



## Sunny Italy at the Royal Castle in Warsaw

**With the arrival of spring, the Royal Castle in Warsaw invites you to the exhibition *Italian Views by Van Wittel*. This intimate exhibition will take viewers on a journey through the picturesque landscapes of Italy, offering a glimpse through the eyes of the prominent veduta painter, Gaspar van Wittel.**

A veduta (Italian: *veduta* - view, skyline) is a painting, drawing, or engraving that depicts a comprehensive view of a city or a particular area within it. Since 22 March, visitors to the Royal Castle in Warsaw have had the opportunity to admire over a dozen selected works by Gaspar van Wittel, one of the pioneers of this painting style.

The exhibition primarily features views of Rome and Naples, two cities crucial for the development of the painter's artistic career, as it was there that he found his wealthy patrons. Although Gaspar van Wittel was born in the Netherlands, Italy became his homeland of choice. He spent the majority of his life there, painting and portraying Italian cities in a highly personal manner.

*The exhibition of van Wittel's proto-vedute immerses us in the poetics of wandering around uncharted corners of Italy and evokes the historical fervour of Polish and European intellectual elites of the 17th and 18th centuries. The exhibition of Gaspar van Wittel's collection of paintings at the Royal Castle foreshadows the creation of a room designed to evoke the tradition of the Grand Tour – a prolonged journey across the continent, with Italy's cities serving as primary destinations. A room dedicated to this form of tourism will be situated near the permanent exhibition of Canaletto's vedute, says Prof. Wojciech Fałkowski, director of the Royal Castle in Warsaw.*

At the exhibition *Italian Views by Van Wittel*, visitors will see paintings depicting various scenes, including the Roman square Piazza Navona, the Roman Forum, the Tiber River near Porto di Ripa Grande, the Arno River near San Niccolò Weir, Porta Romana and its surroundings, and the Old Waterfall on the Aniene River.

Landscapes of famous cities, such as Rome, Naples, and Florence, were created during numerous journeys, which not only provided the artist with fresh inspiration but also opened avenues for securing commissions for future works.



The works of van Wittel were already in great demand during the painter's lifetime, especially among the Roman nobility, who frequently commissioned him to paint both scenes of the city itself and artistic renderings of their own palaces.

*Gaspar van Wittel left behind a vast body of work, including drawings and paintings, which are showcased in major museum collections, particularly those in Italy. The artist is unequivocally regarded as the father of Italian veduta and as the painter who inspired the great vedutists of the 18th century, namely Giovanni Antonio Canal (Canaletto) and his nephew Bernard Bellotto, comments Alicja Jakubowska, curator of the exhibition "Italian Views by Van Wittel" at the Royal Castle in Warsaw.*

The exhibition featuring works by the master of vedute will be open to the public between 22 March and 23 June 2024, in the Officers' Room and the Hall of the Crown's Horse Guards at the Royal Castle in Warsaw.

The exhibition is complemented by an educational programme, featuring lectures on selected topics related to Gaspar van Wittel's work, a catalogue, and audio material narrated by the exhibition curator.

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