

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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FOURTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215/842-6353

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CONTACT: Tina Coplan
Liz Kimball
(202) 842-6353

"HOMAGE TO JACQUES CALLOT" AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

SPOTLIGHTS THE BAROQUE ARTIST'S SPLENDID PRINTS

Washington, D.C. -- Honoring master French printmaker Jacques Callot's birth four centuries ago, a selective exhibition of his finest etchings and engravings will be on view in the National Gallery's East Building from March 29 to September 7, 1992.

A consummate draftsman and elegant documenter of an epoch, Callot worked for some of the most illustrious figures of the early seventeenth century: Cosimo II de' Medici; Louis XIII, King of France; and the Spanish Infanta, Isabella. Collected by cognoscenti through the ages, his work influenced later printmakers, including Rembrandt.

Homage to Jacques Callot features fifty of the artist's best-loved works, drawn from the National Gallery's extensive holdings.

"Thanks to the generous gifts of connoisseurs Rudolf L. Baumfeld and Lessing J. Rosenwald, the Gallery has one of the world's great collections of Callot prints," said J. Carter Brown, director of the Gallery. "Callot's anniversary offers an ideal moment to view again the virtuoso prints of this delightful and significant graphic artist."

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During his brief life of forty-three years, Callot produced more than 1,400 prints and over 2,000 drawings. Born in Nancy in 1592, he became court artist to the Medici in Florence at age twenty-two and spent most of his life at the ducal courts of Tuscany and Lorraine. His depictions of theatrical performances, court festivals, and warfare brilliantly convey the social and political climate of the early baroque period.

A master of technique, Callot skillfully blended reality with fertile invention, boldness with sophisticated refinement. His strong sense of composition and ability to create dramatic, spacious effects is demonstrated in the prints on display. The Fair at Impruneta (1620) infuses a ceremonial out-of-doors pageant with wit and excitement. The Stag Hunt (c. 1620) charges a carefully ordered composition with kinetic energy and atmosphere. Richly interwoven with areas of light and dark, Temptation of St. Anthony (1635) conveys the ravaged afflictions of sin.

H. Diane Russell, curator of old master prints at the National Gallery, selected the works on exhibit. The last Gallery exhibition of the artist's work, Jacques Callot: Prints and Related Drawings, a retrospective, took place in 1975.

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