

ITALIAN ART, JEWELRY AND LUXURY IN THE FORTHCOMING THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA MUSEUM'S EXHIBITIONS IN MADRID (2016-2017)

<http://generalmeeting2016.jimdo.com/>

INTRODUCTION

Since its inauguration in 1992, the museum has organized each year numerous activities in order to present its collections to an increasingly large and demanding public. We especially want today, to highlight the temporary exhibitions for their scientific rigor, quality and media impact. In most of them, some of the pieces from our permanent collection intermix with works from both national and international public and private collections. In the last years the museum has betted heavily on the adaptation of the latest tastes and trends by incorporating more actual subjects (Fashion, Design and Jewelry) and other formats (film, audio and video installations). The exhibitions we present today have Italy as common denominator. They are distant in time, but they seek the formal beauty inspired by classical cultural models admirably reinterpreted and adapted to the taste of his time.

BVLGARI AND ROME

From December 2016 to February 2017 the Museum will display a selection of pieces by jewelry Maison Bvlgari that have been produced over its 130 years in existence. It will be curated by Lucia Boscaini, Director of the Bulgari Brand Heritage Department, and coordinated by the Department of Conservation at the Thyssen Museum. 145 pieces of jewelry and luxury accessories will be shown from the Bulgari's Heritage Collection. Over 30 paintings and historical pictures of ancient and modern Rome by European artists such as Canaletto, Gaspar van Wittel, Ippolito Caffi and Arthur John Strutt will act like windows opened onto its monuments, squares and most emblematic buildings showing that they have inspired much Bulgari's legacy.

The company's name comes from its founder, Sotirio Bulgari, born in Greece in 1857 from a family of silversmiths. In its over 130 years of existence the quality of execution, the exquisite design, the harmony and union between tradition and modernity, its endless creativity and its ability to adapt to new fashion trends has turned the Maison Bvlgari into a byword of Italian luxury and elegance.

The exhibition starts with the **Colosseum** (slide 2), reinterpreted in a bracelet in platinum with cabochon-cut rubies and diamonds made in 1934. The embracing colonnade of **St. Peter's Square** comes alive into unique clip brooches from 1930s. The largeness of the twin churches domes designed by Bernini in the **Piazza del Popolo** (slide 3) is evoked in a ring in platinum with natural grey and white pearls and diamonds from the 1960s. The famous **Trident**, formed by Via del Corso, Via di Ripetta and Via del Babuino, is transformed into the detachable bow brooch set from 1955 supporting three fringes of rubies. The Baroque beauty of the **Piazza Navona** (slide 4) is evoked by the lengthening shape of a brooch from 1934 where three large diamonds stand out like the three fountains that adorn the square. The curved lines of the famous **Spanish Steps** served as inspiration for a convertible jewel of the 1930s. The wings of the ten angels statues designed by Bernini to decorate **Saint Angel Bridge** (slide 5) inspired a pair of earrings from the 1950s in platinum with diamonds. In the 1990s, the pentagonal plan of the **Castel Sant'Angelo** was recalled by a magnificent necklace. **The Pantheon** (slide 6) has also inspired Bulgari, as we can see in a paperweight from 1977. Its domed ceiling decorated by decreasing square coffers is reinterpreted in the design of a necklace in gold with diamonds from 1992. The ceilings of the vaults that feature octagonal coffers in the **Maxentius Basilica** are also evoked in the late 1960s and 1970s by the use of the octagon for large pendants that adorned exquisite sautoirs (necklaces). Hieroglyphics on **Obelisks** (slide 7) inspired sautoirs from the 1970s with inlays in mother of pearl or cornelian. Other Bulgari creations recall the **Appian Way**, created from pieces with different shapes and sizes with playful combinations of colours. The star motif designed by Michelangelo to embellish the **Campidoglio** square was also reinterpreted in a brooch in platinum with rubies and diamonds of 1957.

Such a dialogue of inspirations and suggestions still continue still today with contemporary collections, thus confirming that, to Bulgari, Rome is the most precious jewel.

MASTERWORKS FROM BUDAPEST: FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE AVANT-GARDE

A carefully selected group of about 90 works from the permanent collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest will be on display in the spring of 2017. Paintings, drawings and sculptures from the Renaissance up to the mid-20th century will be shown in 8 rooms, according to a chronological order by the different European artistic schools. The exhibition will be curated by Guillermo Solana and Mar Borobia, Artistic Director and Head of Old Master Painting Department from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum respectively.

The Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1896 and opened in 1906. It features an extensive collection of Old Master and Modern paintings, drawings and sculptures of European origin. With regard to Italian art, 21 works will be exhibited (nearly a quarter of all of the pieces of the exhibition). The Italian masterpieces of Italian Renaissance and Baroque painting come mainly from the collection of Miklós Jankovich, the bequest made by János László Pyrker, Archbishop of Eger, the pictures from Buda Castle and the Esterházy family collections, which was later enlarged by outstanding works by Italian primitives donated by Bishop Arnold Ipolyi.

The second gallery of the exhibition will be dedicated to the **Southern Renaissance Schools** (el Renacimiento en las escuelas del sur) (slide 8). Florentine, Umbrian, Ferrarese, Lombard and Venetian Schools will be represented by their most celebrated artists covering mostly religious subjects. All works are paintings except for two pieces by Leonardo da Vinci: a bronze sculpture of a *Mounted Warrior* and a drawing representing *Studies of Horses' Legs*. One of the most outstanding paintings is the unfinished *Madonna* by Raphael, which admirably synthesizes idealisation and realism, movement and repose.

The fourth gallery is devoted to the **Baroque in Italy and Spain** (slide 9). The Italian Baroque is represented with works by Annibale Carracci, Giuseppe Cesari and Bernardo Strozzi, which contribute to give a very good idea of the principal stylistic trends of the time in the Bolognese, Roman and Genovese schools respectively.

The next two areas are devoted to the **18th century** (slide 10). Italy is well represented by 8 paintings and the drawing *Campo San Zanipalo in Venice* by Francesco Guardi. With the exception of an allegorical picture of Corrado Giaquinto, the rest of the works are from the Venetian School, among which the most representative are *The Virgin with Six Saints* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and two splendid views of Canaletto and Bernardo Bellotto.

RENAISSANCE VENICE: THE TRIUMPH OF BEAUTY AND THE DESTRUCTION OF PAINTING

This exhibition will be held from June 20th to September 24th 2017. Curated by the former Prado Museum Director Fernando Checa Cremades, the display aims to explore Venetian Painting in the 16th Century based on a reflection of some selected paintings from the Museum's Collection. There will be an estimated number of about 67 paintings exhibited.

Based on theoretical and historiographical premises, the visual discourse is focused on the image of Power and Beauty as essential arguments of Venetian Renaissance painting. But it also wants to show how these premises -mainly the importance of colour and the direct observation of Nature- led to the dissolution and practical destruction of painting.

The first and second galleries are devoted to **The most beautiful City in the World (slide 11)** showing a powerful and prosperous Venice followed by masculine portraits of regal governors, melancholy lovers and intellectual artists, a highlight of which is the *Portrait of Doge Francesco Venier* by Titian from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

The third gallery will be dedicated to **The Glitter of Power (slide 12)**, which continues showing male figures as images of chivalrous power with the military overtones of knighthood. They show the taste for reflections so used and appreciated by Venetian Renaissance painters. In addition to the portraits by Titian and other artists, it highlights the *Young Knight in a Landscape* by Carpaccio, also from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

The next gallery will be called **Nature and bucolic landscapes (slide 13)**. There will be exhibited works by Sebastiano del Piombo, Titian, Lotto and Bassano with mythological, religious and narrative scenes from pastoral life, where the light and chromatic modulations play an important role.

The next area is dedicated to **Female Beauty and Painted Fables: Stories of Venus (slide 14)**. We will see portraits of beautiful women dressed in rich coloured robes among which the most significant work is Palma Vecchio's *Portrait of a Young Woman known as "La Bella"* from our collection. The idea of Renaissance beauty is

also shown especially in the figure of Venus, as we can see in the Veronese's exquisite work *Venus and Adonis* from the Prado Museum.

The last room is dedicated to *The destruction of Painting* (slide 15). The works by Titian, Tintoretto, Bassano and Veronese's later and final periods show us loose brushstrokes that seem to destroy the ideal of traditional beauty and the end of a concept of painting that seemed bent on self-destruction. The painting of *The Penitent Saint Jerome* by Titian from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection that shows the destruction of the Saint's body seems to exemplify this process. This interpretation of classical painting would give way to the origin of modernity.

THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

(slide 16) One of the mission and development goals of our library is to provide meaningful contribution to the preparation and support of temporary and touring exhibitions. The Library is usually where preparations for new exhibitions are thought-out. In the preliminary phase, it is used to do a bibliographical search of the holdings that museums, public and private collections have, in order to study the viability of the project. Once they are approved, the Departments of the Museum which are involved in the project request the acquisitions and the interlibrary loans that are needed to prepare the exhibition.

The staff gives priority to those requirements and proceeds to acquire the requested publications. Meanwhile, an accurate revision at both national and international level is made of the latest publications whose content is related to the exhibitions which are going to be held at our museum. The aim is to update the bibliography and make it available to the Departments involved in the preparation of the exhibitions.