

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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NATIONAL GALLERY ANNOUNCES TWO ACQUISITIONS

OF EARLY GERMAN GRAPHICS

WASHINGTON, D. C. February 5, 1979. Two major works of early sixteenth-century German graphic art--a drawing by Hans Burgkmair entitled The Fight in the Forest and an etching by Albrecht Altdorfer entitled The Large Landscape with a Watermill--have been acquired by the National Gallery of Art. Both were purchased through the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund.

The two new works are now on view through February 28 with a selection of thirty-five fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German drawings and prints from the National Gallery's collection.

This exhibition, Early German Drawings and Prints: Two Recent Acquisitions and Related Works, celebrates the new acquisitions and explains their place in the Gallery's holdings. It is divided into two parts, each focused on one of the new works.

The first sets the context for the Burgkmair with a selection of pen drawings. This shows a stylistic development from mid-fifteenth-century simple outline strokes to mid-sixteenth-century mannered calligraphy. The Fight in the Forest is the first major Burgkmair drawing to enter an American collection. There is general agreement that it should be dated 1500-1505. Given this dating, the drawing becomes an unusually early masterpiece of Renaissance draftsmanship in the north. The subject of the drawing is secular, based on a Carolingian chivalric romance. A knight struggles with

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a wild man in the drawing; in the tale, the two become companions and discover later they are twin brothers.

The second part of the exhibition, designed around the Altdorfer, focuses on the subject of landscape. It also reflects something of the development of etching in northern Europe. Altdorfer was the first artist to create public works of art whose subject was pure landscape, with no other religious or narrative subject. Thus, the Altdorfer etching, The Large Landscape with a Watermill, is accompanied in the exhibition by notable landscapes in prints preceding the Altdorfer and by others that continued the tradition of pure landscape begun by him. Altdorfer's work in this area was inaugurated with a series of nine landscape etchings datable between 1515 and 1523. The Gallery's new acquisition is his largest and apparently his last.

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