



Landmark Exhibition Brings Together Five Works by Caravaggio

First Exhibition in Over Two Decades to Trace Caravaggio's Impact on European Art

HARTFORD, CT, February 7, 2012 - The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art will bring together five of Caravaggio's extraordinary paintings in an exhibition that traces his tremendous influence on seventeenth-century European art. *Burst of Light: Caravaggio and His Legacy* will also include nearly fifty paintings by his followers, known as "Caravaggisti", including masterworks by artists such as Gentileschi, Ribera, Zurbarán and Sweerts. On view from March 6 – June 16, 2013 at the Wadsworth Atheneum, *Burst of Light* is the first exhibition in more than 25 years to explore the legacy of this Italian Baroque master.

"We are thrilled to present five original Caravaggio paintings at the museum, providing a rare opportunity for our visitors to experience these masterpieces collectively and in the context of Caravaggio's followers," said Susan L. Talbott, Director and CEO, Wadsworth Atheneum. "The exhibition will include the Wadsworth's own Caravaggio painting, *Ecstasy of St. Francis*, which was the first Caravaggio work acquired by an American museum in 1944. Painted by the youthful Caravaggio in 1595, it is one of the earliest works in which the revolutionary aspects of Caravaggio's style are evident."

Burst of Light will bring together five works by Caravaggio: the Wadsworth's *Ecstasy of St. Francis*, *Martha and Mary Magdalen* from the Detroit Institute of Arts, *Salome Receives the Head of St. John the Baptist* from the National Gallery in London, *The Denial of St. Peter* from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (through April 29), and *Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness* from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

Caravaggio developed a highly distinctive style during his short but influential career, including the use of dramatic lighting, realistic detail, emotionally compelling compositions, and religious themes. Many artists throughout Europe integrated aspects of Caravaggio's style into their own work, a school of artists who are known as "Caravaggisti." *Burst of Light* will feature 30 works by French, Flemish, Italian, and Spanish painters who were influenced by Caravaggio.

The exhibition was co-organized by the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Musée Fabre, Montpellier, the Musée des Augustins, Toulouse, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art under the auspices of FRAME, (French Regional American Museum Exchange) a consortium of 26 museums in France and North America that promotes cultural exchange in the context of museum collaborations. Elements of the

exhibition opened simultaneously at the two French museums in June 2012, and a version of the combined exhibitions was on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from November 11, 2012 – February 10, 2013, before making its final stop at the Wadsworth Atheneum.

A fully illustrated catalogue, including essays by a variety of scholars and the curators in Los Angeles and Hartford, Patrice Marandel and Eric Zafran, will be produced by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The catalogue will also feature an introduction by renowned Caravaggio expert, Gianni Papi, which will address the current state of Caravaggio scholarship, new discoveries and questions of attribution.

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Connecticut. The museum is open Wednesdays to Fridays, 11 am – 5 pm and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am – 5 pm, and the first Thursday of every month 11 am – 8 pm. Please visit www.wadsworthatheneum.org for more information.

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