

# The New Criterion

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## Exhibition note

by Mario Naves

*On "Titian" at the National Gallery, London.*

With the exception of the museum personnel whose livelihood depends on them, nobody likes a crowd at an art exhibition. Aesthetic experience isn't encouraged by peering over the shoulders of a half-a-dozen onlookers, the tinny squawk of audio tours, or waiting on what are often onerous lines. Looking at a painting or sculpture is a one-to-one encounter that benefits from an unimpeded view, an amplitude of time, and peace and quiet. That these attributes are absent from the typical blockbuster show doesn't mean that a real engagement with art is impossible. Only a cynic could claim that the nuances of a Leonardo drawing couldn't make themselves known through a thicket of gallery-goers. Nor do I want to insinuate that the glories of art should be the purview of a privileged few. It's just that there's no denying that the pedestrian traffic one encounters at a museum can make the solace...

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**Mario Naves** is an artist, critic, and teacher who lives in New York City.

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