The cover of this year's annual Irish Art & Antiques Feature celebrates the re-opening of the Irish National Portrait Collection in the Dargan Wing of The National Gallery of Ireland. Dismantled in the 1970s the collection in the interim has been enhanced by a series of acquisitions and special commissions, often generously supported by Irish Life and Permanent plc. This autumn visitors will have the opportunity to explore the new display which is devoted to over 70 national portraits, painted and sculpted from the 16th century to the present day. This includes the splendid 18th century portraits of Lord Edward (by Hugh Douglas Hamilton) and Lady Pamela Fitzgerald and their daughter (attributed to Mallary) and the romantic portrait of Constance Markievicz by her future husband. More recent is the self portrait by Sean Keating on the cover and Louis Le Brocquy's commissioned portrait of the Irish rock band U2's front man, Bono.

Also on display from 16 September is Heavenly Bodies, an exhibition of figure drawing from the 16th century to the present day. This exhibition of great contrasts is curated by Anne Hodge and displayed in the Print Gallery. Artists include Andrea Mantegna, Jacopo Bassano, Girolamo Muziano (illustrated), Ludovici Carracci, Gabriel Metsu, Watteau, Mengs, Mulready, Degas, Modigliani, Rose Barton, William Orpen, Mainie Jellett and Picasso.

Last of the this autumn's displays at the National Gallery, but hot at least is the major exhibition of Dutch genre painting in the age of Vermeer entitled Love Letters that starts at the National Gallery on 1 October for the rest of the year. This exhibition is curated by Peter Sutton, director of the Bruce Museum, Connecticut and travels to his gallery in the new year. The show examines the interest among Dutch painters in depicting scenes involving letters, their writing, dictation, delivery and reception and includes important paintings by Vermeer (see the gallery advertisement), ter Borch (illustrated), de Hooch, Jan Steen and Metsu. The accompanying catalogue is written by the curator with contributions from Jennifer Kilian and...