’s bloodied head to the lower edge of the picture. The boy’s tensed, powerful muscles create a striking diagonal further reinforced by the oppressive hierarchy of living victor and dead loser. Arm and sword intersect at the elbow, forming a cross that separates the heads of the two combatants and directs the viewer’s eye to the stones in the pouch at bottom right with which David vanquished the physically superior Goliath.

In Valentin de Boulogne’s painting David is depicted not in triumphal pose but bending over Goliath’s head and supporting it almost tenderly. Gazing out of the picture, David seems to be contemplating his deed. The flawless skin, the soft animal pelt and the white cloth that has slipped from his shoulder form a bright contrast to Goliath’s dark brown hair and the undefined gloomy setting.

At the sight of Goliath’s gigantic head, the shocked face of the soldier on the left of the picture gives graphic expression to the affect of orrore.
Gallery 2

Amore (10–21)
Baglione's picture was painted in response to a work of Caravaggio's with the same subject (also in Berlin), from which he also borrowed the powerful chiaroscuro.

Sacred love is represented as an armour-clad archangel wielding a thunderbolt and towering above profane love, a young boy lying helplessly on the ground with broken arrows. Turning away at bottom left is a demonic figure symbolizing sin. The archangel triumphs over profane love, which – now separated from evil – is no longer able to resist the power of heaven.

This statue of St Sebastian is regarded as the first entirely independent piece made by the nineteen-year-old Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who around 1617 was still working in his father's studio. Like Michelangelo, the artist on whom he modelled himself, he made his breakthrough with the rendering of soft, vulnerable skin shaped from hard, lifeless stone. The saint's body is pierced by arrows and enfeebled. His head turned upwards to heaven, in the expectation of imminent death, Sebastian surrenders himself to his God in loving renunciation. The perfect rendering of the body, weakened almost to the point of death yet still living, is intended to evoke compassion with the tormented martyr. The young sculptor's strategy is to make this feeling ultimately turn into admiration for his own artistry.

This painting created quite a sensation among Caravaggio's contemporaries. The openly displayed sensuality of the completely naked and yet holy youth had no precedent in art. John takes up eye contact with the viewer. The relationship that is intimated between artist and model is now transferred to us as viewers. With his right arm he embraces the ram, which should by rights be a lamb. Besides rendering purely sensory experience and emotion, Caravaggio also deploys several levels of meaning: the ram may refer to the sacrifice of Isaac and thus to Christ's Passion, while the son of the man who commissioned the painting was born under the sign of Aries and was baptized with the name of the saint.
St Francis embodies the ideal of a perfect Christian life modelled on Christ. In his re-living of the Passion and the receiving of the stigmata, which make him like Christ not just internally but also externally, the saint in ecstasy symbolizes a fundamental transformation. The angel supporting him recalls the motif of the Pietà, where Mary lovingly holds her son in her lap after he has been taken down from the Cross.

Rarely depicted in Caravaggio’s oeuvre, the landscape is severely reduced so that the figures in the foreground completely dominate the overall mood of the painting, which unites mystical surrender with a fervent overwhelming of the senses that is characteristic of extreme spiritual rapture.

Despite its small-scale format, the presentation model of one of Bernini’s most famous works in the church Santa Maria della Vittoria renders the saint’s absolute ecstasy in her mystic union with God. An angel pierced her heart with an arrow which filled her with a blazing, exquisiteely painful love for God. Bernini represents Teresa floating on a cloud, overwhelmed by her joy, her eyes and mouth half open, while the angel beside her makes to pierce her anew.

Thirty years before, Bernini had deployed similar pathos in the rendering of his St Sebastian (no. 11). Both saints are in a completely separate world. In the case of Teresa, however, he deployed a new stylistic device, using the seemingly wild agitation of the folds of her robes to mirror her intense emotions.

Signed and dated, this painting by Finson is one of the most important early copies of a famous but today lost Magdalen that Caravaggio is said to have painted in his final years. Mary Magdalen has thrown back her head, overwhelmed by her feelings of penitence. Caravaggio’s emphatically emotional interpretation, which Finson knew well and of which he made several copies, influenced a large number of painters and sculptors, including Bernini.
Mary Magdalen is customarily represented as a sinner and penitent, desperate in her contrition, absorbed in painful prayer and usually accompanied by a skull, representing the triumph over sin. In Gentileschi’s unique rendering, however, she is a heroine, marked by the enjoyment of the deep, personal gratification that her newfound faith has given her. There are no tears or signs of emotional pain to be seen here. Her linked hands express neither prayer nor earthly renunciation but are merely clasped round her knees. Only her sensuous body can be understood as a reference to her errant past that has now been overcome. Her smile reveals the peace that she has found on her new path as a follower of Jesus. This Mary Magdalen is not directing her inner gaze at an invisible heavenly power but responding to her own emotions. She is bathed in the light of spiritual illumination. Artemisia Gentileschi shows her poised at the moment of her transition from sinner to saint.

Eros and Anteros, sons of Aphrodite, are two loving brothers who are tussling to decide which of them loves the other more. In Neoplatonic terms, however, the subject is the moral contest between profane, erotic love (Eros) and amor virtutis, the virtuous love of the true and the divine (Anteros). Pushing himself up off the quiver lying on the ground, with his left arm Eros endeavours to ward off Anteros, who has, however, already successfully disarmed his brother and pulled the blindfold from his head that had been depriving him of the sight of true love.

The parable tells of the repentance of a sinner and the loving mercy of God. A young man squanders the inheritance he has been given in advance. Destitute, he returns home and is taken in by his father with love and forgiveness. Divesting himself of his clothes betokens the beginning of a new life thus granted to the penitent. In the concentration on the interplay between the hands Guercino has found a powerful solution for rendering the subject.
Profane love (Eros) is tied to a tree trunk, symbolizing the human soul that is chained to the material body. Reni elegantly composes his allegorical depiction of the struggle between virtue and vice, and the subduing of the latter, showing the moment when sacred love (Anteros) carefully burns the arrows of the still blindfolded Eros on a fire. Baglione’s interpretation (no. 10) takes the same approach to interpreting the theme.

Daedalus is fastening wings to the shoulders of his son Icarus. Ignoring his father’s advice not to fly too high, Icarus will later fall to his death. Sacchi depicts the relatively rarely illustrated scene from the Greek myth by focusing on the intense psychological tension between the loving, anxious father and his reckless son. The father’s tender concern is indicated by a slight shimmer on his profile – his cheeks seem to be wet with tears.

The painting illustrates an episode from the epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* by Torquato Tasso (1581), set at the time of the First Crusade. The Saracen sorceress Armida put the crusader Rinaldo into a deep sleep in order to kill him, but at the sight of his handsome form fell in love with him instead.

Poussin concentrated on the moment in which her change of heart takes place, creating a tension-filled juncture of indecision. Her billowing robes indicate the vehemence with which she is about to do the deed. A cupid clutches at her arm, touchingly hindering the impetus of her gesture. The god of love is invisible to her, symbolizing as he does the power of nascent love. Although it seems at first as if Armida is reaching for the head of her victim, closer inspection reveals that this is undergoing a transformation into a gesture of love: Armida’s left hand touches Rinaldo’s right hand, nestling against it tenderly.
Gallery 3

Moto & Azione (22–32)
Vivacità (33–42)
A moment of high drama: Abraham is about to sacrifice his son Isaac as God has demanded of him. Isaac cowers on the ground, resigned to his fate. At the very moment that Abraham is about to put his knife to the boy’s throat, an angel stays his arm: Abraham has done enough to prove his fear of God.

With his left hand the angel points upwards, that is, towards God. The two protagonists gaze intently into each other’s eyes – but does Abraham understand what is happening?

A moment of unbearable tension is depicted here: Cecilia kneels acquiescently while her executioner strides in from the right to inflict the fatal blow. She has fixed her gaze on an angel descending on a cloud, who points with his right hand to the celestial reward for her imminent suffering.

When she was married off to a non-Christian Roman youth, Cecilia ignored the wedding music and sang to God in her heart, in consequence of which she later became the much-venerated patron saint of sacred music.

Among the numerous depictions of St Sebastian this is undoubtedly one of the most gruesome: Carracci here chooses a very rarely illustrated moment, when the soldiers cast his lifeless body into the Cloaca Maxima, the main sewer running beneath Rome.

The subject was chosen at the behest of Maffeo Barberini, who commissioned the painting; his family chapel in the church of Sant’Andrea della Valle stood directly above the spot where the Christian Lucina recovered the saint’s corpse from the sewer.

Poussin’s painting shows the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans in CE 70. The struggle for the Temple precinct, in which the Jews had held out for a long time, was particularly bloody and was pursued against the wishes of the Roman general Titus. Here he has arrived on a white horse at the scene of action, presumably to prevent the destruction of the Temple. The action around him seems frozen, the general himself gazing upwards, as if in presentiment of destiny.
On his flight westwards, the great Trojan hero Aeneas encounters his divine mother, at first failing to recognize her. Venus had appeared to him in the shape of a huntress in order to show him the way to the palace of Dido, queen of Carthage.

Pietro da Cortona translates the inner feelings of the figures into a subtle play of gestures and poses to depict the complex emotional situation of the moment: surprise, recognition, and the as yet not fully successful coming together of mother and son.

Bernini created this terracotta model in preparation for his famous marble statue of David (Rome, Villa Borghese). Despite extensive damage, the model still demonstrates the wholly innovative element in Bernini's invention, which fundamentally differentiates this David from those of his great predecessors (Donatello, Michelangelo), namely the dynamization of the figure in a way that had never before been seen in sculpture. The whole body is tensed, poised with the pent-up energy that is about to be unleashed on his opponent Goliath.

The first homicide: a horrific primal scene in the history of humanity. Manfredi brings the gruesome action so far to the fore that we feel almost as cornered as Abel, here being slain by his older brother Cain.

The artist deploys his extensive knowledge of anatomy to dramatize the athleticism of the perpetrator and the defensive gestures of his victim. The strong plasticity of the bodies also indicates that the artist based them on sculptural prototypes. Against this, the theological aspects of the story rather retreat into the background.

Bernini made this terracotta model in preparation for the statue on the Fontana del Moro on Piazza Navona in Rome.

The sea god Triton stands as an athletic nude in a highly dynamic pose, his legs apart, on a huge shell. He has seized a dolphin that peeps out between his knees and in the fountain functions as a waterspout. The torsion of the triton's body and his wildly animated hair suggest that the group is riding over the sea, driven by the wind.
This model of an elephant was made in connection with plans to erect an obelisk in the forecourt of the Palazzo Barberini in 1632. The design was not realized at the time, but was used for another obelisk in front of the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in 1665/67.

Bernini’s originality lies in the idea of using the representation of a living creature for a rigid architectural element, in this case the base of the obelisk. The artist thus unites three aspects in his work: liveliness, motion and wit.

Mochi’s most famous work is probably his huge marble statue of St Veronica in St Peter’s, for which this bronze figure was a preliminary study.

Mochi’s Veronica broke decidedly with the traditional representation of this saint, usually portrayed sunk in contemplation and silent veneration of Christ’s countenance, which had impressed itself on her veil. In Mochi’s work it is not her veil but a corner of her robe that serves as the sweat-cloth or sudarium, which she now holds up in horror. In the impetus of her forward movement the folds of her robe swirl around her like a whirlwind, a masterly invention that expresses the saint’s inner agitation through outward movement. Mochi dramatizes her as the herald of Christ’s sufferings and imminent crucifixion.

In 1612 the city of Piacenza commissioned Mochi to make two equestrian statues, one of the ruling duke of Parma and Piacenza, Ranuccio Farnese, and another of his father Alessandro.

Mochi prepared thoroughly for this prestigious commission, also making this unusually large bronze model of Ranuccio’s horse. He depicts the animal in an extended trot, with only two hooves touching the ground; this and the flowing mane, swishing tail and snorting nostrils give the work a great sense of movement, liveliness and power – a power that the rider knows how to control, as a good ruler controls his state.

Mochi here surpassed all monuments of this kind that had hitherto been made, and his works are rightly regarded as the first equestrian statues of the Baroque era.
Forced to flee Rome in 1606 having killed a man in a sword fight, Caravaggio arrived in Malta in the summer of the following year, probably under the protection of one of his aristocratic patrons. There can be little doubt that Caravaggio’s fame and his abilities as a painter recommended him to the brotherhood of the Knights Hospitaller. The likeness of the aristocrat Antonio Martelli was almost certainly painted during this time and is by far the most sensitive and subtly characterized of Caravaggio’s surviving portraits. Leaning forward with a concentrated expression on his face and with his arms curiously crossed, the man is beating time with his left hand to the music on the sheet in front of him. Although his mouth is closed and his gaze goes past the viewers, he seems to be addressing them directly or even instructing them to join in the singing. Caroselli signed the painting in the legend of the gold coin on the musician’s cap, which also names the individual who commissioned the work, the banker Ferdinando Brandani.

Bernini based his bust of the French prime minister on a portrait painted by Philippe de Champaigne that had been sent to Rome for this express purpose. However, by turning Richelieu’s head slightly in an opposite direction to the movement of the torso he created an interesting tension in the bust. Bernini gives Richelieu a thoughtful demeanour, appropriate to this wily statesman who served King Louis XIII. The projected air of authority is disrupted by a single, subtle ‘imperfection’, which in turn lends the portrait a feeling of spontaneity: the not-quite-fastened button at the bottom of the mozzetta.

Vouet, who studied the work of Caravaggio during his sojourn in Rome, gave this self-portrait a captivating vivacità (liveliness), as if he were just about to join in a conversation. It is also notable for its masterly handling of the paint. Vouet built up the picture with a restricted palette of tones into which he integrated the brown underpainting. Deliberately placed highlights on the brow and curls of the hair make his head stand out vividly.
Although it seems to be smaller than a true-life bust, this compelling portrait really is life-size. It shows a man of small stature who belonged to the retinue of the duc de Créquy, the French ambassador to the Holy See.

Du Quesnoy created a thoroughly lively portrait, carefully modelling his fleshy features with wrinkles, sagging cheeks and slight double chin together with his well-groomed goatee beard and moustache.

Here the prelate Giovanni Battista Agucchi has been interrupted in his reading of a letter and has just looked up. The artist, probably his friend Domenichino, increases the tension in the painting solely by means of the striking expression on the sitter's face with his wide-open eyes and captivated gaze. The small-scale format and reduced field of view bring Agucchi up close, allowing the viewer of the likeness to become the beholder of a real individual, as if one were sitting right in front of him.

After an extended Grand Tour taking in France, Spain and the Low Countries the English courtier Thomas Baker lodged in Rome from 1636. In his luggage he had a portrait of Charles I by Anthony van Dyck that was intended to serve the sculptor Bernini as a model for a bust of the monarch. This contact gave Baker, a style-conscious dandy, the opportunity of having himself immortalized by the master. Bernini here plays with contrapposti (antitheses, ‘counter-placements’), which are used as an artistic device to arouse the viewer's attention. For example, Baker's finely executed collar of Venetian lace contrasts with his luxuriant hair that frames his face in tumbling waves.
Bernini’s likeness of himself was acquired for Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici’s renowned collection of self-portraits in 1674. Apart from its masterly execution, its appeal rests above all on the fact that it was painted by Bernini when he was around 35 years of age and already famous as a sculptor and architect. In his biography of Bernini, written shortly after the artist’s death, Filippo Baldinucci singled out this likeness among around 150 paintings by the master as ‘a most beautiful and lively portrait of his own person’. The brooding gaze, exploitation of light and shadow and free, insouciant use of paint lend Bernini an intensity of intellectual presence, imbuing his self-portrait with liveliness.

Behind this bust of Scipione Borghese lay a contest between the sculptor Giuliano Finelli with his erstwhile master Gian Lorenzo Bernini, a contest that may well have been arranged by the art-loving sitter himself, since he commissioned a bust from Bernini at the same time. Finelli’s portrait is notable for an incomparable finesse in the rendering of material qualities, using as it were painterly means to bring the hard stone to life.

Caravaggio portrayed the young Maffeo Barberini, later Pope Urban VIII, in the robes of a pronotario apostolico. Maffeo seems to be still absorbed by what he has been reading, which to judge by his known tastes as well as the vase holding pinks, roses and jasmine on the table, is perhaps a volume of love poetry. The portrait was executed at a time when Caravaggio’s style began to display a more psychologically engaging manner. In evidence here, too, are the deeper colouration and darker passages that would come to typify the artist’s style. The sitter’s imposing physical presence and the highly sensitive psychological rendering make this a seminal work of Baroque portraiture.
Gallery 4

Passione & Compassione (43–47)
Visione (48–52)
This painting by Annibale Carracci is not a Pietà in the ordinary sense, since it includes other figures beside the Virgin Mary and the dead Christ. Dressed in red and yellow, Mary Magdalen kneels on the ground, her arms thrown up as if surrendering to her sorrow. Above her stands a woman of more advanced years (possibly Mary the wife of Clopas, mother of James the Younger), who holds out her arms in distress to a third woman, Mary Salome. The latter is supporting the Virgin Mary, who has collapsed in pain and grief. In her deep swoon, Mary echoes the pose and facial expression of her dead son. The deathly pallor of his skin and grey-blue lips indicate the onset of rigor mortis.

Carracci gives each of the women a personal reaction to the death of Christ and the Virgin Mary's swoon. In their individual responses of grief, the women offer varying paths for the viewer to react in a similar way and feel compassion with Christ and his mother.

Although Carracci was a contemporary of Caravaggio's in Rome, he belonged to the classicist movement and was thus Caravaggio's most important counterpart on the art scene. As this Pietà also shows, he combined the colour of the Venetian painters with a thorough knowledge of classical sculpture.

Mary has sunk back, broken with grief, the head of her lifeless son bedded on her lap. The coloration that brings together his corpse and her robes unites the living mother and dead son, as does the nerveless expression of their faces. The predominant blue tones are continued in the mountains of the landscape beyond.

The expanse of monochrome grey separates the instruments of the Passion – crown of thorns and nails – from the Pietà. They refer to Christ's sacrificial death, while the radiant yellow of the angel's raiment heralds the Resurrection that is soon to come. The mourning angels endeavouring to comfort Mary are a subtle invitation to the viewer to feel compassion with the grieving mother.
The arms of the risen Christ are spread wide, mirroring his pose on the cross. Unusually, he here faces the viewer, gazing directly out of the picture and inviting us to contemplate the miracle of the Resurrection. In his incredulity, Thomas is only able to do this by touching the wound in Christ’s side. The disciples show different reactions to the Lord’s appearance: astonishment, understanding, hands folded in prayer – reactions that the painting also seeks to evoke in the viewer.

Spadarino takes a radical approach, omitting all disciples – even ‘doubting’ Thomas – from the composition and focusing wholly on Christ. The Redeemer himself touches his wound, splaying the skin and revealing the flesh beneath. Against the brightly illuminated skin, the dark red seems even more intense. Christ looks expectantly out of the picture, putting viewers in the role of Thomas. However, here they cannot touch but must find their faith solely through seeing.

The evangelists relate that before his crucifixion, a crown of thorns was placed on the head of Jesus as ‘King of the Jews’. A reed was placed in his hand as a sceptre and a scarlet robe around his shoulders as further mocking symbols of ‘royalty’. In Caravaggio’s painting, the canes that Pilate’s henchmen are using to torment Christ are of the same material as his sceptre. Forming a V and an I, they may refer to the man who commissioned the painting, Vincenzo Giustiniani (Iustinianus being the Latinized form of his family name). The work hung above a door in his palazzo in Rome.

Although Christ is surrounded he seems completely withdrawn into himself, submitting to his destiny. The man leaning on the parapet wearing late sixteenth-century dress expresses compassion through his position in the painting, his pose echoing that of Christ – slightly bent over, the head inclined – and his hand almost touching the hand of the Son of God.
Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, called Guercino (1591–1666)

MARY MAGDALEN WITH TWO ANGELS
1622, canvas
Città del Vaticano, Musei Vaticani

Guercino created this painting for the high altar of a church in Rome that was dedicated to St Mary Magdalen. Tradition ascribed her a sinful past before she became a follower of Jesus. She was thus the patron saint of penitent women and those who had been seduced, and was often depicted unclothed as a young woman of beguiling charms.

Guercino shows Mary Magdalen in a landscape at the break of day, kneeling beside Christ’s empty tomb, where instead of his body she finds two angels. With hands folded in prayer, she is absorbed in the miracle of the Resurrection, of which she was shortly to be the first witness. The crown of thorns and the nails from the cross recall Christ’s earthly suffering. However, one of the angels points to heaven, the place to which she will later be transported and from where two angels’ heads look down upon the scene.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610)

MADONNA OF THE ROSARY
c. 1601/03, canvas
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Picture Gallery

St Dominic looks up at the enthroned Madonna, who instructs him to distribute rosaries to the people thronging towards him. At the left-hand edge of the painting the anonymous individual who commissioned the painting is about to seek refuge under the saint’s cloak. With his direct gaze, he seems to be inviting us to follow him. Opposite Dominic stands St Peter Martyr (St Peter of Verona), pointing to the Madonna and child while at the same time turning to the viewer. Two other Dominicans are positioned in the middle plane of the picture that contains the saints and intercessors. The direction of the gazes emphasize the role of the saints as mediators in the plan of salvation: While Dominic gazes at the Madonna and child, they are not visible to the people below, who seem to have eyes only for the rosaries and with zealous fervour petition to be allowed to take part in prayer. People in front of the painting, although assigned to the common folk through their viewpoint as spectators, can partake of the vision as a whole and be gazed upon directly by Jesus.
Here, the reading of the Gospel and meditating upon the crucified Christ have led to deep contemplation of sin, death and redemption. By taking the Word of God to heart, St Francis arrives at a visionary revelation.

The light throws the deeply furrowed face of the meditating saint into dramatic focus. The expression on his face is tensely contrasted with the skull in front of him (cf. no. 51). The saint himself leans forward from the dark thicket that surround him into the revelatory light with which Caravaggio emphasizes the direct effect of the Gospel message. Although the saint crouches there immobile, his inner tension is expressed in the folds of his garment, simultaneously giving the figure a dynamic animation.

For most of his career the Dutch artist Dirck van Baburen worked in Rome, where he was influenced by Caravaggio's art.

St Francis is contemplating a skull, symbol of earthly transience. His mouth is open, as if he is about to exclaim in shock, his hand touching his breast in a state of great emotion. The saint seems to have been overwhelmed by an intense mystical experience, the fleetingness of which is reflected in his pose and face.

Francis is a model for all believers who strive to relive the Passion of Christ in their hearts through prayer and penance (cf. nos. 50, 51). Francis is reading the Scriptures when he is surprised by a vision. An angel appears to him, displaying the instruments of Christ's Passion. Francis sinks back in ecstasy and is supported by a second angel. His eyes turned ecstatically towards heaven, the saint sees nothing, being entirely taken up with the experience of his vision.
Gallery 5

Scherzo (53–62)
Epilogue (63–65)
Bernini is known to have designed ornamental figures for a carriage given to Queen Christina of Sweden by Pope Alexander VII in 1655.

However, these four extremely expressive heads once graced Bernini’s own carriage. They were all cast from the same mould and must have crowned the corner posts of the artist’s vehicle. Verging on caricature, they provide a humorous commentary on the travails of everyday life, which Romans would have understood only too well at the sight of the artist’s conveyance endeavouring to make its way through the city’s congested streets.

This highly idiosyncratic painting clearly betrays Caravaggio’s influence. With extreme light effects and the violent emotional reaction of the main figure, Bigot relates a comic story. In the darkness of the background a second figure is amused by the protagonist’s expense, making us his accomplices. He was presumably the one who has deliberately placed the hollowed-out pumpkin containing a candle, giving the man at the centre such a fright that he overreacts and takes flight, screaming.

The face, build and rendering of the hair of these two chubby little boys display such a strong resemblance to secured figures of children by Du Quesnoy that it seems reasonable to attribute them to the master.

The motif of riding astride an eagle probably plays on the abduction of Ganymede by Jupiter, albeit in humorous inversion: here the children hold in check the symbolic animal of the deity, who is alluded to in the thunderbolts clutched in the birds’ talons.

A whole horde of little satyrs and putti assails the elderly drunken Silenus and his donkey. Du Quesnoy here draws on a poem by Virgil which relates how the beauteous nymph Aegle painted Silenus’ face red with mulberries while his diminutive tormentors trussed him up using vines.

Silenus, tutor to Bacchus, the god of wine, promises to sing a song about the creation of the world in exchange for his release. This sculptural scherzo thus combines wisdom, intoxication and playfulness in a witty conceit.
This little boy sitting casually on a sea-dragon is the work of Pietro and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The extent of the collaboration between the two artists – an ongoing discussion that started back in the seventeenth century – has still not been satisfactorily resolved.

It is, however, quite clear that this group belongs to the genre of the *scherzo*: the wit lies in the effortlessness with which the little putto snaps the jaw of the sea monster. This is a humorous variation on the many bemuscled heroes who have since antiquity traditionally done battle with wild beasts and creatures of fable.

Voracious goats representing a danger for tender vine shoots is a conceit that can be found frequently in the poetry of classical antiquity. Goats were consequently also sacrificial animals in the cult of the wine god Bacchus.

Du Quesnoy takes up this subject in playful manner but above all with a stunning mastery of the sculptural medium. This work became very well-known during the artist’s lifetime through its dissemination in numerous copies.

Dolphins had been considered since antiquity as creatures that were especially well-disposed towards children. Bernini’s work is thus a surprise – and a very unpleasant one at that for the little boy riding on the dolphin who has just been viciously bitten on the leg. The child arches back in pain and seems to be uttering a scream while vainly attempting to pull the creature’s head back.

The sculptor used a stone drill in order to make the openings of mouth and eyes particularly expressive. Bernini’s interest here is wholly focused on the rendering of this moment of pain.

This astonishing work dates from two epochs: the fragment of a classical statuette from the first century CE, brilliantly completed by Alessandro Algardi in 1628. The rump of the small satyr – identified by his telltale curly tail, was excavated in the grounds of the Villa Ludovisi in Rome. Algardi added the legs, the left arm and the fingers of the hand reaching out from the mouth of the mask. The little satyr has put on a huge mask of old Silenus, probably to frighten a now lost companion.
Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665)

**A BACCHANALIAN REVEL BEFORE A TERM**
1632/33, canvas
London, The National Gallery

The frieze-like composition of this *Bacchanalian Revel* unfolds before our eyes, from the nymph on the left squeezing grapes into the cup held by an expectant putto to the clumsy advances of the satyr on the right.

Yet for all the wildness of its subject matter, with frenetic dancing and copious wine, its composition is rigorously elaborated. The toes of the nymph squeezing the grapes, for example, intersect precisely with the sleeping putto’s buttock, and the raised foot of the faun in yellow aligns exactly with the foot of the nymph. The disposition of the figures along a horizontal plane recalls classical friezes and bas-reliefs that Poussin had seen and studied together with his friend the sculptor François du Quesnoy in Rome in the 1620s.

Pietro Bernini (1562–1629)

**SATYR AND PANTHER**
c. 1595/1597, marble
Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst

This highly original fountain figure was created by Pietro Bernini for the country villa of the Corsi family outside Florence.

A wild satyr reaches up to a vine, grasping the ripe grapes hanging above him in order to squeeze their juice and slake his thirst. The panther sitting between his legs holds up its head with its maw agape in expectation. Composed in skilful upward-twisting movements, the group stands in a shell-shaped bowl that was placed at the centre of the fountain’s basin.

The water streaming down from the grapes over the figures must have animated this already highly dynamic composition, creating an eloquent ode to the fertility of the country estate. Gian Lorenzo Bernini must have learnt much from this masterpiece by his father.
Here Preti draws on major works by Caravaggio: the figure in armour seen in rear view, for example, is borrowed from the latter’s Crowning with Thorns (no. 47), while in the woman and young boy he uses figures that are typical of the (profane) scenes of daily life from the circle of Caravaggio (no. 64). The way the figures are grouped – on the left are Jesus and an apostle, on the right the woman and boy – reflects Matthew’s decision to henceforth follow Christ and abandon his previous existence as a tax collector.

Caravaggio devoted several paintings to the subject of a fortune-teller reading a soldier’s hand. His works were developed further in numerous variants by followers such as Valentin de Boulogne.

With its myriad figures, the latter’s Cheerful Company is his most complex work. The crowded composition makes an additive impression, including scenes of fighting and thieving besides fortune-telling and music. Valentin combines various figures and scenes familiar from his oeuvre into a meditation on life – a life that offers pleasures and amorous adventures but which equally consists of unpredictability, conflict and fleeting moments of reflection.

In 1620 Hendrick ter Brugghen returned to Utrecht from his sojourn in Rome. In Italy he had encountered the artistic innovations of Caravaggio and his followers. His painting shows a young woman tuning her lute, one shoulder bared. The almost tender turning of the pegs seems staged with deliberate tension: the woman – probably a courtesan – is finding the right tone, not only for the music but also for her viewers.
TALKS

Prof. Helen Langdon (London)
Caravaggio's Cupid.
Homage and Rivalry
21 October 2019, 7 p.m., Kuppelhalle

Prof. Ute Frevert
(Max-Planck-Institut für Emotionsforschung, Berlin)
Caravaggio's Passionen
in seiner und in unserer Zeit
11 November 2019, 7 p.m., Kuppelhalle

Prof. Daniela Brogi
(Università per Stranieri di Siena)
Alessandro Manzoni, Caravaggio and the »Factory« of Realism
19 December 2019, 7 p.m., Vortragsraum
Registration: eventi.iicvienna@esteri.it

Prof. Valeska von Rosen
(Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Düsseldorf)
Caravaggio »dunkle« Affekte
13 January 2020, 7 p.m., Kuppelhalle

Prof. Lorenzo Pericolo
(University of Warwick)
The Invention of the Baroque Body.
From Caravaggio to Bernini
15 January 2020, 7 p.m., Kuppelhalle
Registration: eventi.iicvienna@esteri.it

Talk of Prof. Estelle Lingo
(University of Seattle, Washington)
The Baroque and the Renaissance: Finding the Gap
and presentation of the Bellori Edition Project of the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max-Planck Institut für Kunstgeschichte, printed by Wallstein publishing house: Caravaggio, du Quesnay, Algardi, Fontana und die Idea
19 January 2020, 7 p.m., Kuppelhalle

IN COOPERATION WITH THE ISTI-TUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA

Luci e ombre sonore
Concert with Simone Vallerotonda
(theorbo and Spanish guitar)
15 October 2019, 7 p.m.
Registration: eventi.iicvienna@esteri.it

Caravaggio al tempo di Caravaggio
Performance by Dario Fo with Franca Rame
(Videovorführung, 94 mins., in Italian with German subtitles)
29 October 2019, 7 p.m.
Registration not required

Venue:
ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA,
UNGARGASSE 43,
1030 VIENNA
FREE ENTRY
One focus of the Kunsthistorisches Museum’s Picture Gallery lies in its rich collection of Roman Baroque painting, which includes the largest group outside Italy of masterpieces by Caravaggio and his followers.

To pay tribute to these rich and diverse holdings above and beyond the exhibition, works by influential masters such as Cavaliere d’Arpino, Giovanni Lanfranco, Pietro da Cortona and Salvator Rosa are being displayed in Gallery VI and its adjoining cabinets.

In the Bassano Hall at the Kunsthistorisches Museum you can see the most recent series of works by Austrian artist Klaus Mossettig: 15 large-scale drawings based on radiographic images of the Caravaggio painting David with the Head of Goliath (Kunsthistorisches Museum). The technique Mossettig uses to rework these images has established his reputation: he translates them meticulously, but simultaneously alienates them in a graphic technique that takes as its subject time and the process of production. Depending on the distance they are viewed from, perception changes between abstraction, fascination with detail and the information value of the radiographic images.

Jasper Sharp, curator of the exhibition The David Plates, in conversation with artist Klaus Mossettig and art historian João Ribas.

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The exhibition catalogue, which features essays by international Baroque experts and was designed by Irma Boom, is available in English and German.

Get your copy at the Museum’s shop or online at shop.khm.at

Also visit our Beethoven exhibition, on display from 25 March 2020!
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