

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 6, 1962: John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that Street in Venice, by the American artist John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), has been acquired by the National Gallery through a gift from the Avalon Foundation. The painting will go on exhibition in a special installation in Lobby D, off the East Garden Court, on Sunday, August 12.

The picture shows a slender girl, dressed in a long shawl, walking alone down a narrow Venetian street. A man, leaning casually against a wall, interrupts his conversation with a companion to watch her go by.

The picture is painted almost completely in shades of grey, with the rapid, impressionistic brushwork that was to make Sargent the most sought-after American portraitist of his day. Painted in the 1880's, it reflects Sargent's recent trips to Spain and Holland to study the work of Velazquez and Frans Hals.

The picture belonged to Sargent's friend, Stanford White, a partner in the architectural firm of McKim, Meade and White, and one of the most influential architects of his day. It remained in the possession of the White family until acquired for the National Gallery of Art.

"I have been in love with this picture for many years," Mr. Walker said. "It captures the mood of Venice - - its languid, moisture-laden atmosphere, and its sense of mystery -- as few paintings I know."

John Singer Sargent was a frequent visitor to Venice, where, with American expatriate artists such as Henry James, he frequented a palace on the Grand Canal, the Palazzo Barbaro, owned by Sargent's Boston cousin, Daniel Sargent Curtis. Among other visitors to the Barbaro was Isabella Stewart Gardner, who was later to build her own Venetian palace in Boston, "Fenway Court," now a museum. Sargent, and Mrs. Gardner grew to be close friends, and various of his pictures, including his famous portrait of her, still hang in their Venetian setting at "Fenway Court."

Street in Venice is in oil on canvas, 17-5/8" x 21", and has been framed by the Gallery in an antique Venetian frame.

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