

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Caravaggio and Caravaggesque Artists in Southern Italy from the Longhi Foundation Collection**

Curated by Maria Cristina Bandera  
Otranto, Castello Aragonese  
11<sup>th</sup> June – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017

*“Caravaggio might rather be the first modern age painter [...]. We should thus try to interpret this painter in a 'natural way', since he has tried to be 'natural' and understandable, humane rather than humanistic; in a word, popular”.*

After the extraordinary success of the exhibition dedicated to Steve McCurry in summer 2016, the Municipality of Otranto and Civita Mostre will be organizing an exhibition in the picturesque premises of the Aragonese Castle, from the 11<sup>th</sup> of June through the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The exhibition focuses on Caravaggio and some Caravaggesque painters who worked in Southern Italy. All the works exhibited come from Roberto Longhi Foundation for Art History Studies, which preserves the legacy of Roberto Longhi, who not only was the most important art historian in Italy, but also a remarkable collector.

Roberto Longhi (Alba 1890 - Florence 1970) is one of the most fascinating figures in 20<sup>th</sup> century art history. He devoted his all life to studying the painting art by Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi, a.k.a Caravaggio, Milan 1571 - Porto Ercole 1610) and his followers, the so-called Caravaggesque artists. He did so since his graduate dissertation on Caravaggio in 1911. This was quite pioneering work in those times, when Caravaggio was one of the "least known painters in Italian art". Longhi immediately recognised the breakthrough nature of Merisi's art, so much so that he considered him as "the first modern age painter".

In his Florentine house - Villa Il Tasso - now the home of the Foundation carrying his name, Roberto Longhi collected works by masters of all times, on which he would conduct thorough research and investigations. The works by Caravaggio and Caravaggesque artists are for sure the most important and significant part of his collection, formed around Merisi's *Boy bitten by a Lizard*, bought by Longhi circa 1928. The painting dates back to the early period of Caravaggio's stay in Rome, around 1596-1597. Immediately striking is the way the boy reacts to the lizard bite: it really looks like a snapshot. Outstanding is also the diligent care with which Caravaggio painted the still life with the carafe and the flowers, a pictorial genre brought to self-standing dignity by Caravaggio himself.

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Fondazione di Studi  
di Storia dell'Arte  
ROBERTO LONGHI

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# CARAVAGGIO

E I CARAVAGGESCHI NELL'ITALIA MERIDIONALE  
DALLA COLLEZIONE DELLA FONDAZIONE LONGHI

OTRANTO  
CASTELLO ARAGONESE

11 GIUGNO  
24 SETTEMBRE 2017

The exhibition is curated by Maria Cristina Bandera, scientific director of the Fondazione Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi (Roberto Longhi Foundation for Art History Studies). Next to Caravaggio's paintings, there are those by his southern followers or in any case of those working in Southern Italy. They all belong to the same collection, thus effectively demonstrating the historical value of Caravaggio's art. The following canvases in particular are real masterpieces: the one depicting the *Apostles*, by a young Jusepe de Ribera and the *Deposition of Christ* by Battistello Caracciolo, the leading Neapolitan Caravaggesque artist; *David* by Andrea Vaccaro and the dramatic *Saint Jerome* by the Master who painted Pau's Emmaus. They are all clear examples of the deep rooting of the master's art among Neapolitan painters. The works by Matthias Stom, who worked in Sicily for a long time, show a perfect synthesis between his original northern culture – linked to Dutch Caravaggism – and Italian painting. Also on show are works by Lanfranco, by the Master of the Annunciation to the Shepherds, by Filippo Napoletano and by Giacinto Brandi. The exhibition ends with two masterpieces by Mattia Preti, the artist who most contributed to maintaining alive Caravaggio's tradition throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

A film by Mario Martone, entitled **Caravaggio, the Last Act** and lasting 40 minutes, made in 2004 will also be shown. Through his camera, this great film director breaks down and reassembles details from Caravaggio's paintings, as well as from some working-class neighbourhoods and outer suburbs of Naples. It is quite an effective way to tell the artistic and human story of the last years in Caravaggio's life in the South of Italy, in a modern language that also speaks to our times.

Tickets to Castello Aragonese for a visit to the fortress premises – including the cellars and the exhibition about the history of Otranto – will also grant access to both the exhibition on Caravaggio and the one on Roberto Cotroneo.

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## Information Sheet

### Title

Caravaggio and Caravaggesque Artists in Southern Italy from the Longhi Foundation Collection

### Period

11<sup>th</sup> June – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017

### Location

Otranto, Castello Aragonese - Piazza Castello

### Opening Hours

Open daily from 10 a.m. to 12 midnight

(Ticket office closes one hour before closing time of the Castle)

Info Tel. 0836 210094

[www.mostracaravaggio.it](http://www.mostracaravaggio.it)

### Tickets

The exhibition is accessible to the public with the entry ticket for the Aragonese Castle, including the Exhibition *Roberto Cotroneo. Genius loci, in the Theater of Art.*

Ticket prices

- €12.00 standard
- €10.00 discounted ticket for groups of at least 12 visitors and special agreements, holders of Otranto Card
- €6.00 special discounted ticket for visitors under 18, special agreements and for residents in the Municipality of Otranto
- Free for children under 6, and under 18 with visiting parents, qualified tourist guides (with a group), disabled people and one accompanying visitor, accredited journalists.

### Press Office

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