

Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting

The Musée du Louvre, in collaboration with the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, is holding a landmark exhibition about renowned painter Johannes Vermeer. For the first time since 1966, this event will bring together twelve of the Delft master's paintings—a third of his total known body of work—providing an insight into the fascinating relationships the artist maintained with other great painters of the Dutch Golden Age.

Thanks to special loans from the most prominent American, British, German, and—naturally—Dutch museums, visitors will be able to see Vermeer in a new light.

The exhibition does away with the legend of the reclusive artist living in his own inaccessible, silent world—without ever implying that Vermeer was just one painter of many. Indeed, his artistic temperament grew more distinct through encounters with other artists. Vermeer did more than launch a new movement: he acted as an agent of metamorphosis.

“The Sphinx of Delft”: coined by French journalist and art critic Théophile Thoré-Bürger when he revealed Vermeer to the world late in the 19th century, this famous expression has served mainly to promote an enigmatic image of the painter. The myth of the solitary genius has done the rest. Yet Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) did not attain his level of creative mastery in isolation from the art of his time.

Through comparisons with the works of other artists of the Golden Age—among them Gerrit Dou, Gerard ter Borch, Jan Steen, Pieter de Hooch, Gabriel Metsu, Caspar Netscher, and Frans van Mieris—the exhibition brings to light Vermeer's membership of a network of painters specializing in the depiction of everyday life while admiring, inspiring, and vying with each other.

The third quarter of the 17th century saw the Dutch Republic's global economic power reach its apogee. Proud of their social standing, the Dutch elite demanded art that would reflect their prestige. This demand led to the emergence of a “new wave” of genre painting in the early 1650s, with artists shifting their focus to idealized depictions of domesticity in elegant society. The men and women portrayed in these masterfully-executed pieces display a staged civility.

Although the artists in question worked in different cities across the Republic of the United Netherlands, their technique, and the style, subjects, and compositions featured in their work showed considerable similarities. The exceptional quality of their creations can be partly attributed to the lively professional rivalry that existed between them.

PRESS RELEASE

Exhibition

22 February–22 May 2017

Hall Napoléon



Johannes Vermeer, *The Milkmaid*, Rijksmuseum
© Rijksmuseum

Organized in partnership with the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin and the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

Exhibition curators: Blaise Ducos, Department of Paintings, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Adriaan E. Waiboer, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, and Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., National Gallery of Art, Washington.

This exhibition enjoys the support of primary sponsor Kinoshita Group, as well as ING Bank and Deloitte.

KINOSHITA GROUP **ING** **Deloitte**

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Opening hours: every day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., except Tuesdays. Night opening until 9:45 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Admission: €15 (permanent collections + exhibitions)

Online ticket sales: www.ticketlouvre.fr

Further information: www.louvre.fr/en

AT THE LOUVRE AUDITORIUM

Lectures

February 23, 2017 at 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Presentation of the exhibition (in French)

Blaise Ducos, Musée du Louvre

March 2, 9, 16, and 30, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Understanding Vermeer—"The Sphinx of Delft"

A series of four lectures

From "Drolleries" to Interior Scenes: the Birth and Beginnings of Dutch Genre Painting

Sabine van Sprang, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels (March 2)

The Fabric of Society: Fashion in the Republic (1650–1680)

Bianca du Mortier, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (March 9)

Johannes Vermeer's *Milkmaid*

Blaise Ducos, Musée du Louvre (March 16)

Vermeer Forgeries

Jonathan Lopez, art historian and writer, New York (March 30)

PRATICAL INFORMATION

Information:

+33 (0)1 40 20 55 55, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

www.louvre.fr

Tickets:

In person: Auditorium ticket windows

Telephone: +33 (0)1 40 20 55 00

Online: www.fnac.com

RELATED WORK

Exhibition catalogue

Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting

Edited by Adriaan E. Waiboer, Blaise Ducos, and Arthur

K. Wheelock Jr.

Co-published by Musée du Louvre Éditions and Somogy Éditions

d'Art. 448 pages, 300 illustrations, €39

Exhibition album

Co-published by Musée du Louvre Éditions and Somogy Éditions

d'Art. 48 pages, 50 illustrations, €8

Documentary

Vermeer's Revenge

Directed by: Jean-Pierre Cottet and Guillaume Cottet

Jointly produced by: ARTE France, Martange Production, Soho Moon Pictures,

Musée du Louvre

A Season devoted to the Dutch Golden Age at the Musée du Louvre

Masterpieces from the Leiden Collection

The Age of Rembrandt

February 22–May 22, 2017

Salles Sully

To mark Thomas S. Kaplan's donation to the Louvre of Ferdinand Bol's painting *Eliezer and Rebecca at the Well*, the Musée du Louvre is presenting a selection from the Leiden Collection, one of the most comprehensive groupings of Dutch Golden Age pictures in private hands.

Drawing the Everyday

Holland in the Golden Age

March 16–June 12, 2017

Rotonde Sully

This major exhibition of drawings retraces the development of the genre scene in the Netherlands during the 17th century.

Reopening of the galleries devoted to northern European paintings from the 17th to the 19th century

After almost one year under renovation, a total of twenty rooms will reopen with a new presentation of some 530 Dutch and Flemish paintings, including works by Rembrandt, Rubens, and Van Dyck.

OTHER EXHIBITIONS

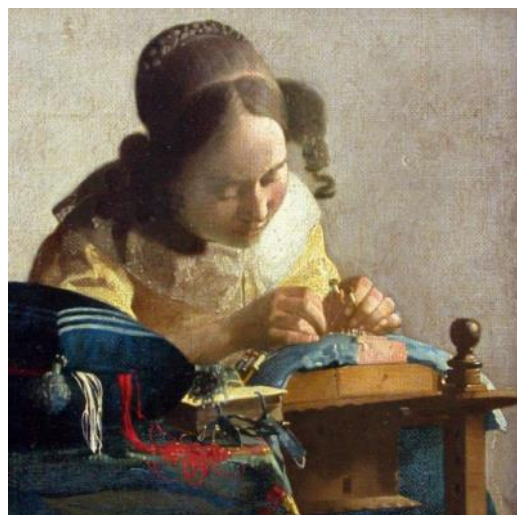
Valentin de Boulogne (1591–1632)

Beyond Caravaggio

February 22–May 22, 2017

Hall Napoléon

Owner of the world's largest collection of his works, the Louvre, in partnership with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is presenting the first monographic exhibition of the most significant representative of the Caravaggesque movement in Europe.



Johannes Vermeer, *The Lacemaker*

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