

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON 25 DC • REpublic 7-4215 extension 248
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. January 25, 1963: John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that an exhibition of prints by Jacques Callot (1592-1635) will be held at the Gallery from Sunday, February 3 through Sunday, March 17, 1963. The exhibition celebrates the recent gift to the Gallery of the Callot collection of Mr. Rudolf L. Baumfeld of Los Angeles. It will display 154 out of the hundreds of Callot prints given to the nation by Mr. Baumfeld and by Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, whose combined gifts have made the National Gallery's collection of prints by Callot one of the most important in the United States for quality and completeness.

Of the 1428 known etchings by Callot, Mr. Baumfeld has assembled nearly 1200, all of excellent quality. As the Rosenwald collection in the National Gallery of Art also contains prints and impressions not duplicated in the Baumfeld collection, the combined holdings form a remarkable resource.

The prints selected for the exhibition cover a wide variety of subjects, all treated with the vivacity and wit that has made Callot's work increasingly popular in our time. The pictures range from gypsies to the fashions of the nobility of Lorraine; from 2-1/2 by 3-1/2 inch single-figure pictures of gobbi or grotesque dwarfs, to vast multi-plate panoramic battle scenes, almost 4 by 5 feet, at times so filled with detail there are over a thousand figures on a single plate; from tattered and mutilated beggars to the elaborately costumed actors in the Commedia dell'arte; from holiday fair-scenes to meditations on the Passion of Christ; from extravagant depictions of court fêtes and triumphal entries to biting comment on the horrors of war. The exhibition also contains a drawing, a sheet of sketches of horsemen.

Jacques Callot was admired by artists and generously rewarded by the nobility of Italy, France, and the Netherlands in his own time. Born in 1592, he grew up in Nancy in the then independent Duchy of Lorraine, amid the tourneys, carousals, theatrical entertainments and elaborate fêtes of the Ducal court. From 1609 to the 1620's he was in Italy, principally at Florence, where he came to know the beggars and the country fairs as well as the great festivals of the Medici where music, drama, complex military maneuvers and ingenious floats were spectacularly combined. He returned to settle comfortably in Nancy, with trips such as his excursion in 1627 to study for many months the terrain for his monumental Siege of Breda.

His final period shows a change in mood. His native city had been ravaged by the plague and then overrun by the French in 1631. From this period comes most of his religious work and his bitter series, The Miseries of War.

Technically, Callot is known as one of the major figures in

the development of the technique of etching, which before his time had been the domain primarily of armorers. He also taught himself the method of "trait simple", or the ability to render figures and movement by means of outline alone, without recourse to cross-hatching.

A profusely illustrated catalogue, with explanatory notes and a full historical and critical introduction, has been prepared by Miss Elizabeth Mongan. The catalogue, which sells for \$1.50, has a preface by Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald and a foreward by Mr. John Walker.

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