

Prendergast in Italy
EXHIBITION FACT SHEET

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| Title | <i>Prendergast in Italy</i> |
| Dates | Saturday, July 18–September 20, 2009 |
| Venue | Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) 15 Lawrence Hall Drive, Suite 2 Williamstown, MA 01267 |
| Contents | <p>Approximately one hundred objects, including seventy Italian watercolors, monotypes, and oils by Maurice Prendergast with related art objects and Prendergast archival materials. The art is borrowed from more than fifty institutions and private collectors including the National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art.</p> <p>Throughout the nineteenth century, American artists were attracted to what Henry James called the “time-mellowed harmonies” of Italy and in particular of Venice. Prendergast presented a view of Italy that was informed by European and American modernism as well as strong interest in the struggles of a newly unified and “modernized” nation. His Italy consisted of ancient monuments transformed by tourists; ancient painting techniques subverted by modernist abstraction. He studied Venetian paintings of the past in the Accademia and modern art in the newly established Venice Biennale. The result was an extraordinary body of work based on two trips to Italy (1898 and 1911) that established Prendergast’s place in the canon of American art.</p> |
| Highlights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First exhibition devoted to Prendergast’s Italian watercolors and monotypes, which many consider his greatest body of work; • Features loans from over fifty museums and private collectors in the United States, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. • Highlights the collection of over four hundred works by Maurice and Charles Prendergast in the Williams College Museum of Art, the largest collection in the world; • The contrast of styles from the two trips, 1898-99 and 1911-12, encapsulates the enormous changes occurring in modern art in Europe and America in the first decade of the twentieth century; • Five works, like WCMA’s <i>Rialto</i>, <i>Venice</i>, are exhibited so that both sides are visible. The many sketches, unfinished works, and double-sided watercolors give us a unique glimpse into Prendergast’s creative process. A large group of color monotypes shows Prendergast’s daring approach to this medium; |

- The views of Venice in this exhibition give the armchair traveler a vivid sense of the city of canals and famous monuments seen through a modern lens. A map of Venice locates Prendergast's sites;
- Thirty related archival materials such as photographs, letters, guidebooks, and Japanese prints belonging to the Prendergasts and now in the collection of the Williams College Museum of Art are also on view;
- The exhibition and scholarly catalogue are based on the decades of research carried out by the Prendergast Archive and Study Center at the Williams College Museum of Art. The center, directed by Nancy Mowll Mathews, published the Prendergast catalogue raisonné, five related books, and has mounted over twenty exhibitions on the Prendergast brothers and their artistic context.

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| Curators | Nancy Mowll Mathews, Eugénie Prendergast Senior Curator of 19th and 20th Century Art and Lecturer in Art, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts and Elizabeth Kennedy, Curator of Collection, Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago, Illinois |
| Catalogue | Merrell Publishers, London will issue the comprehensive, fully-illustrated catalogue in English and Italian. Contributors include: Nancy Mowll Mathews; Elizabeth Kennedy; Kimberly J. Nichols, Associate Paper Conservator, Department of Prints and Drawings, The Art Institute of Chicago; Carol Clark, William McCall Vickery 1957 Professor of the History of Art and American Studies, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts; Alessandro Del Puppo, Università degli Studi di Udine, Udine, Italy; Jan Andreas May, Assistant Curator, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany; Olga Plaszczewska, Chair of Comparative Literature, Faculty of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. |
| Sponsorship | This exhibition is organized by Williams College Museum of Art in partnership with the Terra Foundation for American Art. Terra Foundation for American Art is the lead sponsor with additional funding from the Eugénie Prendergast Endowment. |
| National Tour | After its showing at WCMA, the exhibition travels to: Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (October 9, 2009–January 3, 2010) Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas (February 14–May 9, 2010) |
| General Information | Admission to WCMA is free. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday. Hours: Tuesday–Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm; Sunday, 1 to 5 pm; Monday, closed. The museum is wheelchair accessible. For information, the public may call (413) 597-2429 or visit www.wcma.org . |