

THE WALLACE COLLECTION ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST EVER TRANSATLANTIC LOAN AS PART OF BOSTON'S *TITIAN: WOMEN, MYTH & POWER* EXHIBITION

The Collection's loan of *Perseus and Andromeda* by Titian will signal the first time ever American audiences have had the opportunity to see Titian's *poesie* in its entirety, commissioned over 400 years ago.



Titian (Italian, 1488-1576), *Perseus and Andromeda*, 1556 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection, London.

The Wallace Collection will be loaning its revered painting by Titian, *Perseus and Andromeda*, to Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum for its upcoming exhibition *Titian: Women, Myth & Power*, it has been announced today (23 November 2020). The loan marks the first time American audiences will be able to see Titian's *poesie* in its entirety, following exhibition showings in London and Madrid.

Perseus and Andromeda is one of a series of six large-scale mythological paintings commissioned from Titian by King Philip II of Spain, and painted between 1551 and 1562. Each painting was inspired by a scene from *The Metamorphoses*, an immensely popular epic poem by the Roman poet Ovid. Philip II did not however prescribe which subjects should be chosen, leaving the choice to Titian. The commission was a milestone in Titian's career, and he was conscious that he was creating something unprecedented. He referred to the paintings as his *poesie*, or poetry, because he wanted them to be the visual equivalent of poetry. The Wallace Collection's *Perseus and Andromeda*, perhaps the most dramatic of them all, is also the painting most closely associated with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's *Rape of Europa*. Although separated by some years, the two were conceived as a visual and emotional counterpoints and it is therefore especially meaningful to reunite this pair in Boston.

The significance of this loan renews the special connection between the Wallace Collection and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum that dates back from before the Wallace Collection was gifted to the

nation in 1897. A visitor in her own right, Isabella Stewart Gardner journeyed to Hertford House from Boston on two occasions, once in June 1890 and then again in July 1897, shortly after the death of Sir Richard Wallace's widow, Lady Wallace. This second visit was with her art dealer Bernard Berenson, and a few years later in 1903 she established the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

This announcement follows the landmark decision in 2019 that the Wallace Collection will loan works on a temporary basis, for the first time in its 120-year history. This power to lend allows the Collection to join other national museums in lending works from its collection, both within the UK and internationally. Although the Wallace Collection is traditionally considered to be a 'closed' collection, the terms of Lady Wallace's bequest do not expressly forbid lending or borrowing. Sir Richard Wallace himself loaned works extensively to other institutions in Paris and London, notably the Royal Academy and the Bethnal Green museum. This decision has been instrumental in reuniting Titian's *poesie*, as well as the Collection's upcoming exhibition focusing on Rubens's great landscapes over Het Steen. It demonstrates the significance of the Wallace Collection and its importance to the ongoing narrative of art history.

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection, said:

"I am delighted to help the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum make this historic event possible with our inaugural loan to the United States and to reunite Titian's legendary *poesie*. With Isabella Stewart Gardner herself having visited the Wallace Collection on multiple occasions, we like to imagine that that she was inspired by our museum to found her own, with her absolutely marvellous collection at its heart. A major international philanthropist and collector, Sir Richard Wallace firmly believed in sharing his inheritance with a wider audience. Since it was bequeathed to the nation in 1897 by his widow Lady Wallace, this astonishing collection, filled with some of the greatest masterpieces ever created, has captivated audiences from all over the world - a sentiment this important loan embodies as we take this important step in working ever more internationally."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The exhibition is organised by the National Gallery, London; National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; the Museum Nacional del Prado, Madrid; and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. The exhibition is currently showing at the National Gallery in London under the title *Titian: Love, Desire, Death*.

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Images

Images of the Wallace Collection and Titian's *Perseus and Andromeda* are available for download:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1nZAYWroZm8-BfqOGkACbV1vEM7kwPBu6>

Social Media

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About the Wallace Collection

As one of Britain's preeminent cultural institutions, the Wallace Collection is home to one of the most significant ensembles of fine and decorative arts in the world. Highlights include oil paintings from the fourteenth to the late nineteenth centuries by artists such as Titian, Velazquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of eighteenth-century French paintings and

decorative arts. Visitors can also enjoy superb medieval and Renaissance objects, including Limoges enamel, maiolica, glass and bronzes. Displayed at Hertford House, former home to Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, this outstanding collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm.

www.wallacecollection.org

About the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum - a magical creation of one woman's daring vision - invites you to awaken your senses and be transported. Modelled after a Venetian palazzo, unforgettable galleries surround a luminous courtyard and are home to masters such as Rembrandt, Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo, Whistler, and Sargent. The Renzo Piano wing provides a platform for contemporary artists, musicians, and scholars, and serves as an innovative venue where creativity is celebrated in all of its forms.