



Circa 1492

ART IN THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

National Gallery of Art, Washington
October 12, 1991-January 12, 1992

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART PRODUCES

"MASTERS OF ILLUSION" AS PART OF

CIRCA 1492: ART IN THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Masters of Illusion, a thirty-minute film about the discovery of perspective and concepts of pictorial space during the Renaissance, will be produced by the National Gallery of Art as part of the exhibition Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration, which will be on view October 12, 1991 through January 12, 1992. The film uses new technology to look at old masters in new ways. It is a film about how to see. Masters of Illusion is made possible by the joint support of Canon U.S.A., Inc. and Canon, Inc.

"Masters of Illusion is a cinematic exploration of the birth of perspective, concentrating on space and man's relationship to it, which was one of the major achievements of the fifteenth century," said National Gallery director J. Carter Brown. "When the discoverers in the Renaissance were changing our understanding of the world, the great artists of the Renaissance were changing the way we see the world. This fascinating film will offer all of us a better insight into what was a visual revolution."

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Masters of Illusion will be produced in 35mm widescreen film, as well as High Definition Television and standard video formats. The production will involve the use of advanced special effects, such as multi-layer backlit computer animation and new optical printing techniques.

"Canon is proud to sponsor Masters of Illusion," said Hideharu Takemoto, president of Canon U.S.A., Inc. "By employing twentieth-century imaging technology to understand the historical significance of art and architecture five hundred years ago, Masters of Illusion demonstrates how visual communications have enlightened people throughout the ages. As a leader in imaging technology today, Canon appreciates the forward vision of the fifteenth-century artists and architects who used their communications skills to show us the beginnings of a 'new' global village. Masters of Illusion uses the highest form of imaging communications to bridge the gap between the fifteenth-century and twentieth-century worlds for the millions of people who will visit the National Gallery of Art."

The executive producer of the film and National Gallery external affairs officer Joseph J. Krakora said, "Masters of Illusion underscores the fact that the special effects we are accustomed to seeing today, in films such as Star Wars, are based on principles established by Renaissance masters such as Brunelleschi, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, and Raphael.

Fifteenth-century artist/architect Filippo Brunelleschi's discovery of perspective had an immediate and major impact on art, design, and architecture. The film will utilize special effects and elements of linear design to underscore the importance of Brunelleschi's work for the art of the Renaissance.

Filmmaker Rick Harper will produce Masters of Illusion in association with the National Gallery. The winner of more than 150 awards, Harper has designed, produced, directed, and shot films all over the world for Disney productions, the National Gallery (Collecting America), and many others. James Burke, Great Britain's foremost commentator on science and technology, is ideally suited to be the on-camera host. An award-winning television personality, author, and educator, Burke will become an imaginative part of the special effects in the film.

The film will be broadcast nationwide in the fall of 1991. It will also be available in eight languages -- Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish -- for international distribution and for both High Definition and standard television broadcast in Western Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The videocassette will also be distributed as part of the Gallery's extension program, which provides films, videotapes, and audiovisual material free-of-charge to colleges, universities, and secondary schools throughout the country.