

The European Vision of America

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
December 7, 1975-February 15, 1976

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
April 28, 1976-August 8, 1976

Musées Nationaux de France, Grand Palais, Paris
September 17, 1976-January 3, 1977

A special loan exhibition organized by The Cleveland Museum of Art to honor the American Bicentennial 1976

ADVANCE FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION: The European Vision of America

DATES: December 7, 1975 - February 15, 1976
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

April 28 - August 8, 1976
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland

September 17, 1976 - January 3, 1977
Grand Palais, Paris

CONCEPT: The exhibition will be an homage of the Old World to the New, illustrating the development of the visual image of the Americas in European minds from the time of Columbus to the late nineteenth century.

This image was largely the creation of Europeans who, without crossing the Atlantic, evolved an almost wholly fantastic vision of an exotic land in which all manner of strange plants and creatures were mingled. Stimulated by traveler's tales, by New World objects and artifacts imported into Europe, and by paintings and drawings by the few artists who actually journeyed to the West, these fantasies helped to form European conceptions and misconceptions of the Americas. Notions derived from them were to play a part of some importance in the history of trans-Atlantic relations.

AUSPICES
AND SUPPORT: Organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art, in cooperation with the National Gallery of Art

(more)

and the Réunion des Musées Nationaux de France, the exhibition is supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

GUEST CURATOR: Hugh Honour, British scholar and writer.

CONTENT: On view will be approximately 300 European works of art and other objects. Included will be paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, tapestries, porcelains, silver and gold work, early maps, and illustrated books. Works by such masters as Tiepolo, Goya, Delacroix, Houdon, and Turner will be shown, as well as many creations of anonymous or little-known artists and craftsmen.

Among the works in the exhibition are:

an illustrated edition of Columbus' report to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, published in 1493.

very rare and important maps, including the Miller atlas of about 1525.

the first painting of an American subject, West Indian Scene of about 1540 by Flemish painter Jan Mostaert.

watercolors of New World natives and animals by John White, Sir Walter Raleigh's cartographer and draughtsman.

costume and stage designs with American subjects by Inigo Jones and others.

the first representation of Pocahontas pleading for John Smith's life, illustrated in Smith's history of Virginia, published in 1624.

(more)

seventeenth-century Dutch views of the landscape and natives of Brazil and the West Indies.

an elegant baroque evocation of American flora and fauna in a painting by Jan Weenix.

the first edition of Mark Catesby's The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands with hand-colored engravings of American birds and insects, published in 1731.

Tiepolo's sketches for his fresco America on the staircase ceiling in the Wurzburg Residenz.

British satirical prints dealing with the American Revolution.

Beauvais tapestries and chair coverings celebrating the American Revolution. Ordered by Louis XVI as a gift for George Washington, the tapestries never reached the United States: the French Revolution intervened.

Joseph Wright of Derby's highly romantic painting, The Indian Widow.

Delacroix's Les Natchez, Girodet's The Burial of Atala, and other works inspired by Chateaubriand's Atala, the most popular early nineteenth-century novel with an American setting.

Wedgwood's antislavery medallion, J.M.W. Turner's The Slave Ship, F.A. Biard's Slave Buyer in Africa, and other works illustrating European attitudes toward slavery.

views of nineteenth-century life in the United States, including the first

(more)

illustrated edition of Mrs. Frances Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans, Swiss artist Frank Buchser's paintings of western life, Ernest Narjot's Gold Rush Camp (1882), and prints and watercolors of American street scenes.

LENDERS:

Approximately one fourth of the works are being lent by French public and private collections, among them the Bibliothèque Nationale, Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the Musée du Louvre in Paris, and the Château de Versailles. Other works from abroad are being lent by more than fifty collections in a dozen countries, including the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Library in London, the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon, the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, and the Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich.

From the western hemisphere, the largest individual loans are being made by the Library of Congress in Washington and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Important loans are also being made by two museums in Canada and fifty public and private institutions in the United States.

CATALOGUE:

A scholarly, illustrated catalogue to be published in English and French editions will accompany the exhibition. Text, written by Hugh Honour, will include essays on each major section of the exhibition as well as individual entries for each work exhibited. Approximately 300 pages; 300 illustrations (eight color plates); available in paperbound editions.

END

September 4, 1975

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Mary Dyer, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, (202) 737-4215, ext. 224; or Frances Stamper, Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106, (216) 421-7340.