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"Sources for Shakespeare's Plays: Selections from the National Gallery of Art Library" on View through April 17, 2007

One of Several "Shakespeare in Washington" Events at the Gallery



Livy

Titus Liuius, dat is, de Roemsche historie oft gesten doer den alderwelsprekensten en vernaempsten historisiriuere Titum Liuiu bescreuen... nu eerstmael in onser Nederlantscher spraken ghedruckt

Antwerp, 1541

National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Washington, DC – Shakespeare has been inspiring art and literature for more than 400 years and now the National Gallery of Art is presenting some of the sources that inspired him in a special installation of rare 16th- and early 17th-century books.

Sources for Shakespeare's Plays: Selections from the National Gallery of Art

Library, part of the citywide festival "Shakespeare in Washington," is on public view in the Gallery's Library, East Building, through April 17, 2007. Hours of the exhibition are Monday, noon to 4:30 p.m., and Tuesday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except federal holidays.

Highlights of the installation include Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a source for *Titus Andronicus*, the poem *Venus and Adonis*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Other selections include Livy's *Roman History*, a source for the poem *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Coriolanus*; a special copy of Livy that was annotated with illustrations by Shakespeare contemporary Nicholas Udall; and Plutarch's *Lives*, a source for *Julius Caesar*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

"The National Gallery is pleased to present these beautifully illustrated treasures from our collection that deepen our understanding of the author's genius for reflecting his times as well as universal themes," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

Curator and Related Activities

The curator of the exhibition is Neal Turtell, executive librarian of the National Gallery of Art.

Other activities at the National Gallery that are related to Shakespeare in Washington include:

The Artist's Vision: Romantic Traditions in Britain, on view in the West Building print galleries through March 18, highlights British prints and drawings from late- 18th through early 20th centuries. Included in the exhibition is Dante Gabriel Rossetti's large and dramatic chalk drawing *Desdemona's Death-Song* (1878/1881), on view for the first time since it was acquired by the Gallery, and Shakespearean images such as William Blake's watercolor *Queen Katherine's Dream* (1825) and John Hamilton Mortimer's *Caliban* (1775). This exhibition is supported by a generous grant from the Thaw Charitable Trust.

The Othello Film Festival, presented from January 5 through 13, compares three different cinematic renderings of Shakespeare's Othello: Orson Welles' *The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice* (1952), in which the distinguished actor cast himself in the leading role; Stuart Burge's *Othello* (1965), starring Laurence Olivier as Othello and Maggie Smith as Desdemona; and *O*, the stunning and controversial 2001 adaptation set in a contemporary high school, directed by Tim Blake Nelson.

Three Sunday concerts in the West Garden Court include music from Shakespeare's era, with soprano Ellen Hargis and lutenist Paul O'Dette performing music for voice and lute on January 14 and the Baltimore Consort performing music for a Renaissance chamber ensemble on January 21. On January 28, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Kim Allen Kluge, performs colorful compositions by Benjamin Britten and Elvis Costello based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Gallery Talks will focus on objects related to Shakespeare. They include Edouard Manet's *The Tragic Actor (Rouvière as Hamlet)* (1866), an anonymous 16th-century portrait of the *Earl of Essex*; and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's large drawing, *Desdemona's Death-Song*. Staff lecturers will also lead groups on tours in the exhibition *The Artist's Vision: Romantic Traditions in Britain*.

To learn more about the exhibitions and programs at the Gallery, visit www.nga.gov (<http://www.nga.gov/index.htm>) or call 202-737-4215. For more information about "Shakespeare in Washington," which runs through June 2007, visit www.kennedy-center.org/shakespeare.

National Gallery of Art Library

The National Gallery of Art Library is a major national art research center containing a comprehensive collection of more than 350,000 books, periodicals, and documents on the history, theory, and criticism of art and architecture. The emphasis is on Western art from the Middle Ages to the present (particularly Italian, Dutch, Flemish, German, French, Spanish, and British schools) and American art from the colonial era to the present. The library holds approximately 2,400 periodical titles, of which about 900 are

current. The library also maintains a rare book room containing exceptional resources for study and research. Adult researchers may gain access to the National Gallery of Art Library by calling (202) 842-6511.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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