

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OFFERS GRAPHICS EXHIBITION AND SLIDE PRESENTATION RELATED TO JUNE 1 FIREWORKS

WASHINGTON, D.C. July 21, 1976. As analogues to the National Gallery of Art's eighteenth-century fireworks spectacle held on June 1, a graphics exhibition of European fireworks in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries and an audio-visual program of the Gallery's fireworks presentation will be on view at the Gallery through September 6. Both offerings complement The Eye of Thomas Jefferson, the National Gallery's major Bicentennial exhibition also on view through September 6.

Entitled Feu d'Artifice: Three Centuries of French Fireworks, the graphics exhibition of forty-three engravings and gouaches was organized by French art historian and writer Patrick Bracco. It includes works lent by the Société Ruggieri, the world-famous French fireworks firm whose pyrotechnic spectacles Jefferson saw in Paris while United States Minister to France, as well as examples lent by the Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Musée Carnavalet, and private collections in Paris.

The exhibition is arranged chronologically, according to the events commemorated by the spectacles. During the eighteenth century, fireworks spectacles were organized to celebrate important occasions in court life,

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particularly royal marriages and births, martial victories, and the signing of peace treaties. The general theme of these spectacles was the victory of order and light over chaos and darkness.

The audio-visual program, entitled "The Triumph of Reason and Order over Chaos and War," is composed of color slides of the June 1 fireworks and a sound track of the explosions and accompanying eighteenth-century music. It will be presented in the Gallery auditorium daily through September 6 at 1:00 and 6:30 p.m.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Mary Dyer, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.