

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
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RENAISSANCE PRINT SHOW
AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Washington, October 23rd: David E. Finley, Director, announces the opening of a special exhibition of Renaissance prints by three artists, Lucas van Leyden, Marcantonio Raimondi, and Jean Duvet, at the National Gallery of Art, on Sunday, October 24th, at 2 p. m. Two of these artists, Lucas van Leyden and Marcantonio Raimondi, were once highly regarded, but are little known today. The third, Jean Duvet, a Frenchman, has always been an obscure, enigmatic figure, whose work is only now becoming more appreciated. All three men were born in the last quarter of the 15th century and worked well into the 16th century.

Lucas van Leyden was a precocious genius who, it is said, began engraving at the age of nine. One of his famous plates, Mohammed and the Dead Monk Sergius, which is in the exhibition, was engraved when the artist was only fourteen. In maturity, he was influenced by Dürer and Marcantonio. To modern eyes, his most interesting prints are those that represent Dutch life during his time. The Milkmaid, The Pilgrims and the Two Musicians are typical examples of his genre scenes.

Marcantonio Raimondi acquired his skill in the studio of the painter-goldsmith, Francesco Raibolini (called Francia) in Bologna. Later Marcantonio Raimondi moved to Venice, and then to Rome where his main preoccupation became the engraving of plates after designs of Raphael. Since many of the original drawings by Raphael have been lost, the engravings made from them by Marcantonio are the only record.

Jean Duvet began probably as a goldsmith. His most ambitious work, The Apocalypse, was dedicated, in the published edition, to Henri II of France. Many proofs from the Apocalypse series are included in the exhibition.

The three artists often used common motifs, leaning heavily, not only on the designs of Dürer and Raphael, but frequently borrowing from each other. In spite of that, however, the finished plates are seldom dull. They employed improvisation rather than direct copying. The subject matter chosen is rich in Renaissance fantasy and allegory and, lastly, their technique was extraordinarily accomplished. Because of the extreme delicacy of the lines made with the burin on metal, very few impressions could be taken from the original plates without loss of gradations of tone. The present exhibition provides an opportunity to see a number of unusual impressions of very rare prints. The exhibition has been selected from the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, and from the gift of an anonymous donor to the National Gallery Print Room.