

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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"THE GLORY OF VENICE" COMES TO NATIONAL GALLERY;
MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS BY 18TH-CENTURY VENETIAN ARTISTS
WILL BE ON VIEW JANUARY 29 THROUGH APRIL 23, 1995

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century will be the first major international exhibition in the United States to present a comprehensive selection of the extraordinary accomplishments of Venetian artists of the eighteenth century. The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, where it recently opened. The exhibition will be on view at the National Gallery of Art in the West Building from January 29 through April 23, 1995. The National Gallery will be the only venue for this exhibition in the United States.

The exhibition is made possible by a grant from Mobil Corporation. The exhibition is also supported by the National Gallery's Fund for the International Exchange of Art and an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

"Visitors to the National Gallery will feast their eyes on more than two-hundred paintings and altarpieces, pastels, gouaches, drawings and watercolors, prints, and illustrated books revealing the unity and breadth of artistic production at the highest levels in eighteenth-century Venice, with full representations of art by such well-loved

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masters as Piazzetta, Tiepolo, Canaletto, Guardi, and Piranesi," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We would like to thank Mobil for making this important cultural event possible."

"Mobil is proud to be, for the third time, a partner of the National Gallery of Art, one of the world's foremost cultural institutions," said Lucio A. Noto, Mobil's chairman. The Glory of Venice will showcase many great, yet rarely seen masterpieces. We hope during its stay here this exceptional exhibition will also make visitors and area residents--particularly our young people--more aware of the truly great asset the Gallery represents." The two other National Gallery exhibitions supported by Mobil Corporation were Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images (1978-1979) and The Sculpture of Indonesia (1990). Mobil also supported films made in conjunction with the exhibitions The Search for Alexander (1980-1981), Süleyman the Magnificent (1987), and The Sculpture of Indonesia (1990).

Eighteenth-century Venice was renowned for its canals bordered by magnificent architecture and public squares, a rich literary and intellectual life, grand festivals, and for the quality and vitality of its art, which immediately gained widespread popularity throughout the European world. Venice was also one of the greatest centers of art in the eighteenth century. Artists created works in which color and light were of paramount importance, producing altarpieces for churches, delectable fantasies and decorative paintings for the laity, and portraits and views of the unique city for visitors who wished to remember her striking prospects.

The exhibition of works by forty-five artists begins just at the opening of the new century with paintings and drawings by Sebastiano Ricci (1659-1734), a key figure in the revival of Venetian art in the eighteenth century, introducing the new

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brighter colors and elegant compositions of graceful figures.

The Venetians raised the genre of cityscape to new heights. Canaletto (1697-1768) was considered by many to be the greatest of the Venetian view painters, and was highly esteemed by British on the Grand Tour. His most spectacular views of both Venice and England will be shown. The other great view painters, Luca Carlevaris (1665-1731), Francesco Guardi (1712-1793) and Bernardo Bellotto (1721-1780), will also be well represented by many of their foremost works.

All aspects of the work of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770), the presiding genius in Venice and arguably the greatest painter in Europe at the time, will be shown together with the work of his older contemporary, Giovanni Battista Piazzetta (1683-1754). Piazzetta was a painter of enigmatic genre scenes and altarpieces of great dramatic and spiritual power.

The daily life of the city is illustrated in genre scenes by artists such as Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727-1804), the son of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and Pietro Longhi (1702-1785), who recorded everything from a lady's toilette to the exhibition of a rhinoceros. Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo is represented by a wide range of his paintings, drawings, and prints. Intimate pastel portraits by Rosalba Carriera (1675-1757) and the strikingly realistic work of Alessandro Longhi (1733-1813) and Gaetano Zompini (1700-1778) will also be shown.

The exhibition includes the work of artists who sowed the seeds for developments in nineteenth-century art such as Bernardo Bellotto and Giovanni Battista Piranesi (c. 1720-1780). The sensitive topographical realism of Bellotto, the romanticism of Piranesi's fantastic scenes, as well as the classicism of his subjects all predict important developments in early nineteenth-century European art.

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A number of works have recently been cleaned in preparation for this exhibition. These include a major altarpiece by Piazzetta depicting the Guardian Angel with St. Anthony of Padua and S. Gaetano Thiene (1727-1730) from San Vitale in Venice; Piazzetta's delightful portrait of a boy in Polish Costume, from the Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts; and the National Gallery's own monumental painting of a fanciful tomb by Sebastiano and Marco Ricci.

The Glory of Venice was selected and coordinated by Andrew Robison, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator at the National Gallery of Art, Washington. Sir Michael Levey, former director of the National Gallery, London, and Norman Rosenthal and Jane Martineau at the Royal Academy of Arts also contributed to the conception of the exhibition. The fully illustrated exhibition catalogue contains introductions by Robison and Levey, and new essays on the major artists and movements of the period by an international team of Italian, German, American, and British scholars, as well as individual entries on each work exhibited.

Admission to the Gallery is free of charge. The Gallery, located at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W. is open to the public Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For more information, call (202) 737-4215. For information on assistance for people with disabilities, call (202) 842-6690 or the TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) line at (202) 842-6176 weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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CONTACT: At the National Gallery of Art -- Ruth Kaplan
Deborah Ziska
(202) 842-6353

At Mobil -- Susan Evans
(703) 846-2391