

# the Davis.

DAVIS MUSEUM AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*High-resolution images and interviews upon request*

**THE DAVIS MUSEUM AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE  
PRESENTS**

***FIGMENT OF THE PAST: VENETIAN WORKS ON PAPER FROM THE DAVIS***

***February 5 – May 4, 2014***

*“With its aqueous alleys and enchanted archways,  
Venice has welcomed and hosted countless foreign travelers  
as well as served as a hub of international commerce for centuries.*

*In the eighteenth century, at the height of the Grand Tour,  
Italian artists found new ways to depict their city and appeal to an ever-burgeoning clientele of  
art collectors, connoisseurs, and tourists.” – Curator Eve Straussman-Pflanzer*

WELLESLEY, Mass. – ***Figment of the Past: Venetian Works on Paper from the Davis***, an exhibition celebrating the Davis Museum’s rich holdings of early modern Venetian works on paper from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the Republic of Venice (1797), opens on February 5. Inspired by this extraordinary city during a period in which Venice ruled as an economic and artistic powerhouse, the exhibition displays twenty-five works by artists including Palma il Giovane, Canaletto and Tiepolo, among others. On view through May 4 in the Morelle Lasky Levine ’56 Works on Paper Gallery, the exhibition is free and open to the general public. An opening reception will be held on Wednesday, February 5, from 6:30-8 p.m.

Privileging water over land—Venice’s unusual topography and cultural riches have dazzled and overwhelmed centuries of residents and visitors. For some, like the writer Henry James, it was a portal to the past. For others, Venice represented an alternate way of living that ignited the artistic imagination.

According to **Eve Straussman-Pflanzer**, senior curator of collections and curator of *Figment of the Past*, “The Davis Museum’s holdings of Venetian works on paper encompass a range of media from drawings (on vellum and paper) to prints (engravings, etchings, and woodcuts). These sheets illustrate many stages of the artistic process—from figure and compositional studies to investigations of light and perspective. The *veduta*, or viewing painting, drawing, or print, which figures prominently in this exhibition, was invented expressly to satisfy the visitor’s desire to take home a visual record of their sojourn. Also explored is the function that individual works on paper served both in the artistic process and daily life—a burgeoning area of

academic inquiry. More than painting and sculpture, works on paper, due to their modest scale, provide an intimate view of the period in which they were made.”

Collected largely during the 20th century—particularly while John McAndrew was director of the Wellesley College art museum from 1947-1957—this exhibition is as much an exploration of La Serenissima, as the Venetian Republic was called, as a testament to Wellesley College’s vision as a collecting institution. McAndrew’s legacy extends beyond campus, as he was a founder and first chairman of Save Venice Inc., a foundation devoted to protecting and restoring the art and buildings of Venice from sea level rise.

“I am thrilled that Eve Straussman-Pflanzer has delved into our permanent collections to cull this beautiful grouping for her debut exhibition, added **Lisa Fischman**, Ruth Gordon Shapiro '37 Director of the Davis. “With *Figment of the Past*, Eve bring her scholarly expertise and curatorial acumen to bear on a selection of works that -- it seems -- have been awaiting her arrival.”

*Figment of the Past: Venetian Works on Paper* is presented with generous support from the Marjorie Schechter Bronfman '38 and Gerald Bronfman Endowment for Works on Paper.

## **EXHIBITION EVENTS**

### **Opening Celebration!**

**Wednesday, February 5 | Artist Talk - *Tony Matelli: New Gravity* at 5:30, Collins Cinema | Reception from 6:30–8:00 p.m., Davis Galleries and Lobby | Free**

Join us in celebrating the openings of our spring exhibitions! Artist Tony Matelli kicks off the evening with a special talk about his exhibition *New Gravity* in Collins Cinema. A reception follows in the Davis Lobby, honoring *Tony Matelli: New Gravity* and *Figment of the Past: Venetian Works on Paper from the Davis*.

### **Reading – Landscapes of Italian Poetry: Views of Venice**

**Tuesday, Feb 18 | 2:30 p.m. | Morelle Lasky Levine '56 Works on Paper Gallery | Free**

Students from Associate Professor Sergio Parussa’s seminar ITAS 320: Landscapes of Italian Poetry will present a reading of Italian poetry inspired by works in the exhibition *Figment of the Past: Venetian Works on Paper from the Davis*. As part of their presentation, students will also discuss their interpretations of the texts and images. Poetry readings will be in Italian, with discussion in English.

### **Lecture – Paolo Veronese: Drawings, the Workshop, and the Perils of Connoisseurship with John Marciari**

**Thursday, February 27 | 6:00 p.m. | Collins Cinema | Free**

Dr. Marciari's lecture focuses on the work of leading Italian Renaissance painter and draftsman Paolo Veronese in relation to the works on view in the exhibition *Figment of the Past*. Dr. Marciari introduces Veronese's work as a draftsman and explores the contentious formulation of the Veronese drawing canon, specifically to examine issues surrounding the use of Veronese's drawings within his workshop and collaborative works by Veronese's students.

*Co-sponsored by the Davis and the Art Department, with support from The Edwards Fund.*

**Gallery Walk – *Figment of the Past: Venetian Works on Paper from the Davis with Eve Straussman-Pflanzer and Barbara Lynn-Davis***

**Thursday, April 3 | 3:00 p.m. | Morelle Lasky Levine '56 Works on Paper Gallery | Free**

Senior Curator of Collections Eve Straussman-Pflanzer and Visiting Lecturer in Art Barbara Lynn-Davis explore representations of Venice in the exhibition, with particular focus on how Venetian artists experienced, represented, and imagined their city during the height of the Grand Tour.

## **DAVIS MUSEUM GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Location: Wellesley College, 106 Central St., Wellesley, Mass.**

**Museum Hours:** Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00 am–5:00 pm, Wednesday until 8:00 pm, and Sunday, noon–4:00 pm. Closed Mondays, holidays, and Wellesley College recesses.

**Admission is free and open to the public.**

**Telephone: 781-283-2051**

**Website: [www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu](http://www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu)**

**Parking:** Free and available in the lot behind the museum. Additional parking is available in the Davis Parking Facility.

**Tours: Led by student tour guides and curators. Free. Call 781-283-3382**

**Accessible:** The Davis, Collins Café and Collins Cinema are wheelchair accessible and wheelchairs are available for use in the Museum without charge. Special needs may be accommodated by contacting Director of Disability Services Jim Wice at 781-283-2434 or [jwice@wellesley.edu](mailto:jwice@wellesley.edu).

## **ABOUT THE DAVIS MUSEUM**

One of the oldest and most acclaimed academic fine arts museums in the United States, the Davis Museum is a vital force in the intellectual, pedagogical and social life of Wellesley College. It seeks to create an environment that encourages visual literacy, inspires new ideas, and fosters involvement with the arts both within the College and the larger community.

## **ABOUT WELLESLEY COLLEGE & THE ARTS**

The Wellesley College arts curriculum and the highly acclaimed Davis Museum are integral components of the College's liberal arts education. Departments and programs from across the campus enliven the community with world-class programming— classical and popular music, visual arts, theatre, dance, author readings, symposia, and lectures by some of today's leading artists and creative thinkers—most of which are free and open to the public.

Since 1875, Wellesley College has been the preeminent liberal arts college for women. Known for its intellectual rigor and its remarkable track record for the cultivation of women leaders in every arena, Wellesley—only 12 miles from Boston—is home to some 2300 undergraduates from every state and 75 countries.