

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MASTER DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS TO GO ON VIEW

AT NATIONAL GALLERY'S EAST BUILDING OPENING, JUNE 1

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 24, 1978. Approximately 115 drawings and watercolors by seventy-seven masters dating from the twelfth into the twentieth centuries, exceptionally fine examples either belonging to the National Gallery of Art or promised to it, will go on view in the Gallery's new East Building on June 1, the day the building opens to the public.

Entitled Master Drawings and Watercolors: Selections from the National Gallery Collection and Promised Gifts, this exhibition will represent a survey of the Gallery's holdings in this field and will include a Sheet of Studies by Leonardo; Mantegna's Bird Perched on a Branch; Raphael's Study of Prophets; Sebastiano del Piombo's Prophet Addressed by an Angel; Michelangelo's Male Nude Striding Forward; six drawings by Rembrandt; four each by Dürer and Rubens; three by Tiepolo, Watteau and Fragonard; and further examples by Schongauer, Titian, Breugel, Boucher, Blake, Degas, van Gogh, Homer, Cézanne, Kirchner, and Picasso, among many others.

The exhibition will be presented in the ground-floor gallery of the East Building's northwest tower, in an installation evoking a sequence

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of rooms, almost domestic in size, to allow the quiet and intensely personal media of drawings and watercolors to be seen with maximum advantage. This gallery is representative of the variety of exhibition spaces in the East Building which can be tuned to display many different kinds of works of art.

All works of art in the Gallery's collections have been given or promised by private citizens or purchased with their donated funds, and the selections forming Master Drawings and Watercolors represent the collecting of more than twenty-five donors, including Ailsa Mellon Bruce, the Armand Hammer Foundation, Mrs. Enid A. Haupt, Ruth K. Henschel, Samuel H. Kress, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Lessing J. and Edith Rosenwald, Robert and Clarice Smith, and Joseph E. Widener.

Andrew Robison, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery, has arranged the exhibition, with the assistance of Agnes Mongan, the Gallery's 1978 Kress Professor in Residence and an eminent drawings scholar. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated summary catalogue with 32 color plates. This catalogue, which will also include a preface by J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, and an introduction by Mr. Robison, is scheduled to be published at the time the exhibition goes on view.

The exhibition will begin with an anonymous Austrian drawing, Saint John Dictating to the Venerable Bede, dating from about 1140, one of the earliest works in the Gallery's collections. Other early and Renaissance works included will be a beautiful Franco-Flemish silverpoint entitled The Death of the Virgin, as well as the Italian Renaissance

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drawings mentioned above, and a fine brush-and-ink Young Woman in Netherlandish Dress by Dürer.

In addition to Rembrandt's red chalk Self-Portrait, a pen and wash sketch of his wife Saskia Lying in Bed and four other examples surveying his styles and subjects, seventeenth-century renderings will include Rubens' Lion in color chalks, which is a study for Daniel in the Lions' Den, a monumental oil in the National Gallery's collection, and van Dyck's lyrical Edge of the Wood.

Canaletto's marvelously detailed Ascension Day Festival at Venice and G. B. Tiepolo's subtly toned Virgin and Child Adored by Bishops, Monks, and Women will be among the works presented from the eighteenth century, as will Watteau's study in three chalks Couple Seated on a Bank.

Nineteenth-century master works will range from Blake's visionary watercolor Queen Katherine's Dream, to Daumier's wry crayon study of Two Lawyers, to Homer's Incoming Tide: Scarborough, Maine, in which he uses innovative broad color washes and explores the use of untouched portions of the white paper as one of the elements of color in the work. Also included will be Manet's watercolor The Man in the Tall Hat, a preliminary study for a figure which later appears in his oil The Old Musician, now in the Gallery's collections.

Picasso's extraordinary Self-Portrait done with crayon and watercolor during the artist's early twenties, Nolde's Head of Christ, and Kirchner's Nude Woman in Tub will be among the twentieth-century examples on view.

The twin purposes of the Gallery's graphics collection--aesthetic delight and art-historical illumination--will be further served when the

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Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts opens in 1979. The Study Center will provide the space necessary for the Gallery's entire graphics collection, part of which is now housed in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, and the remainder in the Gallery's West Building. Consolidation of the collection and its relocation in the Study Center will release space in the West Building which, in the future, will be converted into a large graphic art display area in which the whole range of the collection will be rotated on view, becoming, in effect, a national gallery of the graphic arts.

Among other exhibitions at the opening of the East Building will be:

The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting,
an exhibition from the German Democratic Republic

American Art at Mid-Century: The Subjects of the Artist

Piranesi: The Early Architectural Fantasies

Aspects of Twentieth-Century Art: I. Picasso and Cubism;
II. European Painting and Sculpture; III. Matisse--
Cutouts and "Jazz"

Small French Paintings from the Bequest of Ailsa Mellon Bruce

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