

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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19TH-CENTURY ITALIAN DRAWINGS EXHIBITION OPENS MARCH 16

WASHINGTON, D. C. February 20, 1980. Italian art from the 15th through the 18th centuries has been the traditional centerpiece of the study of western art. Only recently, however, has 19th-century Italian art begun to come into its own. Italian Drawings 1780-1890, the first exhibition of its kind in Washington, attempts to survey the evolution and achievements of Italian draftsmanship in the period 1780 to 1890.

This period was infused with a spirit of change in the political as well as the artistic sphere. In 1780, an indigenously unified Italy appeared out of the question. The peninsula had been fought over and carved up by European monarchs for centuries, and most citizens identified with a particular city or region. By the end of 1870, the modern state of Italy had emerged and in subsequent decades completed its solidification.

Italian Drawings 1780-1890, opening in the National Gallery of Art's West Building March 16, shows the evolution of Italian art during the turbulent century and at the same time illuminates the developing national consciousness.

This exhibition consists of 102 drawings, many seen for the first time in the United States. It offers a survey of styles ranging from Neoclassicism and Purism through Romanticism, Naturalism and Realism to Symbolism, Divisionism and the precursors of 20th-century movements. Among the artists are Giuseppe

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Cades, a Neoclassicist; Giovanni Fattori, whose stylistic development extended from Romanticism to Realism; and Giovanni Segantini, whose most powerful work reflects his interest in Divisionism.

Major Italian collections contributing to the exhibition are the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe and the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome, the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi in Florence and the Civico Gabinetto dei Disegni, Castello Sforzesco in Milan. Other loans are being made by U. S. collections, both public and private.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with introduction and entries by Dr. Roberta J. M. Olson, curator of the exhibition and Assistant Professor of Art History at Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts. Dr. Olson will deliver a lecture entitled "The Renaissance of Nineteenth-Century Italian Art" at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 4, in the National Gallery's East Building auditorium. The lecture is open to the public at no charge.

Italian Drawings 1780-1890, an exhibition organized by The American Federation of Arts and supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, will also be shown at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (July 11 - September 7, 1980) and the Achenbach Center for Graphic Arts of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco (November 8, 1980 - January 4, 1981).

It will remain on view at the Gallery through May 11.

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