

*Dr. Cavins*  
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NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 15: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announces the opening of an exhibition of American prints on September 19th, consisting of a brief summary of American graphic art, selected from the collections of the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution and the National Gallery of Art.

Until the end of the nineteenth century American artists were concerned with the factual representation of the American scene. John White, sent out by Sir Walter Raleigh to be the second governor of the ill-fated second colony on Roanoke Island, made sixty-five watercolor drawings of the land, the Indians and their life. The watercolors later served as the basis for the De Bry's engravings in Hariot's, "A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia", 1590, a copy of which is included in the exhibition, lent by the Library of Congress, Rosenwald Collection.

This early graphic representation of life in the new world, published in Europe, now seems picturesque. It was also characteristic of much American art that was to follow, evidencing the strong European tie and the desire to record American life and the curiously elusive native American atmosphere.

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A few rare engravings from the eighteenth century are included in the exhibition. The earliest is a Prospect of the Colledges in Cambridge in 1726, drawn by William Burgis, which was sold at Price's shop in Cornhill, Boston. Another is Paul Revere's celebrated engraving of The Boston Massacre, made in 1770. There are also two large historical engravings, William Penn's Treaty with the Indians and the Death of General Wolf, made from the famous compositions of the expatriate, Benjamin West.

In the nineteenth century a small selection of Currier and Ives prints shows life on the frontier as well as the joys of Central Park. Typical of the popular aquatint views are Bennett's Niagara Falls and Chapman's New York Harbor. A fine selection of Whistler and Mary Cassatt prints from the Rosenwald and Webb collections concludes the nineteenth-century group.

In the modern section there is a very wide variety of subject and technique. One bay is devoted to the powerful dark lithographs of George Bellows. There are delicate etchings by Hassam, Weir and Arms, prints by Sloan, Marsh, Eby, and Heintzelman. Finally there is a small group by younger artists who are experimenting with new techniques, with examples by Drewes, Fuller, Grippe, Margo, Schanker, Ryan, and others.

The exhibition will remain on view through October.

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