

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 17, 1993

CONTACT: Ruth Kaplan  
Tina Coplan  
(202) 842-6353

## LOVIS CORINTH PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

### PRESENTED FOR FIRST TIME AT NATIONAL GALLERY

Washington, D.C. -- Prints and drawings by Lovis Corinth (1858-1925), one of the most important figures in turn-of-the-century German art, will be on view in the National Gallery of Art's East Building from September 12, 1993, through February 21, 1994. The show of seventy-four works includes rare artist's proofs and many extremely fine impressions.

The exhibition celebrates the gift to the Gallery of 134 works from the Sigbert H. Marcy family. Marcy had been a close friend and patron of the artist's and was able to choose prints of the highest quality.

"Our first presentation of Corinth's art is possible thanks to the magnificent gifts and promised gifts of the Marcy family," said Earl A. Powell III, the National Gallery's director. "Their largesse will make the Gallery a leading American center for the study of prints by this major German artist."

Spanning the artist's range of interests, Lovis Corinth: Master Prints and Drawings from the Marcy Family and the National Gallery of Art includes nudes, portraits, self-portraits, mythological and religious scenes, interiors, and the late landscapes that remain among the most popular images of his oeuvre. Represented are such varied media as etching, drypoint,

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lithography, and woodcut.

A painter, draftsman, and accomplished printmaker, Corinth experimented with a range of styles over the course of his career. While committed to the realist tradition, he continually sought to enlarge the boundaries of its expressive potential, to "extend conventions rather than to shatter them," as he put it.

He became a leading exponent of the avant-garde movement, evolving a distinctly personal style that took him far from the academic naturalism of his training. Considered an artist's artist, Corinth ceaselessly pursued an appropriate match between image and technique to achieve a Germanic rather than an international or French form. At the time of his death in 1925, art critic Julius Meier-Graefe called him "the last great German artist who still has something essential to say."

The graphic arts were central to Corinth's oeuvre. He made his first etching in 1891 and his first lithograph in 1894. By the early 1920s he was producing more than 100 prints each year including many self-portraits, using the media to explore new ideas and refine his skills.

Drawings were an equally significant part of his art. Corinth began drawing seriously in 1876, the year he entered art school. Believing that draftsmanship was critical to art, he produced more than 2,000 drawings during his life.

Born in 1858, Franz Heinrich Louis Corinth was raised in the small East Prussian farming community of Tapiaw. His father, a

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farmer, supported his son's decision to become an artist and provided him with the means for economic independence throughout his life.

Having attended art school at the Königsberg Academy and the Munich Academy, Corinth moved to Paris in 1884. He studied for three years at the Académie Julian. After returning to Munich in 1890, he became a founding member of the Secession, an artist's association of 107 members that promised better opportunities for exhibition and promotion. In 1901 Corinth relocated to Berlin, attracted by its prominence as an art and commercial center.

Charlotte Berend, one of his students there, became his wife in 1903 when he was forty-three and she twenty-one. She was the model for an estimated eighty oil paintings and many prints. After Corinth suffered a stroke in 1911, death began to haunt his life and became a recurring theme in his work, as in his print The Artist and Death (1916). However Corinth's productivity continued after his stroke, and he became president of the Berlin Secession in 1915, a post he retained until he died in 1925.

The Marcy family, who came to America in 1941, the year the National Gallery was founded, made their gift in memory of Sigbert H. Marcy and in honor of the Gallery's 50th anniversary.

Andrew Robison, Andrew W. Mellon senior curator, and Christopher With, coordinating curator of art information, are joint curators of the exhibition and contributors to the exhibition catalogue.

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