

**New Perspectives on Old Masters in *[remastered]*
Opening September 20 at The Worcester Art Museum**

First Chance to See the Museum's Newly Acquired Veronese

Worcester, MA—September 4, 2013—Opening September 20, 2013, *[remastered]* is an innovative exploration of 16th-18th century Spanish, Italian, Dutch, and Flemish paintings drawn primarily from the Worcester Art Museum's collection. Featuring over 60 works, the exhibition includes works rediscovered from the Worcester's collection and conserved in its lab as well as a number of major loans from international collections. The traditional salon-style hanging of works, combined with interactive programming, provides visitors with a fresh look at Old Masters, and creates a more dynamic gallery environment that can serve as a classroom, a laboratory, a sanctuary, and a community space. *[remastered]* will also include the first chance to see the Museum's recent acquisition of a painting by renowned Renaissance master Paolo Veronese.

Among the highlights on view is "The Repentant Magdalen" painted by El Greco around 1577, shortly after his arrival in Spain. Though the composition is largely inspired from a Titian painting on the same subject, the work displays El Greco's highly personal style in its spatial distortions, like the saint's elongated limbs, and in its cool coloring. Rembrandt van Rijn's "Saint Bartholomew" is another exhibition highlight. Here, Saint Bartholomew holds a knife, the instrument of his martyrdom. His troubled expression reflects Rembrandt's interest in depicting intense emotions at that moment in his career. In the same gallery, viewers can find "A Game of Tric-Trac" by Judith Leyster, one of Holland's few female master painters during its golden age and the only one whose work shows an active participation in the art market of her day. Like Rembrandt - or his Spanish contemporary, Jusepe de Ribera, whose work is also included- Leyster uses a dramatic and concentrated light source. Instead of drawing attention to an individual, however, the light in this work accentuates the players' relationship.

The recently acquired Veronese, entitled "Venus Disarming Cupid", diversifies the regions represented in *[remastered]*. Painted circa 1560, the work depicts Venus taking her son Cupid's bow. The Venus and Cupid theme was popular in Veronese's paintings, though this is one of the few on the subject that survives. The composition is based on a drawing by the Bolognese master Parmigianino. A gift from collector Hester Diamond of New York, "Venus Disarming Cupid" was given in honor of Rachel Kaminsky, Ms. Diamond's stepdaughter and a Museum board member, and diversifies the Museum's collection, which has typically been stronger in northern European art.

"*[remastered]* takes European Old Master works that are normally arranged in neat rows on the wall, and hangs them side by side," said WAM Director Matthias Waschek. "Paintings large and small, with scales of representation ranging from miniscule to monumental, exchange glances and form serendipitous spatial relationships. Once intimidating, Old Masters here become accessible as visitors are encouraged to discover the baroque passion that awaits them with these marvelous works."

Developed by Waschek in collaboration with the museum's curatorial and audience engagement divisions, *[remastered]* encourages both quiet contemplation and new modes of presentation and engagement. The medallion-style hanging of the works not only recalls 17th and 18th century collection displays, but also encourages contact and connection between works and viewers. Though the gallery space will always provide the chance for individual reflection on a work, interactive programming will also give those who want to learn more the opportunity to explore and discuss their findings. Interpretative iPad applications provide visitors with literature, the ability to look at the works in close detail, and fresh perspectives on Old Masters. Tours by the Museum's new corps of Worcester State University Student Docents will also prompt conversations about the works' relationships to each other, the viewer, and the gallery. Additionally, *[remastered]* will host spirituality practices with interfaith clergy, offering another means of contemplation. Sessions during which visitors can draw nude models in the gallery will bring the content of these paintings to life and reinforce that the roles of viewer and viewed can shift in the creation and consideration of an artwork.

The exhibition's opening party on Friday, September 20 provides a chance to contemplate Old Masters among Baroque music performed by local bands and college a cappella groups. After the member-only hour from 7 to 8 PM, the public can join the opening for the price of regular Museum admission. With food trucks outside, cash bars inside, and live performances throughout the Museum, guests can experience a unique opening event that exemplifies *[remastered]*'s dedication to presenting a fresh look at Old Masters.

Providing the opportunity for both individual contemplation and group engagement, *[remastered]*'s incorporation of technology, scholarship, and community activities reflects the Museum's larger goal of increased accessibility. Symbolized by the opening of the Salisbury Street doors in 2012, Waschek's time as director has been marked with attempts to make WAM more accessible to the greater Worcester community. As the second summer of free admission comes to a close, WAM continues toward this goal with plans for the construction of an access bridge, which will provide significantly improved disability access and a clearer entrance to the Museum for all visitors.

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