100 Great Paintings
Nationalmuseum@Konstakademien, Stockholm
28 May – 30 August 2015
Per Hedström
Director of Exhibitions
During the period when the Nationalmuseum’s main headquarters are being refurbished, the Museum’s exhibition activities have been relocated. In Stockholm, visual arts are shown at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and design and decorative arts at Kulturhuset Stadsteatern. Our ambition has been to present a varied exhibition programme, where material from our own collections form a relatively large proportion.

In the summer months, when tourism soars in Stockholm, we have focused at the Academy on exhibitions that are entirely based on our collection. We also chose in particular to present the kind of art that we know to be popular among summer visitors: Nordic painters from around 1900, French Impressionists, and the most famous old masters, such as Rembrandt and Rubens.

The exhibition 100 Great Paintings at the Royal Academy features a few highlights from the Nationalmuseum’s collection of paintings from the 16th century to the years around 1900. This was but a small selection from among our seven thousands of paintings. The Museum’s collection began on a modest scale, with the Swedish royal art collections in the days of King Gustav Vasa. At least one of the works in this exhibition was in King Gustav Vasa’s collection: the small painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder of Lucretia (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553). Lucretia, 1528. Oil on wood, 57 x 38 cm. Nationalmuseum, NM 1080.
For historic reasons, the Nationalmuseum’s collection of paintings is especially strong in certain areas, for instance Dutch 17th-century art and French 18th-century painting, where the Museum has for many years owned some true masterpieces, including work by Rembrandt and Chardin. Sweden’s political and economic relations with the European continent have played a vital part in forming the content of the collection. The Museum originated in the Swedish royal collections, which opened as a public museum in the late 18th century, and have been shown in the Nationalmuseum building on Blasieholmen in Stockholm since 1866.

Our collection is growing constantly, and the pace has accelerated in recent years. The focus is on fields where the Museum is already strong, but where there is potential for broadening and deepening the coverage of an era or oeuvre. Works by women artists is one essential area in which the Nationalmuseum collection, like those of many other major museums, is weak. The Nationalmuseum has also endeavoured to expand its collection of Danish painting from the so-called Golden Era in the early 19th century. An example of this period is the child portrait by Christen Købke in the exhibition (Fig. 2). Another field that is being enhanced is the Caravaggists, 17th-century artists who were influenced by the paintings of Caravaggio. There is an unusually fine example of this in the exhibition – Domenico Fetti’s David with the Head of Goliath (Fig. 3).

One of the Nationalmuseum’s central projects during the refurbishment concerns the future presentation of our collections once the Museum reopens. The works will be shown in new constellations and in new perspectives. One aspect of this project relates to communication. How should the content of our collections be communicated and presented? In 2015, a team of Museum curators and educators collaborated on formulating the Museum’s new communications and education programme, which includes developing the medium of exhibition text.

Fig. 2 Christen Købke (1810–1848), The Artist’s Nephew, Johan Jacob Krohn as a Child, 1846. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 cm. Nationalmuseum, NM 7285.
In order to use the refurbishment period efficiently, we have endeavoured to utilise our exhibition projects at the Royal Academy as a testing ground for ideas that can later be implemented more extensively in the refurbished museum building. For the exhibition *100 Great Paintings*, we invited a few authors, songwriters and poets to interpret a number of featured works. The idea was to find a more personal and less academic approach to art in the collections, as a complement to the texts written by the Museum’s curators and educators. Texts for the project were contributed by Nino Mick, Tomas Bannerhed, Therese Bohman, Petter (Petter Alexis Askergren), Agnes Gerner, and Frida Hyvönen. The texts were presented next to the works they interpreted, along with a presentation and portrait of the author.

A catalogue with reproductions of all the exhibited works was also produced for the exhibition, which attracted a total of 20,727 visitors.

**Exhibition curators:** Lena Eriksson and Per Hedström  
**Exhibition design:** Joakim Werning  
**Lighting design:** Jan Gouiedo  
**Exhibition technicians and art handling:** Pär Lindblom and team  
**Transport services:** Kaj Björlund and team  
**Graphic design:** Agneta Bervokk  
**Conservation:** Britta Nilsson  
**Exhibition coordinator:** Anne Dahlström  
**Education officer:** Lena Eriksson

**Exhibition catalogue (in a combined Swedish and English edition):**  
*100 fantastiska målningar/100 Great Paintings*  
Nationalmuseum exhibition catalogue no. 674

**Editorial committee:** Lena Eriksson, Per Hedström, Janna Herder and Ingrid Lindell  
**Translation:** Gabriella Berggren  
**Graphic design:** BankerWessel  

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Fig. 3 Domenico Fetti (1588/89–1623), *David with the Head of Goliath*, c. 1617/20. Oil on canvas, 161 x 99.5 cm. Nationalmuseum, NM 7280.
Interiors from the exhibition *100 Great Paintings*. 