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**THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS
EYEWITNESS VIEWS: MAKING HISTORY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE**

Major international loan show is the first museum exhibition to focus on view paintings as depictions of contemporary events

Featured are works by Canaletto, Bellotto, Panini, Guardi and more

May 9 through July 30, 2017
at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center



Giovanni Paolo Panini, Italian, 1691–1765, *The Musical Performance in the Teatro Argentina in Honor of the Marriage of the Dauphin*, 1747. Oil on canvas, 205 x 246 cm (80 11/16 x 96 7/8 in.) Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures. Image © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource,

Los Angeles – Long before today's fast-paced news cycle, the visual memory of contemporary events in eighteenth-century Europe was shaped and sometimes even manipulated by great "view painters." In captivating, acutely-observed scenes these painters, predominately from Italy, recorded such spectacular occasions as royal celebrations, religious ceremonies, sporting contests, and natural disasters.

On view at the J. Paul Getty Museum from May 9 through July 30, 2017, *Eyewitness Views: Making History in Eighteenth-Century Europe* is the first exhibition to focus on view paintings as depictions of contemporary events. The paintings, by artists such as Antonio Canaletto, Bernardo Bellotto, Giovanni Paolo Panini, and Francesco Guardi, are spectacular and famous works from the golden age of European view painting. The exhibition is co-organized by the Getty Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and the Cleveland Museum of Art and will travel to those museums in 2017 and 2018, respectively.



Detail of Giovanni Paolo Panini, (Italian, 1691–1765), *King Charles III Visiting Pope Benedict XIV at the Coffee House of the Palazzo del Quirinale*, 1746. Oil on canvas, 124 x 174 cm (48 13/16 x 68 1/2 in.) Napoli, Museo di Capodimonte. Image: Scala/Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali / Art Resource

"*Eyewitness Views* brings together an incredible array of international loans to tell the fascinating story of how artists captured, and in many ways created, history in eighteenth-century Europe," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "Both in their subject matter of spectacular public occasions, such as papal visits, and in the brilliance of their execution, these colorful panoramic views provide a window into history as well as a testament to the achievements of some of the era's greatest painters."

Potts adds, "Ambitious exhibitions of this kind increasingly require the commitment of partner institutions, and we are particularly grateful to our colleagues in Minneapolis and Cleveland for their support in helping us realize this exhibition."

The paintings, often commissioned by kings and queens, depict many of the great cities of Europe, including Venice, Rome, Siena, Naples, Paris, Dresden, Warsaw, and Madrid; indeed many of the iconic monuments depicted are still recognizable to a well-traveled person today. Vividly detailed and gorgeously painted, these often large-scale canvases transport viewers to the grandeur of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome or onto a gondola floating along the Grand Canal in Venice during a regatta. Featuring more than 40 works created by three generations of eighteenth-century artists, the exhibition lets visitors experience what it was



Bernardo Bellotto, (Italian, 1722–1780), *The Demolition of the Ruins of the Kreuzkirche*, 1765, Oil on canvas, 80 x 110 cm (31 1/2 x 43 5/16 in.), Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. Image: bpk Bildagentur/ Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister/Elke Estel/Hans-Peter Klut/Art Resource, NY

like to be present on the scene as history is made, rubbing shoulders with monarchs, dignitaries, and popes.

In *King Charles III Visiting Pope Benedict XIV at the Coffee House of the Palazzo del Quirinale*, Giovanni Paolo Panini captured the young king's conflicting emotions: tall and elegantly dressed in red, Charles betrays a hint of timidity as he arrives for his first audience with the pope on November 3, 1744.

After Dresden suffered heavy bombardment in the Seven Years' War, the ruins of one of the city's largest churches, the Kreuzkirche, had to be demolished. The painter Bernardo Bellotto was among those who witnessed this poignant scene in July 1765, commemorating it that same year in *The Demolition of the Ruins of the Kreuzkirche*.

Francesco Guardi recorded the first hot air balloon flight in Venice on April 15, 1784 in his painting *The Balloon Flight of Count Zambecari*. Mistrusting this new invention, the Venetians cautiously constructed a floating launch platform on the open water of the lagoon in case the balloon were to crash—but it soared into the sky, watched by a crowd of astonished spectators.

A special audio tour, produced by the Getty Museum, features readings of first-person accounts written by eighteenth-century eyewitnesses who were present at some of the events depicted.

After its presentation at the Getty Museum, *Eyewitness Views* will travel to the Minneapolis Institute of Art from September 10 through December 31, 2017, and to the Cleveland Museum of Art from February 25 through May 20, 2018.



Francesco Guardi (Italian, 1712 – 1793), *The Balloon Flight of Count Zambecari*, 1784, oil on canvas, 70 x 53.7 cm (27 9/16 x 21 1/8 in) Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Eigentum des Kaiser Friedrich Museumsvereins

At the Getty, the exhibition is curated by Peter Björn Kerber, assistant curator in the department of paintings at the Getty Museum. He is the author of the richly illustrated book, also called *Eyewitness Views: Making History in Eighteenth-Century Europe* and published by Getty Publications in conjunction with the exhibition.

The Getty will offer several public events related to the exhibition, including tours and lectures. For more information, visit www.getty.edu/eyewitnessviews

The exhibition has been co-organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and the Cleveland Museum of Art. It is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades.

The J. Paul Getty Museum collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection of works of art.

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