THE GLOBAL CITY
LISBON IN THE RENAISSANCE
PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION
MUSEU NACIONAL DE ARTE ANTIGA
THE GLOBAL CITY
LISBON IN THE RENAISSANCE

CURATORS
Annemarie Jordan Gschwend
Kate Lowe

CONSULTANT FOR THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE
Henrique Leitão

LEVEL 0 - TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS GALLERY
24 FEB - 9 APR 2017

OPENING TIMES
FEBRUARY
tuesday – sunday: 10am – 6pm
MARCH AND APRIL
tuesday – thursday; sundays: 10am – 6pm
friday and saturday: 10am – 8pm

Access with the Museum ticket. Free access to the Museum and the exhibition for Caixa Geral de Depósitos’ clients.

ORIENTED TOURS FOR GROUPS
BOOKING IN ADVANCE:
+351 213 912 800
see@mnnm.dgpc.pt
The history of this exhibition begins in April of 1866, when the pre-Raphaelite painter and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) left his home in Chelsea, London, to evaluate a painting he had seen in a small antique shop. “A large landscape with about 120 figures of the school of Velázquez, [but] not, [I think], by the great V himself,” wrote the painter. The British art world had awakened to Spanish painting and collectors were on the lookout for works by great masters such as El Greco, Velázquez, and Goya. Despite not recognising the city represented in the painting, Rossetti correctly guessed at its Iberian origin.

An impetuous and eclectic collector, Rossetti divided the canvas into two, probably because it did not fit on the already overcrowded walls of his London home. It is known that Rossetti took these two canvases with him, along with other works of art, when he went to live at Kelmscott Manor (Oxfordshire) with the painter William Morris (Rossetti and Morris shared this house for some months in 1871 and between 24th September, 1872 and July 11th, 1874). It is also known that the two paintings remained at Kelmscott Manor when Rossetti was forced to leave the house suddenly after a problematic love affair. They were later included in William Morris’ assets.

An article by Julia Dudkiewicz (“Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s collection of Old Masters at Kelmscott Manor” in The British Art Journal, vol. XVI, No. 2, 2015) confirms that these two paintings belonged to Rossetti’s collection. The historian reports that in May Morris’ (1862-1938) will – daughter of William Morris and heiress of Kelmscott Manor – a list of 220 objects is attached, with descriptions that encompass their provenance. The list includes the two paintings: “two pictures of scenes in a city, part of D.G. R’s things”.

The paintings (currently owned by the Society of Antiquaries of London) have remained at Kelmscott Manor since the 19th century but the represented city was only identified in 2009, by Annemarie Jordan Gschwend and Kate Lowe. The first clue that led to its identification was the number of black people portrayed; in 16th century Europe, only Lisbon and a couple of Spanish cities had such a large percentage of Africans. The architectural details such as the tall narrow houses, the covered gallery with marble columns – 149 in total – and the iron railings led Lowe and Jordan to conclude that it was Lisbon. And, more specifically, Rua Nova dos Mercadores, Lisbon’s main trade street in the 16th century, full of merchants, acrobats, musicians, travelling salesmen, knights, jewels, silks, spices, exotic animals and other wonders imported from Africa, Brazil and Asia.

This exhibition aims to reconstitute the heart of Lisbon during the Renaissance with 249 pieces belonging to 77 lenders: 64 national (institutions and private collections) and 13 international (two private collections and 11 institutions, among them the British Museum, Pitt Riv-
ers Museum, Museo Nacional del Prado, Leiden University Libraries and Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico “Luigi Pigorini”.

On display for the first time in Portugal, the two paintings representing Rua Nova dos Mercadores open the first of the exhibition’s six sections: “Lisbon City Views: historical background”, “Novelties”, “From Africa”, “Shopping in Rua Nova”, “Animals from other worlds” and “Simão de Melo’s house”.

Of note within this surprising set of never before assembled pieces are the extraordinary and meticulous Panoramic View of Lisbon, c. 1570-1580 (Leiden University Library), the Reliquary Casket containing the relics of Saint Vincent (Patriarchal Cathedral - Treasure, Lisbon), the View of Lisbon waterfront with the royal palace, the Paço da Ribeira, 1505 (Câmara Municipal de Cascais/Condes de Castro de Guimarães Museum), the Euclides Megarensis Philosophi atque Mathematici [...]. mathematical works by Francisco de Melo. 1521 (Stadtarchiv der Hansestadt Stralsund), Terrestrial Paradise by Pieter Brueghel the Younger (Museo del Prado), Processional Cross belonging to Catherine of Bragança containing the relics of Saint Thomas Becket (Villa Viçosa Ducal Palace) and the 1579 cameo, by Jacopo da Treszo, representing King Manuel I’s rhinoceros (Guy Ladrière Collection).
Cameo of the 1577 Asian rhinoceros, nicknamed the "Wonder of Lisbon"
Jacopo da Trezzo
Madrid, c. 1584
Sardonyx
Guy Ladrière Collection
© Didier Loire, Paris

Christ crucified
India, Gujarat, 1600-1650
Natural and polychromed ivory (Christ), teak, ebony, natural ivory and dyed bone, brass (cross)
Câmara Municipal do Montijo
inv. MMM/1563
© Câmara Municipal do Montijo/Paulo Alexandrino

Reliquary Casket containing the relics of Saint Vincent
India, Gujarat, 16th century
Wood, mother-of-pearl, silver and velvet
Lisbon, Patriarchal Cathedral - Treasure
© Centro Cultural do Patriarcado de Lisboa/Alexandre Salgueiro
Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga

The main museum in Portugal houses the most relevant public collection, from the 12th to the 19th century. Painting, sculpture, silver, gold and jewellery, decorative arts – Portuguese, European, African and Oriental –, including the largest number of works classified as "national treasures". Among them, the Panels of Saint Vicent, by Nuno Gonçalves, and the Belém Monstrance, symbols of 15th and 16th centuries Portuguese art, and notable paintings by Bosch, Memling, Dürer, Raphael or Piero della Francesca.

The museum has a magnificent garden, with restaurant, over the River Tagus.

OPENING TIMES

Tuesday – Sunday: 10am – 6pm
Closed: January 1, Easter Day, May 1, December 24 and 25

GETTING HERE

Rua das Janelas Verdes
Bus 713, 714, 727
Av. 24 de Julho
Bus 728, 732, 760
Trams 15E, 18E
Largo de Santos
Tram 25E
GPS
38.704516
-9.162278

RESTAURANT

+351 213 912 860
+351 919 231 646
shlrestauracao@gmail.com

GARDEN

Free access (Wi-Fi)