



NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY & MUSEUM

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**“Identity & Restraint: Art of the Dog Collar” exhibition
on view at National Sporting Library & Museum
in Virginia through March 26, 2023**

MIDDLEBURG, Virginia – September 30, 2022 – The dog collar is, arguably, the oldest dog furnishing, and its purpose may be described as both one of identity and restraint. Since the domestication of canines, we have forged a strong bond with dogs—from hunting companions to sporting breeds as well as faithful pets. The dog collar is a symbol of the evolving relationship between humans and canines. The variety of styles that has developed over time—among them intimidating spiked metal rings, utilitarian pieces, elaborately jeweled works of art, and leather finery—show how we tamed, bred, claimed, and came to love our dogs.

“Identity & Restraint: Art of the Dog Collar” is an innovative traveling exhibition developed in partnership between the National Sporting Library & Museum (NSLM) and the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog in New York, NY. This remarkable exhibition marries artwork spanning the 17th through 21st centuries with almost 70 vintage and antique dog collars from the NSLM’s collection. The largest publicly held holding of its kind, 187 collars were generously donated to the NSLM by Dr. and Mrs. Timothy J. Greenan. Paintings, works on paper, and sculptures on loan from the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog and American Kennel Club collections help develop an understanding of the collar as both art and object and how its design changed in relation to different dog breeds and their evolving relationship. NSLM Executive Director Elizabeth von Hassell notes, “With shared aspects of our mission statements, being able to bring our collections together is a natural partnership.”

The exhibition is curated by NSLM’s Deputy Director and George L. Ohrstrom, Jr. Curator Claudia Pfeiffer, who celebrated her 10th anniversary as NSLM’s head curator this year. She edited the exhibition catalogue that accompanies Identity & Restraint. Included in it are a comprehensive essay on the history of the dog collar by Dr. Greenan, who additionally offers his engaging insight as an inveterate collector. An avid sporting art enthusiast, Dr. Greenan noticed trends and purposes in collar designs which encouraged him to flesh out the collection to reflect his comprehensive understanding of their varied uses. He and his wife Jocelyn donated the collars to the NSLM along with his extensive research in 2014.

The art descriptions in the exhibition and catalogue are contributed by Adjunct Curator and former Executive Director of the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog Alan Fausel. His life’s work in the field of art, as

a professor, as a longtime appraiser on Antiques Roadshow, and, perhaps, most importantly, as a dog owner informs his conversational and engaging approach and enriches the visual experience.

The exhibition is organized to convey the variety of roles that dogs began to play over time and the honing of their breeding for hunting, vermin control, work, sporting pursuits, leisure, and domesticity. The journey begins with lion and bear hunting scenes with snarling mastiffs wearing sharp metal collars. They give way to portraits and dynamic renderings of prized gun dogs, sight and scent hounds, terriers, and representative collars; celebrations of champion show dogs and bloodlines; and, ultimately, the once fierce hunters becoming cherished companions with a multitude of bespoke and jewelry-like collar designs. Cumulatively, the visual survey reveals the multitude of shapes, sizes, and roles dogs have come to play in our world today.

The range of Flemish, Dutch, British, French, German, and American artworks and collars represent a multitude of art movements, genres, and time-periods, reinforcing the universal nature of the subject matter. Yet, they also record changing preferences for animal conformation and the establishing of the standards to which breeders aspire today. From the most diminutive works inviting closer contemplation to the scope and grandeur of the largest canvases, each displays a powerful narrative—of survival, of fear, of aggression, of adventure, of whimsy, of recreation, of sentimentality, of pride, and of love. The NSLM in Middleburg, VA, will be the first venue for *Identity & Restraint: Art of the Dog Collar*, from October 7, 2022–March 26, 2023. It will then travel to the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog in New York City from April 5, 2023–September 4, 2023. The final venue will be Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville, Georgia from November 3, 2023–May 3, 2024.

Please check each institution's websites for individual opening events and associated programs being planned.

This exhibition was made possible at the National Sporting Library & Museum through the generosity of Dr. and Mrs. Timothy J. Greenan, Garth Greenan Gallery, and Mark Anstine and Marianna Lancaster.

The National Sporting Library & Museum is located in Middleburg, VA, the heart of beautiful horse country. Founded in 1954, the renowned research Library and fine art Museum highlight the rich heritage and tradition of country pursuits. Angling, horsemanship, shooting, steeplechasing, foxhunting, flat racing, polo, coaching, and wildlife are among the subjects one can explore in the organization's general stacks, rare book holdings, archives, and art collection. The NSLM offers a wide variety of educational programs, exhibitions, and family activities throughout the year, and is open to researchers and the public. There is no admission fee to the Library. The Museum charges \$10 for adults, \$8 for youths (age 13-18), and \$8 for seniors. NSLM members and children age 12 and under are admitted free of charge. Library & Museum hours are Thursday–Sunday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

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Abraham Hondius (Dutch, c. 1631–1691)

The Amsterdam Dog Market, c. 1671–2

oil on canvas, 38 1/2 x 48 1/2 inches

Gift of Robert Flanders in Memory of Walter F. Goodman

On Loan from the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog

Charles Hamilton (British, act. 1831–1867)

Zillah, by 1837

oil on mahogany panel, 16 1/2 x 21 inches

Gift of the Cynthia S. Wood Estate

American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog

- more -

Richard Ansdell, RA (British, 1815–1885)

The Poacher at Bay, 1865

oil on canvas, 53 x 83 inches

Gift of Marie A. Moore, American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog

Dog Collar, Dutch, 1793

brass with modern felt lining, 6 x 1 1/2 inches

inscribed Jan D Hont 1793

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Timothy J. Greenan, 2014

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Dog Collar

Indian, possibly Goan, 18th century

horsehide leather, brass mounds, and agate cabochons

11 x 3 inches

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Timothy J. Greenan, 2014

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