

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

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SCHOLARLY PUBLICATION AND EXHIBITION FEATURE

16TH-CENTURY GRAPHICS OF CARRACCI FAMILY

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 8, 1979. To mark publication in April by the National Gallery of Art of Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family, the first catalogue raisonné published since 1818 of prints by the late sixteenth-century Carracci family of Bologna, the National Gallery will present the most comprehensive exhibition ever mounted of works on paper by the brothers Agostino (1557-1602) and Annibale (1560-1609) and their cousin Lodovico (1555-1619) Carracci. Also entitled Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family, the exhibition will open in the Gallery's West Building March 18 and continue through May 20.

The exhibition and the catalogue, both the result of the Gallery's continuing effort to initiate and support scholarly contributions, reflect the growing appreciation of Bolognese art. The style introduced and dominated by the Carracci at the end of the sixteenth century was characterized by their experiments with light and color, their rediscovery of classical and Renaissance forms and their intense interest in the natural world. This style redirected the course of Italian painting and graphic art from the prevalent "mannerist" style to one based on classical and ideal forms in simplified compositions, and soon spread to other parts of Europe.

The exhibition will present 162 prints, drawings and book illustrations, as well as original copper and silver plates, many of which have never before

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been displayed. The works have been lent from major public and private collections in Europe and the United States, among them the Albertina, the Louvre, the Uffizi, the British Museum, Windsor Castle, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

The comprehensive 536-page catalogue raisonné of the engravings and etchings of the Carracci has been prepared by Diane DeGrazia Bohlin, curator of Italian drawings at the National Gallery and organizer of the exhibition. Illustrated with more than 500 photographs of prints and related material, the catalogue contains entries on all prints including those generally accepted, those questioned and those which have been rejected from the oeuvres of Agostino, Annibale and Lodovico, as well as Francesco (c. 1595-1622), another member of the Carracci family. The introduction to the catalogue places the Carracci in their art-historical context and discusses the influences on their work, their choice of subject matter, technical working methods and reciprocal influence, and their importance to the history of prints. Also included are an appendix listing the publishers of Carracci prints, another comparing prints by artists indirectly related to Agostino and a third presenting letters supposedly written by Annibale and Agostino in 1580.

The exhibition focuses on the graphics of Agostino, the most prolific, and Annibale, the best-known of the Carracci, presenting within the full range of their works, their differing interests. Particularly in their prints, their differences become apparent: Agostino, a preeminent craftsman, concentrated on technical mastery of the medium, whereas Annibale preferred to use the medium to explore atmospheric effects and emotional nuances in human relationships.

After separate installations illustrating the chronological development of

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Agostino, Annibale, and Lodovico, and the works upon which Agostino and Annibale collaborated, the exhibition will offer sections devoted to examples of coats of arms, portraits, the Lascivie and other mythological works, and book illustrations. A final section will feature the Tazza Farnese, an elaborately engraved silver plate commissioned by Cardinal Odoardo Farnese, and the drawings for its decoration, a collaborative effort by Annibale and Agostino.

Complementing the Carracci exhibition and mounted in an adjacent gallery will be a selection of approximately 35 prints by artists who influenced the Carracci and those whom they influenced in turn. The selection will include loans from the Library of Congress and the Baltimore Museum of Art as well as examples from the National Gallery's collection.

Also in conjunction with the exhibition, the Gallery is sponsoring a symposium entitled "The Carracci and Italian Art Around 1600" on April 7 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the East Building auditorium. Participants include Professors Charles Dempsey of Bryn Mawr, Carl Goldstein of the University of North Carolina at Goldsboro, and Donald Pösnér of New York University's Institute of Fine Arts; and Richard E. Spear, Director of Oberlin College's Allen Memorial Art Museum; Stephen E. Ostrow, Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Southern California; Catherine Johnston, Assistant Curator of European Art at the National Gallery of Canada; Erich Schleier, Curator at the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin; and Clovis Whitfield of London.

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