

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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## THE ART OF ROSSO FIORENTINO TO OPEN AT NATIONAL GALLERY

### First U.S. Exhibition Ever Devoted Solely to 16th-Century Italian Renaissance Artist

October 1, 1987 - The first exhibition in the United States ever devoted solely to the works and designs of 16th-century Italian Renaissance artist Rosso Fiorentino opens Oct. 25 at the National Gallery of Art's West Building. Rosso Fiorentino Drawings, Prints and Decorative Arts consists of 117 objects, including 28 drawings by Rosso, 80 prints after his compositions, majolica and enamel platters, and tapestries made from his designs. On view through Jan. 3, 1988, the exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Giovanni Battista di Jacopo (1494-1540), best known as Rosso Fiorentino, worked in Florence from 1513 until 1524, when he went to Rome. He left the city during the infamous Sack of Rome in 1527, wandering about Italy until 1530, when he went to France to work for King Francis I at Fontainebleau. Rosso began his career with a style modeled on the art of the Florentine Renaissance, but he is now seen as one of the founders of the anticlassical style called Mannerism. An intense and eccentric individual, Rosso was internationally famous in the 16th century while today he is most readily recognized for his work at Fontainebleau and for the great impact of his Italian style on French art.

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"Never before have so many of Rosso's drawings been assembled for one exhibition," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery. "This exhibition provides a unique opportunity to see together many of Rosso's drawings, as well as a significant number of his great compositions translated as etchings, engravings, ceramics and tapestries."

Among the works in the exhibition are Pluto in a Niche, a drawing by Rosso made for the series of Gods in Niches engraved by Gian Jacopo Caraglio in Rome in 1526, Pandora and Her Box, a drawing done in France around 1536, and Empedocles - Saint Roch, a drawing of around 1540. Two tapestries, now in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and never before exhibited in the United States, have undergone special conservation for the exhibition. Also on view will be several majolica and enamel plates with compositions by Rosso, such as Hercules Killing the Hydra (1535) from his series depicting the labors of Hercules.

Dr. Eugene A. Carroll of Vassar College, a leading authority on Rosso, is the guest curator and author of the catalogue accompanying the exhibition. "This is an enormously exciting exhibition," said Dr. Carroll. "The opportunity to study the artist's drawings, as well as prints made after lost drawings, is truly unparalleled. We will be able to see and understand the entire span of Rosso's work, during his early great Italian period as well as the years 1530-1540 when he was at the French court at Fontainebleau."

H. Diane Russell, curator of prints and drawings at the National Gallery, is the coordinating curator of the exhibition. Rosso Fiorentino Drawings, Prints and Decorative Arts will be seen only in Washington and closes Jan. 3, 1988. A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

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# National Gallery of Art

*Washington, D.C.*

In 1526 Rosso Fiorentino wrote to Michelangelo, who was then at the height of his fame as the foremost painter in Italy, to defend himself from accusations and rumors that he had spoken disparagingly of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. A shortened version of the letter follows:

To the magnificent Michelangelo Buonarroti, happiness.

Though I have thought of writing to you for a long while, I feared that I may simply be burdening you more than anything else, and thus I kept putting it off. I beg you to forgive me, and ascribe everything to my sincere affection, and to my fear of losing what I do not deserve to lose: that is your favor, which to me is dearer than all else.

As you know, there are many people who, when they can't stick their heads into something, find some way to stick their tails in; there are a few people here who have tried with all their strength to do with me that which their evil natures do with others. But by the grace of God I discovered part of their ugly doings. Since these things touch upon my honor, I could not let them pass without perturbation. Nevertheless, because I believed in the high truth, I tolerated them patiently, especially since I had heard in several letters that you, in your grace and goodness, defended me several times. But those corrupt people so eager to do evil, seeing that they could not hurt me as they had wished, have tried a new way. So that, although I have confidence in the integrity and wisdom of your judgement, and in my own innocence, I nevertheless decided to break my silence, for this thing touches me to the quick. For I understand that you have been told that when I arrived here and entered the chapel you painted, I am supposed to have said that I would not adopt that manner (of painting). It must be self-evident how

silly that is. I am certain that your judgment is capable of penetrating any and all matters, not to speak of this silly matter; and the greatness of your spirit allows me to be confident that you have little desire to listen to such tales. Nevertheless, I thought I could not refrain from taking the proper steps to eliminate whatever sourness might enter your or other people's feelings toward me. For I tell you herewith, that whoever said that lied in his teeth, and I am ready to challenge in any way whoever says otherwise. And not only that, but also whoever says that I have ever spoken of the chapel other than as something divinely made. Not only of that work, but of you and all your other works - if not as they deserved, at least as much as I was capable. Wherefore I urge you to judge me according to your good spirit, and accept me in your thoughts that way, and not according to those who wish me ill.

I can express but a small part of my sentiments; but with confidence in your good mind, I will stop here. Finally, I beg you to keep me in your good graces, as up to this day, to which I continually commend myself.

From Rome, this 6th day of October 1526, from your very devoted servant,

Rosso Fiorentino

# National Gallery of Art

*Washington, D.C.*

ROSSO FIORENTINO  
DRAWINGS, PRINTS AND DECORATIVE ARTS

October 25, 1987 - January 3, 1988

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

¶ - color transparency available  
§ - black and white photograph available

All drawings in the exhibition are by Rosso Fiorentino. All prints, except for the portrait of Rosso Fiorentino (cat. no. 1), were executed after Rosso's compositions by various other artists. Dates in brackets refer to the date the image was composed by Rosso, rather than the date the print was made.

<u>Catalogue Number</u>	<u>Title</u>
1 §	<u>Portrait of Rosso Fiorentino</u> , woodcut by Cristofano Coriolano, after Giorgio Vasari, 1568 credit: Washington, National Gallery of Art Library
2	<u>Allegory of Death and Fame</u> , engraving by Agostino Veneziano, [1517] credit: London, The British Museum
3 §	<u>Standing Nude Woman</u> , red chalk over black chalk, c. 1520 credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
4	<u>Virtue Vanquishing Fortune</u> , red chalk over black chalk, c. 1521 - 1522 credit: Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum
5 §	<u>Seated Male Nude</u> , red chalk, c. 1523 credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
6 §	<u>Seated Nude Woman</u> , red chalk, 1524 credit: Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland
7	<u>Saint Roch Distributing His Inheritance</u> , red chalk, 1524 credit: Paris, Jean-Jacques Lebel Collection

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- 8 ¶ Fury, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 9 Hercules Fighting Cerberus, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 10 Hercules Shooting Nessus, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 11 § Hercules Killing the Hydra, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 12 § Hercules Fighting the Centaurs, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland
- 13 Hercules Overpowering the River Achelous, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 14 Hercules Fighting Cacus, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 15 Plate with "Hercules Killing the Hydra," Majolica from the workshop of Guido Durantino, 1535  
credit: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum
- 16 Plaque with "Hercules Fighting the Centaurs," enamel in grisaille on copper by Leonard Limosin, 16th century  
credit: The Hague, Rijksmuseum
- 17 Challenge of the Pierides, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 18 Platter with "The Challenge of the Pierides," Majolica, 16th century  
credit: Washington, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
- 19 Pluto in a Niche, red chalk and red wash over black chalk, 1526  
credit: Lyons, Musee des Arts Decoratifs
- 20 Bacchus in a Niche, red chalk and red wash over black chalk, 1526  
credit: Besancon, Musee des Beaux-Arts et d'Archeologie

- 21-40                    Gods in Niches, 20 engravings by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1526
- 21 §                    Saturn  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 22                      Ops  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 23 §                    Jupiter  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 24                      Juno  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 25                      Neptune  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 26                      Thetis  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 27 §                    Pluto  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 28                      Proserpina  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 29                      Mars  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 30                      Venus  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 31                      Apollo  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 32                      Diana  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 33                      Mercury  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

- 34 § Ceres  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 35 Hercules  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 36 Hebe  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 37 Bacchus  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 38 Ariadne  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 39 Vulcan  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 40 § Minerva  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 41 Plaque with the Goddess Ops, enamel in grisaille on copper by Leonard Limosin, 16th century  
credit: Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery
- 42-43 The Loves of the Gods, 2 engravings by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1527
- 42 Pluto and Proserpina  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 43 Saturn and Philyra  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 44 Dish with "Saturn and Philyra," Majolica attributed to Francesco Durantino, mid-16th century  
credit: London, The Victoria and Albert Museum
- 45 Standing Nude Youth, grey chalk heightened with white, 1527  
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre
- 46 Profile Head of a Young Woman, black chalk, 1527  
credit: Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Art Museums

- 47                    Battle of the Romans and the Sabines, engraving  
by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1527  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 48                    Adoration of the Magi, engraving by Cherubino  
Alberti, [1527]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 49                    Copy of Michelangelo's Apollo, red chalk over  
traces of black chalk, 1527  
credit: New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library
- 50                    Ideal Bust of a Woman, black chalk, 1527  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 51                    Reclining Male Nude, pen and ink, 1527  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 52                    Stoning of Saint Stephen, engraving by Cherubino  
Alberti, [1528]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 53 §                  Agony in the Garden, engraving by Cherubino  
Alberti, [1529]  
credit: New York, The New York Public Library
- 54                    Standing Apostle, red chalk over black chalk, 1529  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 55                    Design for an Altar, pen and ink and wash,  
heightened with white, over black chalk, 1529  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 56                    Altar, engraving by Cherubino Alberti, [1529]  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and  
Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 57                    Mars and Venus, pen and ink, brown wash heightened  
with white over black chalk, 1530  
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre
- 58                    Mars and Venus, anonymous engraving, [1530]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 59 §                  Judith with the Head of Holofernes, engraving by  
Rene Boyvin, [1530 - 1531]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

- 60 § ¶ Annunciation, pen and ink and brown wash, heightened with white over black chalk, 1531 or 1532  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 61 Annunciation, anonymous engraving, [1531 or 1532]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 62 § Saint Paul and Saint Peter, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1530 - 1532]  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi
- 63 Saint Jerome, red and black chalks, 1531 - 1532  
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre
- 64 Narcissus, engraving by Etienne Delaune, [1531 or 1532]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 65 Vertumnus and Pomona, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1532 - mid-1533]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 66 Cartouche with Satyrs, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1532 - mid-1533]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 67 Ornamental Panel Illustrating Petrarch's Vision on the Death of Laura, pen and brown ink, grey-brown wash heightened with white, 1534  
credit: Oxford, Christ Church
- 68 § The Three Fates, Costume Designs, engraving by Pierre Milan, [c. 1534]  
credit: Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art
- 69 The Three Fates, Costume Designs, engraving by Pierre Milan, [c. 1534] on blue paper  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 70 ¶ Saint Denis (Dionysius the Areopagite) in a Niche, pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white, over black chalk, 1535 or 1536  
credit: Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Kunstbibliothek
- 71 Cartouche with Nudes, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum

- 72 Allegorical Scene of Rage and Madness, anonymous etching, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 73 Two Groups of Three Putti, anonymous engraving, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 74 The Revenge of the Nauplius, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 75 The Funeral of Hector, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett
- 76 The Death of Adonis, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1536]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 77 The Death of Adonis, wool and silk tapestry, [1536]  
credit: Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum
- 78 Fame, engraving by Domenico del Barbieri, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 79 The Nymph of Fontainebleau, engraving by Pierre Milan, completed by Rene Boyvin, [1536]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 80 The Twins of Catania, engraving by Rene Boyvin [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 81 Caritas Romana, anonymous engraving, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 82 Cleobis and Biton, silk and wool tapestry, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum
- 83 The Royal Elephant, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1532 - 1534]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 84 The Rape of Europa, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [c. 1534 - 1536]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

- 85                    Saturn and Philyra, engraving by Rene Boyvin,  
[c. 1534 - 1536]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 86                    The Unity of the State, etching by Antonio  
Fantuzzi, [c. 1532 - 1534]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 87                    The Sacrifice, engraving by Etienne Delaune,  
[c. 1532 - 1534]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 88                    The Sacrifice, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi,  
[late 1536 - 1537]  
credit: Poughkeepsie, Vassar College Art Gallery
- 89                    The Dance of the Dryads, engraving by Pierre  
Milan, [c. 1532 - 1534]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 90                    Dish with "The Dance of the Dryads," enamel  
attributed to Jean Court, named Vigier,  
16th century  
credit: The Chatsworth House Trust
- 91                    The Enlightenment of Francis I, engraving by Rene  
Boyvin, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 92                    The Enlightenment of Francis I, etching by  
Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 93                    Draped Youth Leaning on a Block,  
anonymous etching, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 94                    Fortune Giving a Drink to a Young Prince, etching  
by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1532 - 1534]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 95 § ¶                Pandora and Her Box, pen and ink and wash over  
traces of black chalk, c. 1536  
credit: Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts
- 96                    Contest of Athena and Poseidon, etching by  
Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1536]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 97                    Seated Male Nude, red chalk, c. 1536  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 98                    The Martyrdom of Saints Marcus and Marcellinus,  
red chalk over black chalk, c. 1537  
credit: Northampton, Smith College Museum of Art

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- 99                    Allegory on the Birth of Christ, etching by  
Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1537]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 100                   Allegory on the Birth of Christ, etching  
attributed to Master I.O.V., [c. 1537]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 101                   Pieta, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1537]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 102                   Leda and the Swan after Michelangelo, black chalk,  
c. 1538  
credit: London, Royal Academy of Arts
- 103                   Holy Family in a Cartouche, anonymous etching,  
[c. 1538]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 104                   Apollo Holding a Lyre, pen and grayish ink and  
wash, 1537 or 1538  
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre
- 105                   The Three Fates, Nude, engraving by Pierre Milan,  
[1538 - 1540]  
credit: London, The British Museum
- 106                   Cephalus and Procris in Two Niches, engraving by  
Rene Boyvin, [1538 - 1540]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina
- 107                   Figure Costumed as Hercules, anonymous etching,  
[1539]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 108                   The Dream of Hercules, engraving by Rene Boyvin,  
[1539]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 109 ¶                 Empedocles - Saint Roch, red chalk over traces of  
black chalk, 1539 or 1540  
credit: Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum
- 110                   Empedocles, engraving by Rene Boyvin,  
[1539 or 1540]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 111                   Christ the Redeemer in a Niche, anonymous  
engraving, [1538 - 1540]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 112                   Design for a Tomb, pen and ink and wash over  
traces of black chalk, 1539 or 1540  
credit: London, The British Museum

- 113                    Holy Family with Saint Anne, chiaroscuro woodcut  
in three blocks by Master NDB, [1539 - 1540]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 114                    Holy Family with Saint Anne, anonymous engraving,  
[1539 - 1540]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale
- 115                    Madonna and Child with a Book, engraving by Rene  
Boyvin, [1538 - 1540]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 116                    Judith and Holofernes, red chalk over traces of  
black chalk, 1540  
credit: Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County  
Museum of Art
- 117                    The Visitation [?], red chalk, 1540  
credit: Paris, Jean-Jacques Lebel Collection

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