

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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INTERNATIONAL LOAN EXHIBITION OF CALLOT GRAPHICS OPENS AT NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D. C. April 23, 1975. A major international loan exhibition of prints and drawings by the French printmaker Jacques Callot (1592-1635) will be on view at the National Gallery of Art June 29 through September 14.

Over 200 prints and fifty preparatory drawings will be included in the exhibition, entitled Jacques Callot: Prints and Related Drawings.

The majority of prints in the exhibition will be from the National Gallery's graphic arts collection, which contains impressions of almost all of Callot's 1400 prints, given to the Nation in large part by Rudolf L. Baumfeld and Lessing J. Rosenwald.

Sixty-five loans to the exhibition will come from prominent collections in London, Leningrad, Stockholm, Paris, Chicago, Boston, New York, San Francisco, New Haven, Princeton, and Ann Arbor. Two museums in Callot's birthplace of Nancy in Lorraine will also lend works to the exhibition.

Included in the exhibition will be copper plates etched for Callot's first great cartographic war series, The Siege of Breda, and books illustrated by Callot. In addition, the wide-ranging admiration for Callot's etchings at the time of his

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death will be illustrated by approximately fifteen copies of his prints executed by known, as well as anonymous, seventeenth-century printmakers.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition, with scholarly text written by H. Diane Russell, Assistant Curator of Graphic Arts at the National Gallery, will contain illustrations of all exhibited works, as well as entries on each print and drawing and fifty-five supplemental illustrations. Jeffrey Blanchard, a graduate student at Yale University, has contributed a section on theatre in Callot's work.

The prints, to be installed thematically, will represent several broad categories which reflect major aspects of seventeenth-century life, allowing the viewer an opportunity to observe Callot's stylistic development as well as the maturation of his concepts.

In 1608, Callot left Nancy for Rome, then Florence, where in 1614 he became a court artist to the Medici. Many of his prints from this period, including War of Love and Solimano, served as the official record of Medici court festivals and theatrical performances, which were highly regarded in early seventeenth-century Europe.

The pervasive strength of the Catholic faith in seventeenth-century Europe is reflected in Callot's religious prints, which form the largest yet least appreciated category in his oeuvre and which span his entire career. Two versions of his Temptation

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of Saint Antony, a very rare impression dated 1617 and a later one from 1635, reflect the artist's playful fantasies with grotesque animal and human forms, as well as communicating a serious moral statement.

Less well-known but equally exquisite are Callot's sensitive evocations of landscape.

Callot's technical accomplishments as a printmaker are represented in two important advances he made in etching. One is his discovery of a hard ground, which, in contrast to those previously used, firmly adhered to the plate and did not chip. This hard ground, made of mastic and linseed oil, provided a sound surface against which the artist could manipulate his tools to achieve sweeping and swelling lines, and which Callot used to its fullest aesthetic value.

The second advancement concerns his exploration of the technique of "biting." Although the practice of making repeated bitings of the etcher's plate was not uncommon during Callot's lifetime, he was the first to use the process to create effects of light and space, as in his etching The Stag Hunt.

Also on view will be a small exhibition of about forty prints and etching tools, providing a short survey of the etching technique in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and documenting the origins of the technique and its development over a 200-year period. Works in the Gallery's collection by the Hoppers, Dürer, Callot and Bellange, among others, will be included.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Pamela Jenkinson, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.