

# National Gallery of Art News Release



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## THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ANNOUNCES EXHIBITION OF JOHN SINGER SARGENT'S EL JALEO

Washington, D.C., May 29, 1991 -- The National Gallery of Art announced today that El Jaleo, one of John Singer Sargent's greatest paintings, will be the centerpiece of an exhibition at the National Gallery of Art next year. The exhibition, John Singer Sargent's "El Jaleo", will include 7 paintings and 44 drawings and watercolors by the artist. El Jaleo and other related works will be on loan for the first time from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and other public and private collections in the U.S. and abroad. It will be on view March 1 through July 5, 1992, in the East Building of the National Gallery. Conservation of the painting and the exhibition have been made possible by generous grants from the NYNEX Foundation and New England Telephone.

"We are most fortunate to be able to show John Singer Sargent's great painting, which is evidence of his enthusiasm for Spanish culture," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art. "We are enormously grateful to the Gardner Museum for lending us this great treasure, newly revealed, and to the other lenders of related works, some previously unknown even to Sargent scholars. This marks a milestone in the National Gallery's policy of restricting certain exhibitions to a very narrow focus, centered on a major masterpiece."

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"NYNEX Foundation is delighted to help bring this national treasure to both Boston and the nation's capital for the enjoyment of visitors from around the world," said Pattie Gallatin, vice president - Programs for NYNEX Foundation.

El Jaleo, a life-size painting that depicts a magnificent flamenco dancer, was the highlight of the Paris Salon of 1882. Critics marveled at the painting's energy and theatricality, comparing it to the work of Goya and Velázquez.

Spain held a powerful attraction for European and American artists and tourists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many made the journey there not only to study the paintings of the Spanish masters in the Prado and other museums, but also to experience the exotic ambiance, especially of southern Spain. The sinuous movements of the gypsy dances of Andalusia, performed for tourists in taverns and accompanied by traditional songs and guitar music, were potent experiences. Sargent's intention was to capture all of this in the works on view in this exhibition.

An addition of special interest is The Spanish Dancer, an earlier version of El Jaleo. This large canvas (7 x 5½ feet), was abandoned by the artist in Paris and was unknown until its rediscovery in 1988 in Grenoble, France.

El Jaleo itself was purchased by a New York dealer and later acquired by an American collector, Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, who gave it to Isabella Stewart Gardner. She made it the centerpiece of the Spanish Cloister at her home in Boston, which in later years became the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

The curator of the exhibition at the National Gallery is Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., curator of American and British paintings. A fully illustrated catalogue published by the National Gallery of Art will accompany the exhibition. It will include essays by Mary Crawford Volk, guest curator for the exhibition, with contributions from Warren Adelson and Elizabeth Oustinoff. In addition, the catalogue will include a summary of the conservation prepared by Mary Crawford Volk in conjunction with restorer and painting conservator Alain Goldrach.