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## A Renaissance in Ottawa

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**WHAT:** "Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and the Renaissance in Florence" at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, Ontario.

**WHEN:** May 29-Sept. 5.

**HOW MUCH:** \$9.60 (U.S.), which includes access to the museum's permanent collection.

**WHY GO:** What classical Athens was to theater and Jazz Age Paris was to literature, 16th-century Florence was to art. Focusing on the city from 1500 to 1550, this exhibition brings together some 125 works from top worldwide institutions, including Florence's Uffizi Gallery and the Vatican collections in Rome. Most have never before traveled to North America.

While the contributions of the show's most celebrated figures -- Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael -- are limited to a half-dozen items, the exhibition boasts an impressive range of paintings, drawings and sculptures from artists almost equally central to the Italian Renaissance, notably Andrea del Sarto, Piero di Cosimo, Agnolo Bronzino and Rosso Fiorentino. Battles, biblical heroes, Greek deities, powerful Medici statesmen, tranquil Virgins -- all are rendered in the rich oils and legendary technical prowess of the Italian masters.

**DON'T MISS . . .** Leonardo's scrawled "*Sheet of Studies*" (c. 1503-1504), a riot of ideas and inventions -- charging horses, interlocking gears, strange shapes, scribbled equations, human profiles -- that show the range and creativity of the quintessential Renaissance man. The sketches were preparations for his "Battle of Anghiari" fresco at Florence's Palazzo Vecchio . . . In Michelangelo's "*The Three Labours of Hercules*" (c. 1530), Leonardo's dour rival displays his unparalleled drawing talent, capturing the human body in expressive, dynamic and vigorous poses . . . The glasslike smoothness of "*Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro*" (c. 1523-1524), an icon of the Mannerist movement painted by Fiorentino, gives a heavily stylized serenity to a remarkably violent scene . . . Bronzino, court painter to the ruling Medici family and perhaps the era's finest portraitist, shows his technical skills in "*Portrait of a Man*" (c. 1550-1555).

**EXTRAS:** If you're still under the impression that di Cosimo and del Sarto are hit men for Tony Soprano -- or, better yet, if you're already a Florentine art cognoscenti -- consider immersing yourself in the museum's symposium, "*An In-Depth Look at the Renaissance in Florence*" (\$32). Held May 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the event will feature talks by international scholars from the Uffizi, the Louvre and D.C.'s National Gallery.

To fully tap your inner Italian, stop by one of the museum's "*After Hours*" soirees, which include an exhibit tour accompanied by Italian food and Renaissance-era music. They take place June 16 and Sept. 1 at 6 p.m. Tickets (\$28) go on sale May 16.

**EATS:** Centered on Preston Street, west of downtown Ottawa, is the city's very own Little Italy, home to dozens of Italian eateries and cafes. A full roster is at <http://www.prestonstreet.com/>. One local favorite, not in Little Italy, is

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**EQUIFAX**

*Mamma Teresa* (300 Somerset West St., 613-236-3023). Located in a historic red-brick house, the elegant restaurant is known for its in-house pastas and homemade sauces. Dinner for two is about \$80.

*SLEEPS*: Pamper yourself like a Medici prince with a "Summer in the City" package at the *Carmichael Inn and Spa* (46 Cartier St., 877-416-2417, <http://www.carmichaelinn.com/>). The deal starts at \$280 per room and includes two nights' lodging, breakfasts, a trolley tour and admission to the Museum of Civilization and "Renaissance in Florence."

Ottawa's top design property, *Arc The Hotel* (140 Slater St., 800-699-2516, <http://www.arcthehotel.com/>), has an "Art Exhibit Package" for \$135 per night. It includes a double room, breakfast for two and a pair of passes to the exhibit. The deal is available only on weekends until June 26; afterward it's valid seven days a week.

*INFO*: The *National Gallery of Canada* (800-319-2787, <http://www.national.gallery.ca/>) is at 380 Sussex Dr.

-- Seth Sherwood

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