

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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UNPRECEDENTED EXHIBITION OF RENAISSANCE DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS
INCLUDES MASTERWORKS
BY SCHONGAUER, DÜRER, GRÜNEWALD, CRANACH, AND HOLBEIN;
AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, OCTOBER 24, 1999- JANUARY 9, 2000

Washington, D.C. - From Schongauer to Holbein: Master Drawings from Basel and Berlin is an unprecedented exhibition of master drawings and watercolors by many of the greatest Renaissance artists in Germany and Switzerland. It will be on view in the National Gallery of Art's West Building – its only U.S. venue – October 24, 1999 through January 9, 2000. This presentation of almost two hundred Renaissance works from 1465 to 1545 comes from two of the foremost collections of these drawings in the world, the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel and the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and includes Martin Schongauer, Hans Holbein the Elder, Albrecht Dürer, Mathis Grünewald, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Hans Baldung Grien, Urs Graf, Albrecht Altdorfer, Wolf Huber, and Hans Holbein the Younger. Mini-surveys of their works reflect their development as well as their variety of style and subject.

The exhibition is made possible by UBS AG.

"The Gallery has long been devoted to collecting and exhibiting early German and Swiss art, and this rich and varied showing of Renaissance drawings makes the finest works available to our visitors. We are delighted that our colleagues in Berlin and Basel have so generously agreed to share many of their greatest treasures. We also welcome UBS AG as a generous, first-time exhibition sponsor," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

"UBS is extremely proud to sponsor this exhibition of treasured works from such an important period in the development of art. The works of these Renaissance masters convey astonishing expressive power and offer an enlightening glimpse at a significant era," said Carlo Grigioni, General Manager of UBS' Private Banking Division in the Americas. "As we extend our support of the arts in America, UBS is delighted to share the enjoyment of these vitally important works with the National Gallery's friends and visitors."

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master drawings...page 2

The exhibition begins with some of the finest late medieval drawings, which are anonymous, and continues with larger groups of works by known artists at the end of the fifteenth century, such as Martin Schongauer and Hans Holbein the Elder. The rise of individuality, which is characteristic of the Renaissance, is seen not only in personal artistic styles, but also in the new prominence of portraiture and emphasis on diverse personalities.

The towering artistic figure of Albrecht Dürer is thoroughly represented with three dozen masterworks of every period and type, including works in pen and ink, watercolor, silverpoint, chalk and charcoal, and in pen and white on colored papers prepared with various tints of wash. Also shown are drawings on woodblocks intended to be carved to prepare woodcuts. Together, these works represent Dürer's powerful personal style – a combination of his origins in the old German, medieval workshop tradition of exquisite craftsmanship and of his mastery of the newest Renaissance concepts of perspective, proportion, and anatomy.

The intense emotion and imagination of Grünewald, Lucas Cranach, Hans Baldung Grien, and Urs Graf are also fully shown, as are the spirited visions of forested nature by Albrecht Altdorfer and Wolf Huber. The exhibition concludes with a rich selection of every type of drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger. He is the first truly international German artist who was born and trained in Augsburg, but worked primarily in Basel and for the highest realms of the court in London, as well as in France, Denmark, and Flanders.

The curator for the exhibition is Andrew Robison, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator at the Gallery. A fully illustrated catalogue written by experts in Basel and Berlin will be available in softcover in the Gallery Shops and through the Gallery Web site at www.nga.gov. To order by phone, call (301) 322-5900 or (800) 697-9350.

Additional support for the exhibition has been provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. Support for the catalogue has been provided by Pro Helvetia, Arts Council of Switzerland. The brochure is made possible by The Circle of the National Gallery of Art.

The Washington exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art in collaboration with the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel and the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

The National Gallery of Art, located on the National Mall at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. Admission is free. For general information, call (202) 737-4215; call the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176 or visit the National Gallery of Art's Web site at www.nga.gov. To receive the Gallery's free bimonthly Calendar of Events, call (202) 842-6662.

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