

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAJOR ITALIAN ENGRAVINGS EXHIBITION

OPENS AT NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. June 18, 1973. Prints of the Italian Renaissance, a major historical survey exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Art, goes on view to the public this Saturday, June 23, in the special exhibition galleries on the ground floor.

This important exhibition of early Italian prints is the first to be held in the United States in over fifty years. More than 350 engravings of the 15th and early 16th centuries have been gathered from public collections in America and abroad.

Because of the exceptional rarity of 15th century Italian engravings, no single museum, not even the greatest European cabinets, could present works of this period so comprehensively.

Over 200 prints are from the National Gallery's holdings, mostly from the Rosenwald Collection.

The scholarly value of this exhibition is immeasurable. A 600 page catalog of the National Gallery's collection of early Italian prints, reflecting the most extensive new research done since the 1948 publication of Hind's Early Italian Engraving, the most widely accepted source reference in the field, has been produced in conjunction with the exhibition.

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In addition, the exhibition installation and an accompanying 32 page guide have been designed and created to guide the viewer through the chronology and geography of the numerous schools, styles and artists.

In a number of instances, exhibition organizers Konrad Oberhuber and Jay Levenson, who have also written the catalog entries, have gathered multiple impressions of a single print, and designer of the installation, Gaillard Ravenel, has mounted them in proximity with one another for often unique opportunities for comparison. The exhibition begins with a section devoted to the goldsmith's art of niello featuring a Florentine cross and book covers. Prints pulled from these decorative silver plaques were the origin of engraving in Italy. The exhibition also includes early woodcuts and illustrated books.

Galleries adjacent to the exhibition will display related Italian paintings from the Gallery's collection, for study purposes.

Dr. Oberhuber is the Research Curator in the Gallery's Graphic Arts Department. Mr. Levenson, a student at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, is the most recent recipient of the Gallery's Finley Fellowship. Mr. Ravenel, who has designed numerous exhibitions in recent years for the Gallery, is a Curator in the Graphic Arts Department.

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