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**VIEWS OF VENICE BY CANALETTO AND HIS RIVALS
IN LANDMARK EXHIBITION AT NATIONAL GALLERY
OF ART, WASHINGTON, THE SOLE U.S. VENUE
FEBRUARY 20–MAY 30, 2011**

Canaletto

The Entrance to the Grand Canal, looking West, with Santa Maria della Salute,
about 1729

oil on canvas

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The Robert Lee Blaffer Memorial Collection, Gift of Sarah Campbell Blaffer

© Copyright The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The Robert Lee Blaffer Memorial Collection, gift of Sarah Campbell Blaffer

Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art, Washington, will present 21 of Canaletto's finest paintings of Venice with 34 by his most important contemporaries, including Gaspar Vanvitelli, Luca Carlevarijs, Michele Marieschi, Bernardo Bellotto, and Francesco Guardi, in ***Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals***, on view from February 20 through May 30, 2011, in the East Building. These dazzling cityscapes represent the best view painters of Venice—each responding to the city in his own way, and each competing in a market driven largely by the British Grand Tour, at its height during the 18th century.

"Unlike previous exhibitions on Venice or Canaletto, this one focuses on rivalries that pitted the artist against his fellow painters. Visitors to the show will have the opportunity to compare their differing portrayals of the same or similar sites or monuments. We are deeply grateful to our

supporters for making this landmark show possible," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

The entrance to the exhibition will feature a 35-foot-long gondola that once belonged to the American painter Thomas Moran and is now in the collection of the Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA. One of the world's oldest gondolas, it will visually "transport" visitors to the lagoon city celebrated in the views of Canaletto and his rivals.

The convergence of art and science will be represented in a monumental first edition of *Iconografica Rappresentazione della Inclita Città di Venezia* (1729), one of the greatest printed maps of cities, and two 18th-century examples of the camera obscura, an optical device likely to have been used by the view painters.

Exhibition Organization and Support

Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, the sole U.S. venue for the show, and the National Gallery, London, where it is on view through January 16, 2011.

The exhibition in Washington is made possible by the Bracco Foundation, which promotes cultural, scientific, and artistic expressions to improve the quality of life.

"The Bracco Foundation is honored to support this extraordinary exhibition of Venetian view paintings, which reproduce all of the landscape details so accurately, they evoke the presumed use of the camera obscura," said Diana Bracco, president of the Bracco Foundation. "Combining art and science as two related facets of seeing and understanding, this project represents a continuation of our support of the artistic and cultural heritage of Italy, and our mission to spread the knowledge and appreciation of art, culture and science throughout the world".

It is also made possible through the generous support of the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation.

Additional support is kindly provided by Sally Engelhard Pingree and The Charles Engelhard Foundation.

It is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Celebrating Italy

The exhibition is part of *ITALY@150*, a series of activities in Washington, DC, and throughout the United States, that celebrate the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy and the long-lasting friendship between the two countries.

From March 1 to May 30, Washington DC will honor Italian culture with ***La Dolce DC***, a citywide celebration of all things Italian, timed to coincide with the opening of ***Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals***. In addition to this landmark exhibition and the outstanding Italian masterpieces in the permanent collection, the Gallery will present an array of offerings celebrating Italian culture, including lectures, film programs, concerts, Gallery Talks, and Garden Café Italia.

The Exhibition

Europe has many beautiful cities, but only Venice inspired a school of view painters who depicted the city, stone by stone and canal by canal, capturing views that are still recognizable today. The genre of *vedute* (view paintings) culminated in Venice in the 18th century with Giovanni Antonio Canal (1697–1768), known as Canaletto.

In 1719 Canaletto, who was trained as a painter of theatrical scenery, visited Rome where he was inspired to begin view painting. In the late 1720s, in response to market demand, he began to replace the somberness of his earlier works with views drenched in sunlight. Within a decade, Canaletto dominated the genre and the exhibition will include many of his greatest masterpieces, from such prestigious collections as that of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Throughout the exhibition Canaletto's major works will be juxtaposed with those of his rivals to illuminate their complex relationships. Organized chronologically, the exhibition includes a pivotal work by Gaspar Vanvitelli (1653–1736), Canaletto's precursor and the founding father of Italian view painting, titled *The Molo from the Bacino di San Marco* (1697). Trained in the Netherlands and based mostly in Rome, Vanvitelli depicted a Venice distinctly calm in comparison to the work of Canaletto and his contemporaries who followed.

One of Vanvitelli's successors and the first view painter in Venice to depend on foreign patronage was Luca Carlevarijs (1663–1729), an artist Canaletto soon eclipsed. Visitors to the Gallery will see important early works by Canaletto, such as *The Piazza San Marco, Looking East* (1723), on view next to similar subjects by Carlevarijs.

The festivals, regattas, and ceremonies of Venice will be showcased in the exhibition through several important works, including Canaletto's *The Molo from the Bacino di San Marco on Ascension Day* (c. 1733–1734). Historical events of the city were also recorded by the view painters, such as in Carlevarijs' pioneering composition *The Reception of the British Ambassador Charles Montagu, 4th Earl of Manchester, at the Doge's Palace, 22 September 1707* (c. 1707–1708), which will be paired with Canaletto's masterpiece *The Reception of the French Ambassador Jacques-Vincent Languet, Comte de Gergy, at the Doge's Palace, 4 November 1726* (c. 1727).

Canaletto's closest competitor was the short-lived but highly original Michele Marieschi (1710–1743), the most spontaneous of the view painters. Marieschi employed characteristically broad brushstrokes and a fondness for unexpected viewpoints that come to light in *The Rialto Bridge from the Riva del Vin* (c. 1740s).

At the height of Canaletto's fame, his workshop offered the finest training a view painter could receive. He taught his nephew Bernardo Bellotto (1721–1780), whose views are sometimes confused with those of his uncle. A unique characteristic of Bellotto's style is his vibrant blue sky, seen most dramatically in *The Piazzetta, Looking North* (c. 1743).

The development of Venetian view painting culminated with Francesco Guardi (1712–1793), whose works close the exhibition. A rival who appeared during the final decade of Canaletto's life, Guardi anticipated the rise of romanticism in the 19th century, and emphasized the fragility of Venice rather than its permanence. In *San Giorgio Maggiore and the Giudecca* (about 1780), Guardi depicts a gentle, poetic impression of the city.

View painters prized topographical accuracy in their work. A tool they may have used to construct their views is the camera obscura—an optical device that helped painters project, invert, and trace the buildings and vistas of Venice. Two 18th-century examples of the camera obscura will be on view, providing an opportunity for visitors to learn more about this scientific tool.

The map entitled *Iconografica Rappresentazione della Inclita Città di Venezia* (1729), a recent acquisition of the National Gallery of Art, combines the talents of the leading Venetian figure painter of the decade, Sebastiano Ricci (1659–1734), and the leading Venetian printmaker in the 1720s and early 1730s, Giovanni Antonio Faldoni (c. 1690–c. 1770), with views by Francesco Zucchi (1692–1764), mostly after Luca Carlevarijs. Using groundbreaking surveying tools and

mathematics of the day, Lodovico Ughi (active 1710–1730) prepared precise measurements of buildings, streets, canals, and gardens, making this map—measuring approximately 60 x 72 inches—authoritative for more than a century.

Curators and Catalogue

The exhibition is curated by Charles Beddington, a leading specialist on Canaletto. It is coordinated at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, by David Alan Brown, curator of Italian and Spanish paintings.

Published by the National Gallery Company, London, and distributed by Yale University Press, the exhibition catalogue includes essays by Beddington and Amanda Bradley, assistant curator of pictures and sculpture, The National Trust. Biographies for each artist are followed by short introductions to the works, which are grouped chronologically by artist. The 192-page catalogue includes 130 color illustrations and is available for purchase in the Gallery Shops in hardcover and softcover. To order, please visit our Web site at shop.nga.gov; call (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; fax (202) 789-3047; or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov.

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



Faithful to its mission to promote Italian heritage and to spread the knowledge and appreciation of art, culture, and science throughout the world, the Bracco Foundation has deep roots in the values built up over eighty years by the Bracco family and the Bracco Group. These values place corporate social responsibility at the forefront in an effort to improve the quality of life and to promote social cohesion.

The Bracco Foundation, therefore, is honored to support the National Gallery of Art in Washington as official sponsor of the exhibition *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals*, in which the city is portrayed by Canaletto, Bellotto, Guardi, and their contemporaries in a series of *vedute*, or view paintings, that are unrivalled in the history of art. This cultural project reinforces the bond that brought Bracco and the National Gallery of Art together five years ago, in 2006, when Bracco supported a magnificent exhibition devoted to the great Renaissance masters Bellini, Giorgione, and Titian.

The present exhibition, combining art and science as two related facets of seeing and understanding the world, will give ample consideration to the optical device known as the camera obscura, which may well have been used by the *vedutisti*, Marieschi and Canaletto in particular, to construct their views. In this way the colorful, light-filled canvases in the exhibition, showing la Serenissima in all her changing aspects and moods, appear to have a scientific perspective as well.

In Venice, as Joseph Brodsky wrote, "*Depict, Depict! the light cries to you, mistaking you for some Canaletto or Carpaccio or Guardi.*"

Diana Bracco
President of the Bracco Foundation

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Related Activities

VENICE: CANALETTO AND HIS RIVALS CELEBRATED WITH RICH ARRAY OF RELATED PROGRAMS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Film still from *Ossessione* (Luchino Visconti, 1942, 35 mm, Italian with subtitles, 140 minutes), to be shown at the National Gallery of Art on Saturday, January 15, at 4:30 p.m., as part of the film series *Neorealismo 1941–1954: Days of Glory*, presented in honor of *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals*.

The National Gallery of Art plans a host of programs in honor of its major exhibition *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals*, on view in the East Building from February 20 through May 30, 2011—the sole U.S. venue. Exploring the themes of this exhibition are lectures, a symposium, films, concerts, gallery talks, an audio tour, a new menu of signature Italian dishes created by Chef Fabio Trabocchi for the Garden Café, and inspired gift items and books in Gallery Shops. Also timed to coincide with this celebrated exhibition is La Dolce DC, a citywide celebration from March 1 to May 30, of all things Italian.

All programs are presented free of charge in the East Building Auditorium unless otherwise noted. Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Public Symposium***Sights and Sounds of 18th-Century Venice***

April 2 and 3

Lecture Programs

Introduction to the Exhibition—Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals

February 20, 2:00 p.m.

Charles Beddington, guest curator, and David Alan Brown, curator of Italian paintings, National Gallery of Art

Canaletto's Venice: The Art of Fiction

March 13, 2:00 p.m.

Eric Denker, senior lecturer, National Gallery of Art

Michael Kahn and Shakespeare's Italy

May 22, 2:00 p.m.

Michael Kahn, artistic director, Shakespeare Theatre Company, in conversation

Special Lecture Course

The Fabric of Venice

Eric Denker, senior lecturer, National Gallery of Art

Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the East Building Auditorium and Saturdays

at 12:30 p.m. in the West Building Lecture Hall

This five-lecture course explores the constituent elements of the urban environment in one of Europe's fabled cities.

February 22 and 26—*From Bellini to Canaletto to Whistler: Venice Depicted*

March 1 and 5—*Spanning La Serenissima: The Canals and Bridges*

March 8 and 12—*Orbis Mundi: The Piazza, the Squares, and the Courtyards of Venice*

April 26 and 30—*Sacred Spaces: Saint Mark's Basilica and the Churches of Venice*

May 10 and 14—*Venetian Beneficence, Venetian Magnificence: Scuole Great and Small*

Gallery Talks

Regular public tours of *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals* will be offered by the adult programs department of the education division. For times and topics, please consult the bimonthly calendar of events or the Gallery Talk section of the Gallery website at www.nga.gov/programs/galtalks.

Audio Tour

A self-guided recorded tour of the exhibition, narrated by Gallery

Director Earl A. Powell III and with commentary by leading scholars on Venetian art and history, will be available for rental (\$5.00) at the entrance to the exhibition. Focusing on major works in the exhibition, the tour will shed light on the popularity of paintings of Venice in the 18th century, when the maritime republic's economic and political glory had waned but the city's beauty and renowned festivals attracted ever-growing crowds of visitors. Comparisons of paintings depicting the same locations or similar subjects will illuminate the rivalry between Canaletto and artists such as Bernardo Bellotto and Francesco Guardi as they sought to capture the splendor of *La Serenissima*, the Most Serene Republic of Venice.

Exhibition Film

Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals

This lively and engaging film, largely shot on location in Venice, puts Canaletto and his talented but lesser-known rivals in context. Taking a closer look at the patrons and artists, the film also seeks to explain how the Grand Tourists' passion for Venice and its colorful round of festivals and ceremonies shaped the pictures by which we still define the city today. The 40-minute version of this film will be shown in the East Building Auditorium Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m. and select Saturdays at 11:30 a.m. from February 20 to May 30. A 15-minute version is shown inside the exhibition continuously. The film was produced by the National Gallery, London.

Film Programs

Neorealismo 1941–1954: Days of Glory

January 8–February 26

Born out of turmoil in postwar Italy, neorealism addressed a moral and aesthetic need in the Italian cinema, in Roberto Rossellini's words, "to express things as they are." Forsaking artificial sets and the mannered effects of studio production for natural locations and nonprofessional actors, the neorealist collaborators shared a conviction that the subject of art must be ordinary life (a perspective that was gaining ground elsewhere as well). Spanning the decisive decade when the political and social order in Italy was still fermenting, this series features a variety of formal approaches by eight directors along with critical writers such as Cesare Zavattini and Carlo Lizzani. Presented in association with Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia-Cineteca Nazionale, Cinecittà Luce S.p.A., and the Embassy of Italy, with thanks to the Pacific Film Archive, Susan Oxtoby, Laura Argento, Rosaria Focarelli, and the Italian Cultural Institute of Washington.

<http://www.nga.gov/programs/film/Neorealismo.shtm>

Remembering Risorgimento

March 12, 13, 19

The Italian cinema is rich with romantic and heroic spectacles set against dramatic moments in Italy's history. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Risorgimento, the Italian unification movement, the Gallery presents three films that incorporate rich motifs from the era. Together they offer radically dissimilar styles and different ideological perspectives. The centerpiece is the new restoration of Luchino Visconti's epic *Il Gattopardo*, presented through the courtesy of Martin Scorsese, The Film Foundation, Gucci, and Cineteca di Bologna. With thanks to the Embassy of Italy and the Italian Cultural Institute.

<http://www.nga.gov/programs/film/risorgimento.shtm>

Ciné-Concert: *The Italian*

March 19, 1:00 p.m.

Music by Donald Sosin and Joanna Seaton

Early dramas on the subject of new immigrants to America rarely had the fervor or sophistication of *The Italian*, a Thomas Ince production about Beppo Donnetti (George Beban), a poor Venetian gondolier whose dreams become nightmares when he faces the realities of New York's Lower East Side. *The Italian* is preserved from the original paper print held in the Library of Congress collection. (Reginald Barker and Thomas Ince, 1915, 35 mm, silent with live music, 80 minutes)

Death in Venice

May 15, 4:30 p.m.

Luchino Visconti's incomparable 1971 masterwork is presented in a restored Italian archival print on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of Austrian composer Gustav Mahler, whose music is featured on the soundtrack.

Concerts

Vivaldi Project

February 20, 6:30 p.m.

Music by Vivaldi and other composers

West Building Main Floor, West Garden Court

Red Priest

February 27, 6:30 p.m.

Music by Vivaldi and other composers

West Building Main Floor, West Garden Court

National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble and Chatham Baroque

March 13, 6:30 p.m.

Music by Vivaldi and other composers

West Building Main Floor, West Garden Court

Inna Faliks, pianist

March 30, 12:10 p.m.

Music by Tania León and Fanny Mendelssohn, 3 Melodies; Sheila Silver, 6 Preludes on Baudelaire; and Lera Auerbach, La Fenice, Sonata # 1 on the Art of Venice in honor of Women's History Month and Venice:

Canaletto and His Rivals

West Building Ground Floor, Lecture Hall

Venice Baroque Orchestra

April 10, 6:30 p.m.

Music by Vivaldi and other composers

West Building Main Floor, West Garden Court

Teacher Workshop

Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals

Saturday, March 5 (repeated Saturday, March 19), 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

East Building Concourse, Education Studio

Drawing on the exhibition *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals*, this workshop will compare Canaletto's pictures to those of other successful Venetian view painters and examine their approaches to vistas and landmark buildings such as the Doge's Palace and the Grand Canal. Following an introductory talk on the exhibition, participants will have a choice between a studio art activity and a lecture that explores Venice in film and literature. Fee: \$10; registration required; please visit

www.nga.gov/education/teacher.shtm#register.

Garden Café Italia

In honor of the exhibitions *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals* and *Italian Master Drawings from the Wolfgang Ratjen Collection, 1525–1835* (May 8–November 27, 2011), as well as the Gallery's renowned collection of Italian masterpieces, **Chef Fabio Trabocchi** will transform the menu in the Garden Café from February 12, 2011 to March 20, 2012. Returning from New York to DC in 2011 to open the highly anticipated restaurant Fiola in Penn Quarter, Chef Trabocchi will create a menu of signature Italian dishes for the Garden Café, including a buffet as well as à la carte selections.

Located in the West Building near the 6th Street and Constitution Avenue entrance, the Garden Café is open for lunch Monday to Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 4:00 p.m. It offers a special preconcert menu on performance Sundays, October to May, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. For more information or to make reservations, please call (202) 712-7454 or visit www.nga.gov/dining.

Garden Café Italia is presented in partnership with Restaurant Associates and Executive Chef David Rogers at the National Gallery of

Art.

Gallery Shops

The exhibition catalogue will be sold in English in hardcover and softcover; French, German, Italian, and Spanish translations will be available in softcover. The Gallery Shops will also offer a wide selection of scholarly titles, books on Venice, several children's books, DVDs of the exhibition film, a CD of music from 18th-century Venice, and a 2012 wall calendar with images of works on view in the exhibition. In honor of Chef Fabio Trabocchi's menu in the Garden Café Italia, his book *Cucina of Le Marche: A Chef's Treasury of Recipes from Italy's Last Culinary Frontier* will be available.

Visit the Shops, browse online at www.shop.nga.gov, call (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002, fax (202) 789-3047, or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov.

Celebrating Italy

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http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/Ambasciata_Washington/Menu/Ambasciata/News/150.htm.

From March 1 to May 30, Washington, DC, will celebrate its connections to Italian culture with **La Dolce DC**. Timed to coincide with the Gallery's exhibition *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals* and a staging of "The Merchant of Venice" at the Shakespeare Theatre Company, this celebration is also designed to showcase the ways in which Italians have contributed to DC's cultural fabric and grandeur. In addition to this landmark exhibition and the Italian masterpieces in the permanent collection, the Gallery will present an array of offerings celebrating Italian culture, including lectures, film programs, concerts, Gallery Talks, and Garden Café Italia.

About the Exhibition

The National Gallery of Art, Washington, will present some 20 of Canaletto's finest paintings of Venice with more than 30 by his most important contemporaries, including Gaspar Vanvitelli, Luca Carlevarij, Michele Marieschi, Bernardo Bellotto, and Francesco Guardi, in ***Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals***, on view from February 20 through May 30, 2011, in the East Building. These dazzling cityscapes represent the best view painters of Venice—each responding to the city in his own way, and each competing in a market driven largely by the British Grand

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For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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