

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

1 August 2019

The Mystery of the Madonna

Images:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/133918740@N04/sets/72157710026491656/>

Conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland is arranging a special talk at Ellon's Haddo House on Wednesday, 14 August.

Jennifer Melville, the Trust's Head of Curatorial & Conservation Services, will reveal the results of intensive efforts to throw a ray of light on the painting 'The Haddo Madonna' and discover if it's a true blue masterpiece by Italian Renaissance artist Raphael or simply the work of a beautiful stranger.

The claim that the painting was a forgotten work by Raffaeollo Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520) was made by Bendor Grosvenor in the BBC's *Britain's Lost Masterpieces* TV programme in 2016 and received worldwide media coverage, causing a commotion as a result. Better known as Raphael, the artist is regarded as one of the 'Holy Trinity' of Renaissance masters, along with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.

Since then, detailed examination and research to find out if the painting is really like a virgin has been undertaken with the help of the National Gallery in London.

The painting was given a holiday from the intense interest of visitors to Haddo, when special arrangements were made by conservators to transport it south and return it again. While in London, experts got into the groove of the paints used and the backing material of the girl during their investigations.

The composition of the painting itself was also examined as it was common to strike a pose in specific styles in religious iconography of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Jennifer's talk will be delivered at 4.00 for 5.00 pm at Haddo House on 14th August and she will confirm if the investigations justify the love for the painting or if a mystery remains as to who's that girl.

Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis starting at £8.00 per person and can be purchased by calling **01651 851 440**, e-mailing haddohouse@nts.org.uk or by going online at <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/haddo-house/events>

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National Trust for Scotland Press Office. Contact Jim Whyteside on 0131 458 0241/ 07889 456779.

Editor's Notes:

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The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

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From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. Visit today. Enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.

Unfolding the mystery of the Haddo House Madonna, is Raphael the artist behind the masterpiece? 4.00 for 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 14 August 2019 at Haddo House, Methlick, Ellon AB41 7EQ.

<https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/haddo-house>

<https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/haddo-madonna>

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