

Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg to Unveil Rare Caravaggio Masterpiece in Landmark U.S. Exhibition of Baroque Masterpieces

In Caravaggio's *Light brings revolutionary artist's Boy Bitten by a Lizard to Florida alongside nearly 40 Baroque masterpieces from Florence's legendary Fondazione Roberto Longhi, many never before seen in America*



Left: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Boy Bitten by a Lizard (Ragazzo morso da un ramarro)*, c. 1597, oil on canvas. Courtesy of Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi, Florence, Italy. **Right:** Jusepe Ribera, *Saint Bartholomew (San Bartolomeo)*, c. 1612, oil on canvas. Courtesy of Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi, Florence, Italy.

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – October 8, 2025 – The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg (MFA) will present *In Caravaggio's Light: Baroque Masterpieces from the Fondazione Roberto Longhi*, a landmark exhibition opening October 25, 2025. Featuring some 40 masterpieces from one of the world's most revered private collections of 17th-century painting, the exhibition offers a rare opportunity for American audiences to experience the revolutionary genius of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and the international artists he inspired.

At the exhibition's heart is Caravaggio's electrifying masterpiece, *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* (c. 1597), a cornerstone of the Fondazione Roberto Longhi collection. The painting captures a fleeting moment of shock and pain, blending a lush still life with piercing psychological insight. Its intense realism, dramatic light (*chiaroscuro*), and theatrical power shattered artistic conventions. Remarkably, this will be the first time in more than a decade that the Longhi version of the iconic painting will be on view in the United States.

Beyond Caravaggio, the exhibition charts his seismic impact on European art. Visitors will explore stunning works by his closest followers—the Caravaggisti—who adopted his bold techniques to create their own powerful art:

- **Valentin de Boulogne's *The Denial of Saint Peter*** (c. 1615–17): An emotionally charged, large-scale masterpiece that showcases the artist's sophisticated use of shadow and narrative tension.
- **Jusepe de Ribera's series of *Apostles*** (c. 1612): Works painted with haunting realism and dramatic light that convey deep spiritual intensity, underscoring Ribera's pivotal role in spreading tenebrism throughout Spain and Naples.
- **Carlo Saraceni's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*** (c. 1618): A dramatic and gripping tableau that exemplifies the artist's masterful blend of Venetian colorism and Caravaggesque lighting.
- **Matthias Stomer's *The Annunciation of Samson's Birth*** (c. 1630–32) and ***The Healing of Tobit*** (c. 1640–1649): Paintings whose cinematic scale and radiant compositions underscore the Dutch artist's place among the greatest interpreters of sacred drama in Caravaggio's wake.

All works in the exhibition come from **the collection of Roberto Longhi** (1890–1970), the legendary Italian art historian and connoisseur. His pioneering scholarship in the 20th century restored Caravaggio to his rightful place in the art historical canon. Longhi's discerning eye not only rediscovered lost masterpieces but also assembled one of the most significant and personal collections of Baroque painting ever formed. Much of this collection has never before traveled to the United States.

"Caravaggio changed painting forever, and his influence echoes through the centuries", said **Dr. Stanton Thomas, William and Hazel Hough Chief Curator**. "This exhibition is an extraordinary opportunity to experience that revolution firsthand, from a masterwork by Caravaggio himself to the daring interpretations of those he inspired. To host the Longhi collection here at the MFA is a profound privilege for our museum and our community."

To complement *In Caravaggio's Light*, the Museum will concurrently present ***Baroque Continuum: Caravaggio and the Caravaggisti Over Time***. This focused exhibition traces the enduring reach of Caravaggio's innovations across four centuries, from the Baroque period through to the present day. Featuring works in painting, printmaking, photography, and sculpture, *Baroque Continuum* reveals how artists across Europe and the Americas have drawn on Caravaggio's dramatic realism, theatrical staging, and emotional intensity to explore psychological states and human experience in ever-evolving ways. Artists featured in *Baroque Continuum* include **Thomas Anshutz, Gertrude Käsebier, Edward Steichen, Dianora Nicolini, Reza Aramesh**, and others.

The exhibition design across both shows will immerse visitors in the world of Baroque. The galleries will be transformed with sumptuous damask wall coverings and theatrical lighting to evoke the dramatic, opulent environment for which these paintings were created.

The Museum will present a robust slate of programs alongside *In Caravaggio's Light* and *Baroque Continuum*. Highlights include scholar talks and tours with leading experts from the Fondazione Roberto Longhi and a one-night-only immersive opera by Nathan Felix. The full list of programs can be found [at this link](#).

In Caravaggio's Light is organized by the Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi and Civita Mostre e Musei, in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg. The exhibition will travel to The Mint Museum in 2026, on view April 25–October 25, 2026.

Exhibition Details:

- **Venue:** Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 255 Beach Dr. N.E., St. Petersburg, FL
- **Dates:** October 25, 2025–March 22, 2026
- **Tour:** *In Caravaggio's Light* will travel to The Mint Museum (Charlotte, NC) from April 25–October 25, 2026
- **Information and Tickets:** mfastpete.org

Press Kit & Exclusive Press Preview:

[Press Kit](#)

[Press Preview RSVP](#) (invitation only) on Thursday, October 23, 2025

About the Museum of Fine Arts St. Petersburg

The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg (MFA) has an encyclopedic collection of art from around the globe and across the centuries, with almost 5,000 years of civilization represented in thousands of objects extending from antiquity to the present. The collection includes works by Georgia O'Keeffe, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Auguste Rodin, Kehinde Wiley, Jacob Lawrence, and many others, as well as ancient Greek and Roman, Asian, African, Art of the Americas, and Native American art. The museum's photographic collection is one of the largest and most well-respected in the Southeast. The museum's rotating exhibition galleries feature a diverse selection of temporary exhibitions from all over the world, as well as exhibitions curated from the museum's extensive collection. In addition to its robust exhibition program, the MFA engages the community through exciting public programs and events and serves students through youth programs and a partnership with the Pinellas County School System.

marketing@mfastpete.org
727.896.2667

The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg
255 Beach Drive NE,
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

mfastpete.org