

NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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WASHINGTON, December 1: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, announces the opening, on Sunday, December 2, of an important exhibition of fifteenth century graphic art, selected from the Rosenwald Collection. The exhibition includes woodcuts, broadsides, a famous printed textile, block-books and early illustrated woodcut books.

This is the first time that the fifteenth century Rosenwald material has ever been shown in such a large homogeneous exhibition. No other collection, public or private, contains so many rarities in the field of early woodcuts. The full span of the fifteenth century is in evidence. In this respect, the number of prints before 1450 are of particular interest. The textile of the Marriage at Cana, made c. 1400, is an unusual example of printing from wood blocks on linen, before paper was common in Europe. Another outstanding print, the Adoration of the Magi, is one of the earliest woodcuts known. The very large unique woodcut of The Crucifixion, c. 1460, a recent discovery, is very close to the school of Roger van der Weyden. Originally it was probably intended as a portable altar.



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An extraordinary group of block-books, the Biblia Pauperum, the Apocalypse of St. John, the Ars Moriendi and the Ars Memorandi, made in the middle years of the century, have been lent to the exhibition by the Library of Congress, Rosenwald Collection.

Although most of the prints in the exhibition are of religious subjects, such as were often sold to pilgrims at the great shrines, still a number of popular diverting pictures are to be seen. The illustrated World Map, designed by Hans Sporer in Augsburg, is a compendium of medieval knowledge and folklore. The graphic battle between The Emperor Frederick III and Pope Paul II for the balance of power is a rare example of an early political cartoon. Sheets of Italian and German playing cards indicate the popularity of games. Also a large broadside of an invitation to a shooting and rifle competition, which was published in Cologne, gives an idea of Gothic sporting events.

The exhibition will remain on view through January.

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