

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

Colloquium, Friday 17th January 2003
at the Paul Mellon Centre

In October 2002, Tate Britain opens a major exhibition of the work of Thomas Gainsborough which will bring together the largest group of works by the artist ever to be seen in one place.

Curated by Michael Rosenthal (University of Warwick) and Martin Myrone (Tate Britain), the exhibition will offer a new vision of Gainsborough as an artist whose work, though charming and engaging, is also intellectually rewarding and vibrant. In an era of increasing conformity in the British art world, dominated by the theory-led practice of Reynolds and the Royal Academy, Gainsborough's art provided a vital alternative. The exhibition will show that, in favouring visual pleasure over theory, originality over convention, and an engagement with the social world

rather than academic abstraction, Gainsborough and his art have a continuing significance for British culture. It will also highlight the emergence of public art exhibitions

from 1760 as a key element in the modernisation of the British art world and will demonstrate how the artist's career developed and unfolded within this public context.

The Paul Mellon Centre joins with Tate Britain in organising this academic colloquium to reflect on issues raised by the exhibition and its catalogue. Led by the curators and a group of invited Gainsborough specialists, this event will provide an opportunity for students and scholars to contribute to a discussion of the artist's work, the themes and arguments proposed by the show, and current directions in eighteenth-century studies.

Further details and booking information will be available from the Centre from Autumn 2002, and will also be available at the exhibition.



Thomas Gainsborough *Giovanna Baccelli* (1782)