



Masterpieces  
from the  
Hermitage

# Treasury!





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PRINTING AND BINDING  
Printer Trento, Italy

LITHOGRAPHY  
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PAPER  
Inside 150g Arctic Volume White  
Cover 300g Invercote G

FONTS  
Collis  
Foundry Gridnik  
Univers

EDITION  
2,500 Dutch  
1,000 English

PUBLISHED BY  
Hermitage Amsterdam

PUBLISHER  
Annelies ter Brugge

BOOKSHOP DISTRIBUTION  
WBOOKS / wbooks.com  
ISBN Dutch  
978 90 78653 790  
ISBN English  
978 90 78653 783

NUR 640

Catalogue for the exhibition  
*Treasury! Masterpieces from  
the Hermitage*, from 2 February  
to 25 August 2019, organised  
by the State Hermitage Museum  
in St Petersburg and the  
Hermitage Amsterdam.

PHOTO CREDITS  
© State Hermitage Museum,  
St Petersburg, except:  
pp. 17, 208–09 Rineke Dijkstra  
p. 27 above Evert Elzinga  
p. 27 below Joost de Beij  
p. 47 ill. 6 bpk / Volker-H Scheider  
p. 134 Henk van Os

Images on pp. 18–19 and 136–37:  
Teresa Mar, *Secret Garden*.  
Light art projection for the  
Hermitage Amsterdam, 2019  
Austrian light artist has made a  
special work of art for *Treasury!*:  
a light projection onto the ceiling  
of the Great Hall. It contains images  
of the more than two hundred  
objects in the exhibition.

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WITH THANKS TO  
Nadezhda Burova and Andrey Prigov  
Stichting Vrienden van de Hermitage  
Nederland for its generous gift  
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was our patron as the Prince of Orange  
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Masterpieces  
from the  
Hermitage

# Treasury!





# An Art Historical Noah's Ark

CATHELIJNE BROERS

DIRECTOR, HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM

What helps you look at art better? Do you need more time?  
More information? Someone to explain? Does humour help?  
Is it all about the context?

For the last decade we have been reaching out to our visitors.  
Taking them on journeys through art, culture and history.  
Exhibition after exhibition – all curated from the amazing  
collections of our renowned parent institution in St Petersburg –  
we have pondered the right balance between education and  
enjoyment, between offering support and letting visitors  
discover things for themselves.

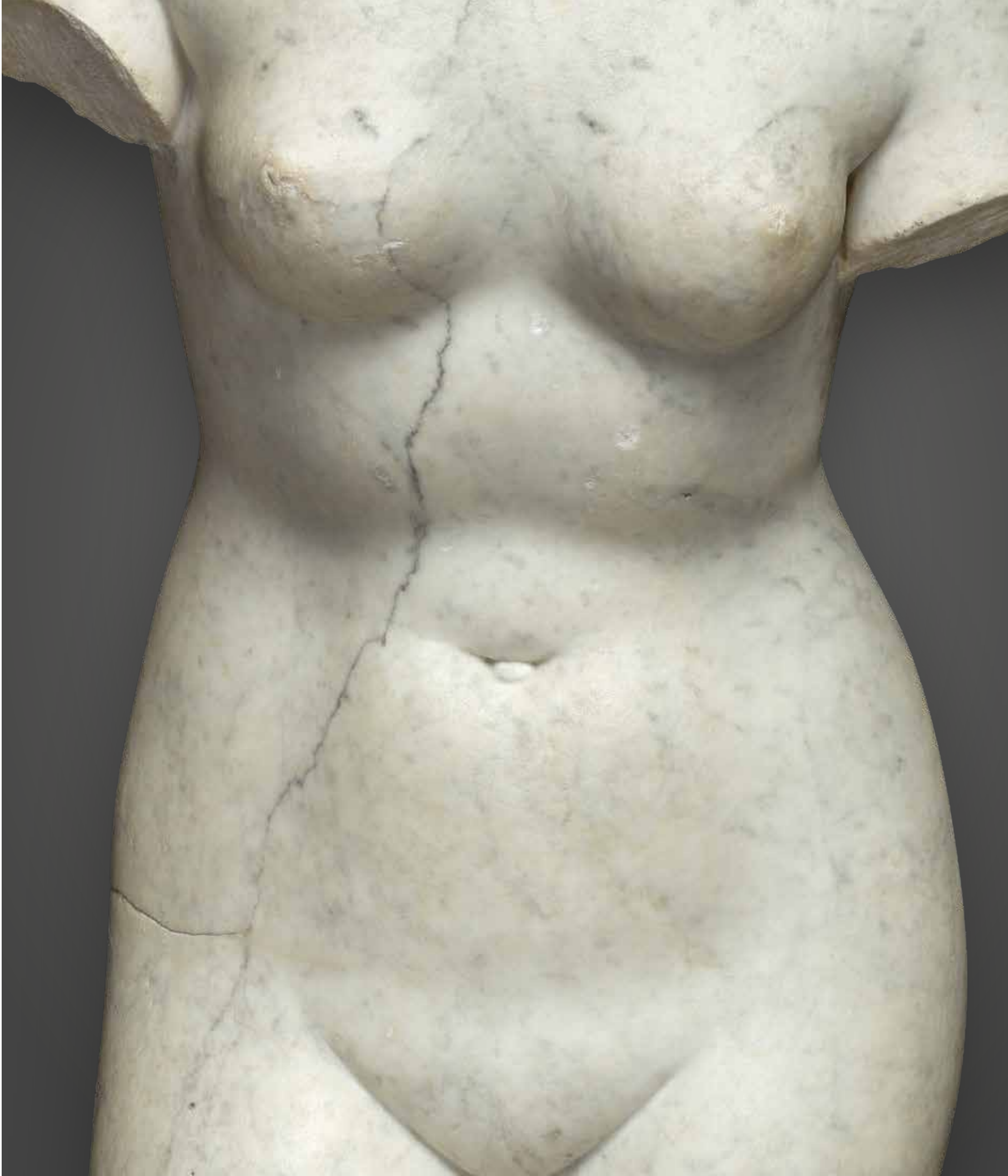
Over the last few years, our youngest 'colleagues' – the kids  
on our Hermitage for Children art education programme –  
have been giving us a helping hand. Ever since the Hermitage  
Amsterdam opened in 2009, we have been offering free art  
education for primary school children in the greater Amsterdam  
area and each year our educators have scouted out the most  
gifted amongst them to take part in a multi-year talent  
development programme (also free of charge). The children  
selected visit each exhibition and make observations about  
works of art, often with great candour and always to the point.

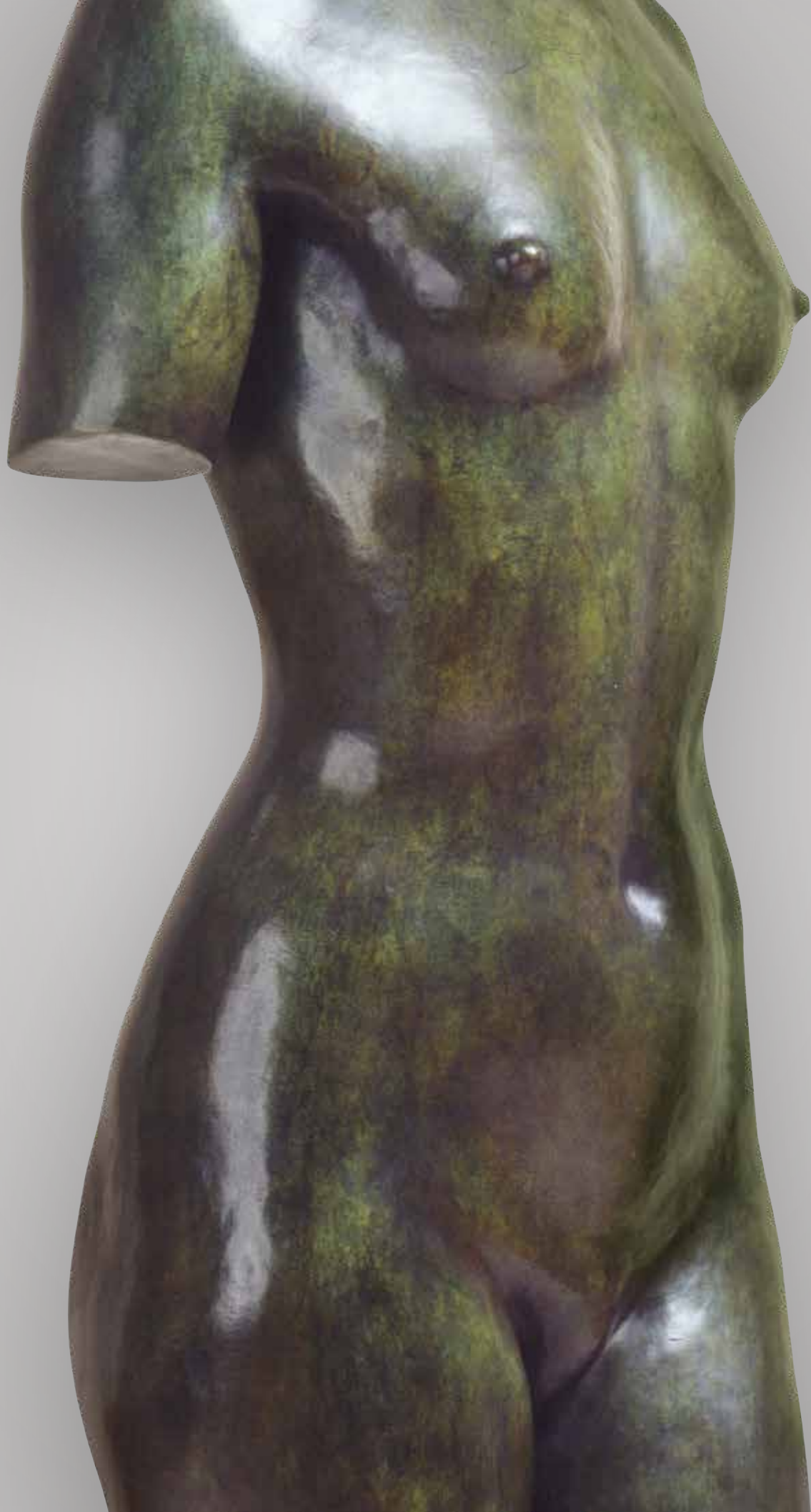
# Nature and Ideal

To further illustrate this question of how to idealise the naked body even while observing the rules of anatomy we turn to a Roman second-century marble torso of Aphrodite, based on a Greek original of the fourth century BCE (cat. 7). Extremely popular in Classical art, the image of Aphrodite (Venus), goddess of beauty and love, was captured time after time in successive ages, in many different kinds of fine and decorative art, in every imaginable material and technique. Forming a fascinating pair to the ancient figure is a bronze sculpture of *Spring (Without Arms)* by Aristide Maillol (twentieth century; cat. 8).

Inspired by Classical Antiquity, superb in its proportions, its pale-green finish quite deliberately imitates the patina of ancient bronzes. Symbol of youth and of burgeoning nature, the nude model is glorious to behold from all sides. In their harmonious silhouettes these two female figures make tangible their artistic link: in the union of nature and ideal, of nature and philosophy.







2ND CENTURY BCE



Torso of Aphrodite on a Capital with Volutes  
Ancient Roman  
cat. 7

1910–11



ARISTIDE MAILLOL  
Spring (Without Arms)  
cat. 8

REMINISCENCES IN ART





# Tradition and Innovation

A comparison of different periods and the identification of general types is key to our investigation of the history and various manifestations of stereotypes of beauty. Warming both eye and soul is the superb *Donna nuda* by an artist of the school of Leonardo da Vinci (sixteenth century; cat. 9). The pale hues of the naked body and fine play of light and shade in the darker draperies create a particularly sensual note. For comparison we have chosen a painting produced nearly four centuries later, a *Female Nude* by French artist Henri Matisse (twentieth century; cat. 10). Sharply contrasting, they demonstrate their creators' very different manners. The sixteenth-century portrait belongs to a more academic school, although with many realistic aspects, while Matisse's is experimental, capturing the model through the use of accentuated lines and generalisation of colour. This comparison gives eloquent expression to the question of tradition and innovation in art. Even as new artistic trends emerged in the last third of the nineteenth century (Impressionism, Post-Impressionism etc.), the systems and techniques of the Old Masters continued to co-exist.

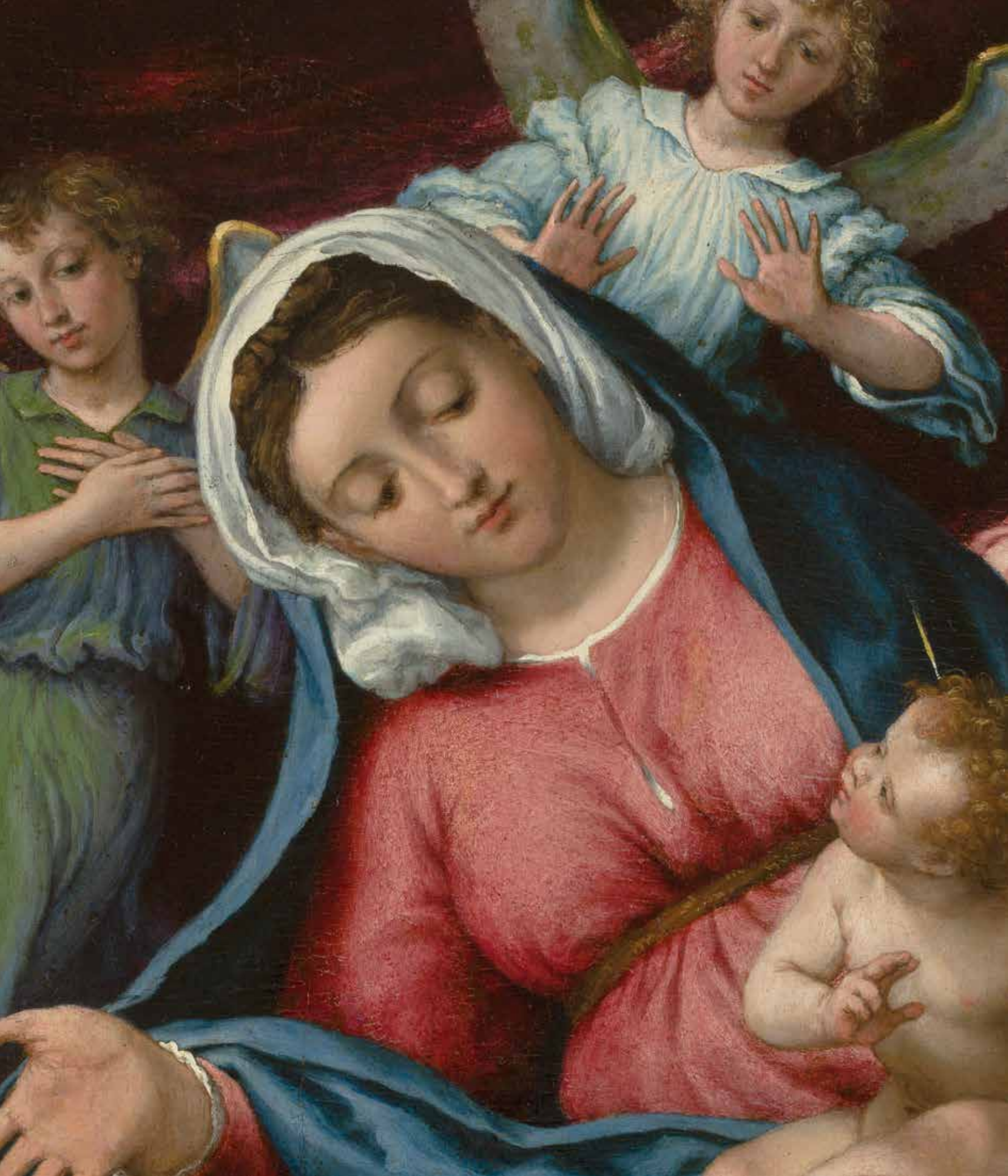


# Religion and Symbolism

Femininity, and of course motherhood, and the broader, more cosmopolitan theme of redemption from sin were all touched on in the unsurpassed works of the Renaissance period. Two sixteenth-century masterpieces from the Hermitage collection are here presented for a comparison of composition, style and colouring: a *Virgin and Child Beneath an Apple Tree* by the German painter Lucas Cranach the Elder (cat. 13) and the *Madonna delle grazie* by Italian artist Lorenzo Lotto (cat. 14). Both are packed with symbolism but they are also remarkable for their fine compositions and superb palette, with finely placed colour accents. They offer different artistic approaches to the same image. Cranach's picture presents a Protestant Virgin, personification of the True Church on earth: the Christ Child holds an apple and bread, symbols of his redemption of Original Sin. Lotto's Catholic Madonna is accompanied by three angels who look upon the newborn Saviour with reverence.









C. 1527–30



LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER  
The Virgin and Child Beneath an Apple Tree  
cat. 13

1542



LORENZO LOTTO  
Madonna delle grazie  
cat. 14

REMINISCENCES IN ART

