

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CARAVAGGIO MASTERPIECE MAKES RARE CHICAGO APPEARANCE**

***The Supper at Emmaus* on View at Art Institute**

**Starting October 10 Through the Holidays**

The Art Institute of Chicago will be offering visitors the rare opportunity to view one of **Caravaggio's** masterworks from **October 10, 2009, to January 31, 2010**. Coming from the National Gallery, London, ***The Supper at Emmaus*** is one of the most highly regarded paintings by one of the most influential of all Western artists, and it



is a painting hardly ever seen outside of London. For these four months, it will be one of the few Caravaggios on view anywhere in the United States.

*The Supper at Emmaus* will serve as the centerpiece for a focus installation in **Gallery 211** of the Art Institute's collection of "Caravaggesque" paintings. Caravaggio's insistence on heightened realism and the sculptural qualities of his figures, often brightly lit against a dark background, are evident in works such as Bartolomeo Manfredi's *Cupid Chastised* and Cecco del Caravaggio's *The Resurrection*. A gallery brochure will also lead visitors to other galleries where the diffusion of Caravaggio's style throughout Europe will be immediately apparent in works such as Rembrandt's *Old Man with a Gold Chain* and Rubens's *The Capture of Samson*.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610) is an artist known not only for his groundbreaking paintings that heralded the emergence of the Baroque era but also for his profoundly tumultuous life. Apprenticed at the age of 13 in Milan, the artist fled for Rome when he was 21, after an altercation with a police officer. In Rome, despite his unconventional style and penchant for bar brawls, he quickly attached himself to one of the favorite painters of Pope Clement VIII. His sensual depictions of both quotidian life and exalted religious subjects brought him to the attention of wealthy private patrons and influential members of the clergy, most notably Cardinal Francesco del Monte. *The Supper at Emmaus* was painted for one of the most avid collectors of art in Rome, Ciriaco de Mattei.

Caravaggio's *The Supper at Emmaus*, painted in 1601, depicts a dim tavern that forms the backdrop for a moment of profound revelation. Two men eating at a table, served by an innkeeper, realize that the guest who joined them at their meal is none other than Christ himself, reappearing to his disciples after his death and resurrection. The painting is recognized as a superb example of Caravaggio's style at its most mature and developed. Caravaggio has represented this scene with his sense of uncompromising realism, punctuated by his signature contrasts of light and dark, which lend a deeply dramatic sensitivity to the painting. The moment of the disciples' realization is pictured with radically foreshortened gestures of shock and disbelief: one disciple spreads his arms wide, demarcating the depth of the painting; the other leans forward abruptly, as if he were to jump out of his chair, shoulders hunched and hands gripping the arms of his seat. Caravaggio has rendered all of the details—the food on the table, the worn wrinkles in the garments of the men—with crisp precision and an almost clinical handling of paint. Against this stark realism is counterposed the moment of religious epiphany, the sacred manifesting itself within the mundane setting of a dining room.

*The Supper at Emmaus* will take the place of *The Crucifixion* by Francisco de Zurbarán, which will play a key role in the National Gallery, London's upcoming exhibition, *The Sacred Made Real, Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600–1700*, on view in London this fall.

The Chicago presentation of *The Supper at Emmaus* is curated by Christina Nielsen, Assistant Curator of Medieval Art, the Art Institute of Chicago.

IMAGE: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (Italian, 1571–1610), *The Supper at Emmaus*, 1601. Oil and tempera on canvas, 141 x 196.2 cm. The National Gallery, London, Presented by the Honorable George Vernon, 1839, NG172.

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#### **MUSEUM HOURS**

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

10:30 am–8:00 pm Thursday

10:00 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

**TARGET FREE THURSDAY EVENINGS AFTER 5:00 pm**

#### **SUMMER HOURS (from Memorial Day to Labor Day)**

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

10:30 am–9:00 pm Thursday, Friday

10:00 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

**TARGET FREE SUMMER EVENINGS THURSDAY AND FRIDAY AFTER 5:00 pm**

#### **FREE FEBRUARY 1 TO 28**

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

#### **ADMISSION**

**Adults \$18.00 Includes all special exhibitions and coat check**

**Children 14 and over, students, and seniors \$12.00 Includes all special exhibitions and coat check**

**Chicago residents receive a \$2.00 discount with proof of residency**

**Children under 14 always free**

**Members always free**

Free Evenings are free to all. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Museum Passport" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.

**The Art Institute of Chicago is a museum in Chicago's Grant Park, located across from Millennium Park.** Visitors can enter the museum via the Michigan Avenue entrance or the Millennium Park entrance on Monroe Street.