



## PRESS RELEASE

### ***Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry***

**17 June – 17 September 2017**

**National Gallery of Ireland**

[www.nationalgallery.ie](http://www.nationalgallery.ie).

The National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin will present ‘Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry’, from 17 June—17 September 2017. This major exhibition celebrates the work of Johannes Vermeer and will give new insights into the relationships the artist maintained with other great painters of the Dutch Golden Age.

Conceived by the National Gallery of Ireland, this revelatory exhibition will bring together some 60 paintings from major public and private collections around the globe. Ten masterpieces by Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) will be included – nearly a third of Vermeer’s surviving works and the third highest number of works by the artist ever assembled in the world.

Genre painting – scenes of everyday life – of the Dutch Golden Age between 1650 and 1675 ranks among the pinnacles of Western European art. This exhibition explores how the virtuosity of these masterpieces was achieved in part thanks to a vibrant artistic rivalry among a number of first-rate painters working in different cities across the Dutch Republic. They drew inspiration from each other’s painting, and then tried to surpass each other in technical prowess and aesthetic appeal.

The Delft master Johannes Vermeer is today the most celebrated of these painters. He is frequently portrayed as an enigmatic figure working largely in isolation, but this exhibition clearly demonstrates how Vermeer’s subjects, compositions and figure types owe much to works by contemporary Dutch artists, including Gerrit Dou, Gerard ter Borch and Frans van Mieris, all of whom were more successful and influential in their time. The exhibition brings together groups of paintings of domestic scenes – letter writing, in front of a mirror, musical scenes – and the obvious similarity of the compositions shows the interplay between artists – nonetheless Vermeer’s brilliance and originality brings new heights to the subjects and his work takes genre painting to a yet higher level.

Dr Adriaan E. Waiboer, Head of Collections and Research, National Gallery of Ireland says: “Vermeer and his contemporaries constantly tried to surpass each other’s work in technical prowess and aesthetic appeal. Their creative rivalry contributed to the exceptionally high quality of their combined oeuvre. Visitors to this exhibition will be able to observe that artists had individual ways of inserting, changing and disguising their borrowings.”

The National Gallery of Ireland’s own Vermeer, *Woman Writing a Letter, with her Maid* c.1670, which is regarded as one of the artist’s finest works, will be shown alongside other exquisite compositions including *Woman with a Balance*, c.1663–4 (National Gallery of Art, Washington); *Woman with a Pearl Necklace*, 1663–4 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin); *The Astronomer*, 1668 (Musée du Louvre, Paris) and *The Geographer*, 1669 (Städel Museum, Frankfurt). Paintings of daily life by contemporaries of Vermeer, including Gerrit Dou, Gerard ter Borch, Jan Steen, Gabriel Metsu, Pieter de Hooch and Frans van Mieris, will also feature.

The exhibition draws on a significant number of loans from, among others, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Musée du Louvre, Paris; Städel Museum, Frankfurt; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; The National Gallery, London, and the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Exhibition**

The exhibition in the National Gallery of Ireland will be on display from 17 June to 17 September 2017. Ticket booking will open from mid-April [www.nationalgallery.ie](http://www.nationalgallery.ie)

### **Exhibition Organisers**

The exhibition is organised by the National Gallery of Ireland in collaboration with the Musée du Louvre, Paris, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

### **Venues & Dates**

20 February – 22 May 2017 – Musée du Louvre, Paris

17 June – 17 September 2017 – National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin

22 October 2017 – 21 January 2018 – National Gallery of Art, Washington

### **Curators**

Dr Adriaan E. Waiboer, Head of Collections and Research, National Gallery of Ireland

Dr Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., Curator of Northern Baroque Painting, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Dr Blaise Ducos, Curator of 17th-and 18th-century Dutch and Flemish paintings, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

### **Catalogue**

A catalogue accompanying the exhibition is published by Yale University Press.

Edited by Adriaan E. Waiboer with contributions by, among others, Arthur K. Wheelock Jr, Blaise Ducos, Eric Jan Sluijter, Marjorie E. Wieseman and Quentin Buvelot, the catalogue benefits from an extensive research programme carried out in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Hague.

£40.00 hardback ([www.yalebook.co.uk](http://www.yalebook.co.uk))

### **Website**

In conjunction with the exhibition, a dedicated website ([www.connectvermeer.org](http://www.connectvermeer.org)) has been developed in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Hague. The site will serve an interactive platform on the Vermeer and Dutch genre painters.

### **Film**

A [documentary film](#), entitled, ‘Vermeer: Beyond Time’ will be released in May 2017 as one of the events associated with the exhibition. The film, directed by Jean-Pierre Cottet and produced by James Mitchell, is a co-production between Martange Production (Paris), Soho Moon Pictures (Dublin), Arté France and the Louvre. The film will be broadcast on RTÉ One, Ireland’s public service broadcaster to coincide with the exhibition in Dublin in June and will subsequently air on PBS in the United States.

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