

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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TITIAN EXHIBITION AT NATIONAL GALLERY

October 12, 1989, Washington, DC -- A major Titian exhibition that will be seen next year only at the National Gallery and the Ducal Palace, Venice, was announced today on the occasion of Italian president Francesco Cossiga's visit to the Gallery. Titian, Prince of Painters will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Venetian Renaissance master's birth, now generally accepted as 1490. Including some sixty works from many public and private collections, the exhibition will be the largest ever devoted to the artist since the one held at the Ca' Pesaro, Venice, in 1935.

The exhibition is being organized by the Comune di Venezia and the Soprintendenza ai Beni Artistici e Storici de Venezia (City of Venice and Venetian Superintendency of Fine Arts) and the National Gallery of Art, with the support of Galileo Industrie Ottiche S.p.A.

Standing beside Titian's dramatic and boldly painted portrait of Doge Andrea Gritti from the Gallery's own collection, National Gallery director J. Carter Brown, said, "Titian's work is well represented in our permanent collection, and we are proud to announce that the only major special exhibition of his paintings ever to be held in this country will be here at the Gallery."

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Tiziano Vecellio, known as Titian, is considered one of the greatest artists of the Western world. His extraordinary gifts won him the patronage not only of Pope Paul III and the Italian rulers but also of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who knighted him, and of King Philip II of Spain, for whom he painted an incomparable series of religious and mythological canvases. The profound influence of his works, created during a career of almost seventy years, underlies the painterly tradition found in Western art from Rubens to Delacroix.

A committee of scholars, headed until his death by Professor Rodolfo Pallucchini and now by Professor Francesco Valcanover, has been selecting the paintings to be included in the exhibition and preparing the essays to be published in the catalogue. The exhibition will feature world-famous masterpieces from major museums in Europe and the U.S. including the Louvre, Prado, and Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Four ceiling paintings from Venice, including the Allegorical Figure of Wisdom from the Marciana Library and three vast canvases with Old Testament subjects from the sacristy of S. Maria della Salute, will show Titian's mastery of this genre. In addition, the exhibition will reconstruct the ceiling of the Scuola of San Giovanni Evangelista, re-uniting the central canvas, St. John the Evangelist on Patmos, now in the National Gallery of Art, with the twenty surrounding decorative panels from the ceiling still in Venice, according to the scheme originally intended by the artist.

Prior to its showing at the National Gallery October 28, 1990 through January 27, 1991, Titian, Prince of Painters will premiere at the Ducal Palace in Venice, June 1 through October 7, 1990.