

Scottish National Gallery – new exhibition to feature Titian



TITIAN AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF VENETIAN ART

22 March – 14 September 2014

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY, The Mound, EH2 2EL

Admission free

T 0131 624 6200 | nationalgalleries.org

Two of the world's most celebrated paintings will be at the heart of a fascinating new exhibition which opens at the Scottish National Gallery this week. Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* and *Diana and Callisto* were jointly acquired by the Scottish National Gallery and the National Gallery in London in 2009 and 2012, following a nationwide fundraising campaign. *Titian and the Golden Age of Venetian Art* will draw upon the Gallery's superb collection of sixteenth-century Venetian paintings, drawings and prints to provide context for these paintings and illuminate this exceptionally creative period in the city's history.

A major coup for the exhibition is the opportunity to show for the first time in Scotland Titian's late masterpiece, the *Death of Actaeon*, from the National Gallery, London. This is the first time it has been lent anywhere since the National Gallery acquired it in 1972. In total, the exhibition will include 16 paintings and some 30 drawings and prints by most the top names in Venetian art of the period. Another highlight will be a drawing which the Gallery acquired at auction in 2007, which has subsequently been identified as a rare drawing

by Titian.

The exhibition will include 16 paintings and some 30 drawings and prints by most the top names in Venetian art of the period, including Lorenzo Lotto, Palma Vecchio, Jacopo Bassano, Jacopo Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese. Highlights will include Bassano's festive pageant, the *Adoration of the Kings*, and Tintoretto's altarpiece, *Christ Carried to the Tomb*, as well as Titian's early pastoral masterpiece, the *Three Ages of Man*.

This latter painting is part of the incomparable Bridgewater Loan of Old Master Paintings to the Scottish National Gallery. Crucially, the acquisition of the two Diana paintings from the same collection has guaranteed the continuation of this entire loan until at least 2030. Notable among the selection of works on paper is a rare, recently identified drawing by Titian, which the Gallery acquired, unrecognised for what it was, at auction in 2007. Also on show will be a fine selection of prints reproducing works by Titian.

Diana and Actaeon and *Diana and Callisto* formed part of a series of six large mythological paintings by Titian with subjects drawn from the ancient writer Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. One of the greatest series of paintings in European art, the works were painted over a ten-year period (about 1552-62) for the Spanish king, Philip II, who was Titian's most important patron for the last two decades of his career. The two Diana scenes have been admired by artists ever since they were painted, from Peter Paul Rubens and Diego Velázquez in the seventeenth century, to the great twentieth-century British painter Lucian Freud, who described them as 'simply the most beautiful pictures in the world'.

The exhibition also affords the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Gallery, London, an opportunity to recognise and thank the many organisations and individuals who contributed so generously to the acquisitions of these

extraordinary pictures

Ben Thomson, Chairman of the Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, said: 'Thanks to a fantastic collaboration with the National Gallery in London we were able to secure two superlative masterpieces for the public. We look forward to building on this collaboration in the future.'

A free Titian & Diana app is available to download from nationalgalleries.org. Generously supported by the Art Fund, the app offers extensive audio and visual content, including curatorial interviews, about these iconic paintings.