

Carlo Crivelli *Radical Illusionism in the 15th Century* Spring 2022



NG739: Carlo Crivelli, *The Annunciation, with Saint Emidius* (1486)
Egg and oil on canvas, 207 x 146.7 cm
© The National Gallery, London. Presented by Lord Taunton, 1864

Ikon announces award-winning exhibition of Crivelli masterpieces with major loans travelling from the National Gallery to make a “dream come true”.

Ikon is delighted to announce winning the inaugural £150,000 Ampersand Foundation Award, which will enable the gallery to realise its dream of staging an exhibition of works by the 15th century master Carlo Crivelli. The Trustees of the National Gallery in London have agreed to lend four masterpieces by Crivelli for the exhibition.

The exhibition *Carlo Crivelli. Radical Illusionism in the 15th Century* will be presented at Ikon during spring 2022. Ikon's exhibition proposal fought off strong competition from four other shortlisted galleries across the UK.

This announcement comes as Jonathan Watkins marks 20 years as Ikon Director: "An exhibition of work by the 15th century painter Carlo Crivelli is not only a dream come true for Ikon, but also something that I have always really wanted to do. Since being an undergraduate I have been fascinated by Crivelli, at once very "traditional" in a northern Italian style but pointing towards a postmodern art historical future unlike any other pre-modern artist. In other words, arguably, Carlo Crivelli was as radical as Magritte. How often he crops up in my conversations with artists – who acknowledge him, positively, as an artist's artist - and I keep on revisiting, literally, through pilgrimages to museum collections."

The exhibition will highlight Crivelli's experimental use of single point perspective and trompe l'oeil to assert the coexistence of terrestrial and spiritual realities. Crivelli played with the idea of paintings as windows onto other worlds, at once suggesting and undermining illusionism. At the same time he used sculptural relief to create illusions of illusionism. Such cleverness was conveyed with consummate craftsmanship and at the same time foiled by an exquisite and elegant beauty.

The Ampersand Foundation Award is open to all the current members of the Plus Tate network. It aims to enable the winning institution to realise its dream project in the form of an exhibition, new commission, public space intervention or any other kind of project. There are no restrictions on the subject or format of the proposal except that it must be delivered by a curator, director or a team of curators working within the institution.

The winner is awarded £125,000 to realise their proposal and all its associated costs, and an additional £25,000 to produce a related publication. The shortlisted institutions each receive £5,000.

Dr Caroline Campbell, National Gallery Director of Collections and Research, said: "The National Gallery was created for the benefit of the British public, but we recognise that a number of visitors may find it difficult to make the journey to London – that is why it is really important to us to work with galleries like Ikon. We hope that *Carlo Crivelli. Radical Illusionism in the 15th Century* will allow some of our great masterpieces to reach people who have never visited their national collection or haven't done so for a long time, and maybe inspire them to visit or revisit the collection."

Flor Souto, Director of The Ampersand Foundation, said: "What we want to achieve with this award is to enable curators and directors working in a tough funding environment to realise a project that they have always wanted to do but have been unable to do so far due to funding pressure."

The institutions which were shortlisted for the award are: Camden Arts Centre, London, Firstsite, Colchester, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes and South London Gallery, London.

The winner was selected by a judging panel composed of the following five members:
Jack Kirkland, Chairman, The Ampersand Foundation
Amanda Sharp, Frieze Co-Founder
Alastair Sooke, Trustee, The Ampersand Foundation
Sam Thorne, Director, Nottingham Contemporary*
Caragh Thuring, Artist

*(Please note Nottingham Contemporary did not enter this year. In future years, the director of the winning institution will sit on the judging panel and that institution will be ineligible to enter that year).

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@ikongallery #IkonGallery

Links:

ikon-gallery.org

theampersandfoundation.com

Notes to Editors:

1. The Ampersand Foundation was founded in 2011 by businessman, collector and philanthropist Jack Kirkland to support the visual arts. The Foundation supports high-quality exhibitions and projects, provided they are free to the public at least one day per week. It also supports public collection expansion and capital projects. The Foundation is focused mainly on supporting institutions and projects within the UK.
2. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity

and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. ikon-gallery.org

3. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
4. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. ACE support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, ACE will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. artscouncil.org.uk