

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CORREGGIO AND HIS LEGACY: SIXTEENTH-CENTURY EMILIAN DRAWINGS AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C. January 20, 1984. An important exhibition which traces the influence of the sixteenth-century Emilian artist Antonio Allegri, called Correggio, opens in the National Gallery of Art's West Building Ground Floor Galleries on March 11, 1984. This is the first survey of sixteenth-century Emilian drawings to be presented in the United States. It remains on view through May 13, 1984.

By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, Correggio was considered by artists and writers to be the equal of the finest Renaissance masters, surpassed only by Raphael. His greatest achievement was his ability to combine light, atmosphere and movement with naturalistic forms. In addition, Correggio's predilection for red chalk, red washes, and white heightening contributed to the predominance of color and coloristic effects in sixteenth-century Emilian drawings.

This exhibition concentrates on Correggio's immediate following, his critical fortunes in his own region and century, and the dissemination of his highly individual style. Thirty-one artists are represented.

The twenty-six drawings by Correggio on view represent approximately one-fourth of his known graphic oeuvre, and date from all periods of his short career. They reveal that, in all cases,

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Correggio's drawings were not made as ends in themselves but as compositional or figure studies in preparation for paintings. Works included range from his earliest drawings, dependent on north Italian traditions, to his mature studies which exhibit a loose handling of predominantly red chalk, resulting in the dissolution of contours and a heightened sense of atmospheric effects.

Correggio's immediate influence in Parma, where he had decorated the Camera di S. Paolo in 1519, is demonstrated with drawings by several Parmese artists. Giorgio Gandini del Grano and, more importantly, Parmigianino, continued aspects of Correggio's typology and composition.

After Correggio, Parmigianino is the best known Emilian draftsman of the first half of the sixteenth century. The twenty drawings by Parmigianino, selected from more than eight hundred known to be by his hand, display his early dependence on Correggio as well as the range of subject matter and virtuoso techniques in his later work.

Correggio's atmospheric effects continued to be influential in Parma and Emilia through mid-century, both directly and as transformed by Parmigianino. The drawings of Gandini, the Sieneese-educated Michelangelo Anselmi, Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli, Nicolò dell'Abate, Lelio Orsi, and Jacopo Bertola all give evidence of stylistic debts, in varying degrees, to one of these two Parmese masters.

At the end of the sixteenth century, all three Carracci--Lodovico, Agostino, and Annibale--returned to the naturalism of Correggio as an antidote to the prevalent Bolognese mannerism. Annibale Carracci and his fellow Bolognese artist Pietro Faccini, in particular, incorporated elements of Correggio's art into their own. Thus Correggio remained a strong part of the regional heritage at the end of the century; a

heritage transmitted to later generations through Faccini and the Carracci.

The curator of the exhibition is Diane DeGrazia of the National Gallery's Prints and Drawings Department. The fully-illustrated scholarly catalogue by Ms. DeGrazia includes an essay by Eugenio Riccòmini, Superintendent for artistic and cultural works for Parma and Piacenza. A brochure, with an overview of the exhibition, is also available. Correggio and His Legacy will travel to the Galleria Nazionale in Parma (June 3--July 15, 1984) where it will be accompanied by an Italian edition of the catalogue.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Public Information), or Marla Price, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565 (202)842-6353.