

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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OLD MASTER DRAWINGS FROM THE ALBERTINA  
AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. February 24, 1984. Seventy-five old master drawings from the world-famous Albertina in Vienna will be shown at the National Gallery of Art in Washington and at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York next fall and spring. This major exhibition was announced today (February 29, 1984) on the occasion of the state visit of the President of the Federal Republic of Austria, Rudolf Kirchsclaeger.

The exhibition will coincide with the bicentennial of political and economic relations between Austria and the United States. The honorary patron of the exhibition is H. E. Thomas Klestil, Austrian Ambassador to the United States.

Entitled Old Master Drawings from the Albertina, the selection will include drawings by some of the greatest draftsman of all time - Michelangelo, Raphael, Durer, Cranach, Bruegel, Rubens, van Dyck, Rembrandt, Poussin, Claude and Fragonard, among others. Some, such as Durer's Praying Hands, have never before been seen outside the Albertina.

Preparations for the exhibition, which have been in progress for almost two decades, have been made by Ambassador Klestil, Dr. Wilhelm Schlag, Ministry of Science and Research, Walter Koschatzky, Director of the Albertina, J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, Charles A. Ryskamp, Director of the Pierpont Morgan Library, Andrew Robison, Senior Curator of the National Gallery, who made the selection of drawings with Dr. Koschatzky, and

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Mrs. John A. Pope, President of the International Exhibitions Foundation, the administering organization. The exhibition is supported by a grant from United Technologies Corporation.

The drawings represent the great periods of art from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. A wide range of subjects -- portraits, landscapes, religious and historical themes, figure studies and genre scenes -- reflect the work of fifty-six masters of the major schools of Italy, Germany, The Netherlands and France. Among the renowned and rare examples will be, in addition to Dürer's Praying Hands, also his View of Antwerp Harbor, Hans Baldung Grien's Witches Sabbath, Holbein's Two Angels Holding an Escutcheon, Rembrandt's An Elephant, Pieter Brueghel's Painter and Connoisseur, Rubens' The Assumption of the Virgin, van Dyck's Portrait of Artus Wolfaert, Michelangelo's Seated Male Nude, Raphael's The Muse Erato, Lorenzo Lotto's Bust of a Young Man, Claude's Tiber River Landscape with Promontory, Watteau's Two Studies of a Young Woman, and Fragonard's Marguerite Gérard Sketching.

The Albertina, a former Austrian royal palace, houses one of the largest and richest collections of drawings in the world, an extraordinary assemblage of more than 50,000 works of art. Begun in 1769 by Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738-1822) and his wife Marie Christine, the favorite daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa, the Albertina acquired its name in 1873 as a tribute to Duke Albert. The royal couple shared a deep interest in the arts, and collected graphic art -- drawings and prints -- of exceptional quality and on a scale that came to represent a vast fortune. The most significant event in the early development of the Albertina occurred in the mid-1770s when the royal couple took possession of a collection which Count Giacomo Durazzo, Austria's emissary to Venice, had amassed at Albert's instigation. The collection was accompanied by a systematic concept for its expansion, the

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Discorso Preliminare, in which Durazzo set down principles that Albert followed (and which have held to this day). In 1776, he acquired the priceless collection of drawings from the Imperial Library, which had been kept in the Schatzkammer, the Hapsburg repository of ecclesiastical and secular treasures.

After the First World War, the Republic of Austria assumed ownership of the Albertina. In 1920, the collection was joined with the larger Print Room of the former Imperial Library, a merger that resulted in the present collection's huge size and unparalleled quality.

Old Master Drawings from the Albertina will be accompanied by a 256-page catalogue, in which each drawing will be reproduced in color, and, wherever possible, actual size. It will include a history of the Albertina, written by Dr. Walter Koschatzky, and a scholarly analysis of each drawing.

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