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Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, Milan, Italy



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## Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

- Architecture: Alessandra Quarto, Milan / Italy
- Photography: Frieder Blickle, Hamburg / Germany and Dirk Vogel, Dortmund / Germany
- Place: Milan

- Country: Italy
- Website: <http://pinacotecabrera.org/en/>
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**The Pinacoteca di Brera art gallery in Milan is currently restructuring its rooms with a new approach to exhibitions involving a series of “Dialogues” between large paintings with related religious themes. Thanks to ERCO LED lighting each masterpiece becomes more uplifting.**

What would be the conversation between Perugino and Raphael? Or between two other great masters of art history? The Pinacoteca di Brera answers this question with a series of “Dialogues”, matching a selection of masterpieces from the museum’s own collection with related pieces on loan. The first dialogue, “Perugino and Raphael, the Marriage of the Virgin”, puts the two frequently contrasted portrayals of the marriage ceremony between Mary and Joseph side by side for the first time, enabling a comparative analysis of the originals. “You could see the very calm stability of the Perugino and the increasing plasticity and fluid movement of Raphael,” says Brera Director James M. Bradburne, as he recalls the experience. The “Dialogues” have since continued with themes including “Andrea Mantegna: New Perspective” and “Dinner Conversation with Caravaggio”.



Entrance area to the Pinacoteca di Brera, photo: Frieder Blickle



Hall with the painting of “Saint Mark Preaching in a Square of Alexandria in Egypt” (1504-1507) by Gentile Bellini and Giovanni Bellini, photo: Frieder Blickle



Visitor with hat, photo: Frieder Blickle

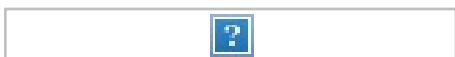


Details of a painting pique interest, photo: Frieder Blickle

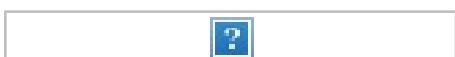
## **Large paintings with religious themes**

Founded by Empress Maria Theresa of Austria in the 18th century, when Lombardy was still under the sovereignty of the Habsburg dynasty, the Pinacoteca di Brera expanded a few decades later thanks to Napoleon, who filled it with numerous large paintings depicting religious scenes, which had been confiscated from churches and monasteries at the time of the dissolution. This explains why the collection comprises chiefly religious works that can be admired at the Pinacoteca di Brera today, many of them large altarpieces such as the “Coronation of the Virgin” by Andrea di Bartolo and Giorgio di Andrea.

“Brera has one of the most beautiful collections in Italy – possibly even in the world. The amount of fire power – or “candle power” – of this collection is unparalleled”, Bradburne states. The collection has since grown to feature iconic works of the 20th century, including “Enfant Gras” by Amedeo Modigliani and “Head of a Bull” by Pablo Picasso.



“The Dead Christ and Three Mourners” (1470-1474) by Andrea Mantegna, photo: Dirk Vogel



“Pietà” (1467-1470) by Giovanni Bellini, photo: Dirk Vogel



“Coronation of the Virgin” (1415) by Andrea di Bartolo and Giorgio di Andrea, photo: Dirk Vogel



“Madonna and Child” (1320 -1323) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, photo: Dirk Vogel

## **New layout for a strong emotional charge**

Housed in the Palazzo Brera, the Pinacoteca di Brera is situated in the centre of historic Milan alongside the Academy of Fine Arts. The present building largely dates from the 17th century, when it was constructed in Baroque style by architect Francesco Maria Richini. Originally a Jesuit college, from the mid-18th century, it was used to accommodate several of the city’s cultural and scientific institutions. The “Dialogues” hosted by the Pinacoteca tie in with the transformation of its rooms. Arranged chronologically across six centuries, their colour schemes are designed to reflect the various historical periods and assist in guiding visitors around and, perhaps more importantly, to emphasise the colour palette of each painting thereby enhancing its sublime essence.

The idea behind this restructuring, according to Bradburne, was “to give the existing collection more clarity. To make it easier to understand for the visitor. To give more drama, more emotional power”. For example, the 15th century is represented by ultramarine, the colour typically chosen to depict the robes of the Virgin Mary.

## **Rich colours intensified by brilliant light**

As well as the restructuring, the art gallery is undergoing a complete relighting, due to be completed in 2018. ERCO spotlights from the [Optec](#) and [Pollux](#) ranges are being used. Based entirely on LED technology developed by ERCO, the new lighting renders the works of art in brilliant colours. On the CRI scale, ERCO LEDs offer the best possible colour rendering, with a Ra >90 for warm white light and a Ra >80 for neutral white light. LEDs in ERCO luminaires with white light have a continuous spectrum without emphasis on individual spectral ranges by adding coloured LEDs. This guarantees a faithful reproduction of colours with consistent depth and vibrancy throughout the life of the luminaire.

Thanks to superior light quality, the art on display at the Pinacoteca di Brera has never looked more alluring and richer in colour. Even subtle transitions between colours can now be distinguished, giving three-dimensional expression to features such as the contours of Christ in the “Pietà” painting by Giovanni Bellini.

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