

# International Exhibitions | West and East, fine art at International Exhibitions | Contemporary suggestions

International Exhibitions began to focus more on social issues.

The spread of a positivist culture, faith in progress born from developments in science and technology, industrialisation and colonialism could not fail to evoke among the middle classes feelings of piety and a humanitarian concern for improving the lives of the most disadvantaged. Accordingly, the International Exhibitions also found themselves involved in social issues: the heroic achievements of medicine were joined by a silent public awareness about the “victims of labour” and the brutality experienced by rural workers. Arab and Ottoman artists, visiting the studios of Western painters, partly encouraged the cultural exchange between East and West, but while some Western styles and techniques were introduced, their paintings appear to give rise to a figure of contemporary womanhood that was closer to reality and which is represented with renewed sensitivity. The same female figures that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century as the protagonists in Gustave Klimt’s decorative schemes interwoven with gold and polychrome tiles were derived from Byzantine mosaics.



**Working Number:** IT2 021

**Name:** Edward Jenner Inoculates his Small Son with the Smallpox Vaccine

**Holding Museum:** National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM)

**Date:** c. 1878

**Materials:** Bronze

**Curator Justification:** The sculpture by Giulio Monteverde represents Edward Jenner, inventor of the smallpox vaccine, inoculating his own son with the very first dose. The work was exhibited at Vienna’s first International Exhibition in 1873, where it won the gold medal. The marble version was exhibited in 1878 at the Paris exhibition, where it won the Medal of Honour.



**Working Number:** IT2 022

**Name:** Edward Jenner, Marble Group by Giulio Monteverde

**Holding Museum:**

**Date:** National Central Library

**Materials:** 1878

**Curator Justification:** Illustration from a magazine showing the marble group by G. Monteverde

The engraving celebrates the work of Monteverde. Contemporary reports say that at the 1878 Paris exhibition the marble version of the sculpture was awarded the Medal of Honour and the public received it enthusiastically.



**Working Number:** IT2 024

**Name:** Proximus tuus [Latin: Your Neighbour]

**Holding Museum:** National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM)

**Date:** 1880

**Materials:** Bronze

**Curator Justification:** The sculpture denounces the brutal hopelessness of rural work with solemn realism. It was exhibited at several International Exhibitions, including those held in Munich in 1883, Antwerp in 1885 and St Louis in 1904.

---



**Working Number:** IT2 025

**Name:** The Victims of Labour

**Holding Museum:** National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM)

**Date:** 1882 (fusion 1895)

**Materials:** Bronze

**Curator Justification:** This relief sculpture by Vincenzo Vela is a tribute to the many workers who died during construction of the Gotthard railway tunnel in Switzerland (1871-81). The artist affirmed that he had not been commissioned to make the work, but had personal reasons for making it. It was cast in bronze at the request of the Ministry of Education in 1895 and exhibited at the Paris exhibition of 1900.

---



**Working Number:** IT2 020

**Name:** Dreams

**Holding Museum:** National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM)

**Date:** 1896

**Materials:** Oil on canvas

**Curator Justification:** First presented at the International Exhibition of Art in Florence, this portrait attracted the attention and critical acclaim of the public since its first appearance in 1897. In fact, so admired was the work that it was reproduced on postcards.

---



**Working Number:** TR2 165

**Name:** Madame X

**Holding Museum:** Sabanc# University, Sak#p Sabanc# Museum

**Date:** 19th century

**Materials:** Oil and pastels on cardboard

**Curator Justification:** This portrait won the bronze medal at the Paris exhibition of 1889, the year after it was painted. Halil Pasha, who was part of the Asker Ressamlar (Soldier Artists), founded a new Ottoman art tradition inspired by the Western style, and worked with Jean Leon Gérôme at his atelier in Paris.

---



**Working Number:** IT2 103

**Name:** The Three Ages of Woman

**Holding Museum:** National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM)

**Date:** 1905

**Materials:**

Oil on canvas

**Curator****Justification:**

Shown in 1911 at the International Exhibition of Fine Arts in Rome, Klimt's work won a prize and was then bought by the Italian state. In the work, the vogue for Orientalism that had spread among artists who wanted to free themselves from the conventions of Western art is apparent, as are the Byzantine mosaics Klimt saw in Ravenna in 1903.

---