

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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ITALIAN BAROQUE PAINTINGS

ON LOAN TO NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Washington, DC, September 26, 1990 -- A selection of 25 Italian baroque paintings by masters such as Caravaggio, Annibale Carracci, and Guido Reni will be presented in the National Gallery of Art's West Building, September 26 through November 11, 1990. The paintings are drawn from the collections of 16 Italian banks and the Italian Banking Association. Banks in Italy have a centuries-old tradition of collecting, preserving, and exhibiting fine art.

The selection showcases most of the art historical trends, as well as regional developments, in figural and landscape painting in seventeenth-century Italy. Some of the paintings have never been published and many have never been exhibited outside Italy. Only three of the works, The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula (1610) by Caravaggio, The Finding of Moses (1635-1640) by Bernardo Cavallino, and Saint George (c. 1645-1650) by Francesco Guarino, have ever been on view in the United States. The loan was arranged by the National Gallery of Art in conjunction with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Banking Association.

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"We are delighted to be able to make known this group of old master Italian paintings to our public," said J. Carter Brown, director, National Gallery of Art. "The choice of baroque pictures, which is a particular strength of the banks' collections, is intended to complement and supplement the permanent collection at the National Gallery, in an area in which its collections have less depth than in the earlier schools of Italian art."

"The variety of subject and style of this selection encapsulates the diversity within seventeenth-century painting. The pictures also demonstrate the quality and level of artistic accomplishment throughout Italy during this richly productive period," said Diane De Grazia, National Gallery curator of southern baroque painting, who traveled to Italy to select the works of art with Pier Giovanni Castagnoli of the University of Bologna.

Italian banks have been patrons of the arts since as early as the fifteenth century when at least one bank commissioned a fresco to grace its headquarters. In subsequent years, Italian banks have commissioned, collected, and acquired, through the purchase of former residential palaces, an ever-increasing number of works of art. In addition to collecting, conserving, and exhibiting Italian art, the banks also sponsor catalogues of their art collections, monographs on their architectural sites (the actual bank buildings), exhibitions of art, and scholarly publications about local or regional artists, past and present.

This group of paintings will also be seen at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, December 19, 1990 through January 27, 1991.