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From Dürer to Ruscha: Exceptional Works on Paper Dating from the 15th Century On View at the National Gallery Of Art, May 4–November 2, 2008



pictured above left:

Jean Poyet, French, c. 1445 – before 1504

The Coronation of Solomon at the Spring at Gihon, c. 1500

pen and black ink with watercolor and white heightening

National Gallery of Art, Washington

Patrons' Permanent Fund, 2006

pictured above right:

Solomon Telingater, Russian, 1903 – 1969

Central Theater of the Red Army: First Cavalry, 1930

collage of photomechanical reproductions with brush and ink and gouache over graphite on gray–green paper

National Gallery of Art, Washington

Patrons' Permanent Fund, 2005

Washington, DC – Since 2003, the National Gallery of Art has acquired an exceptional group of drawings, prints, and rare illustrated books, which are the focus of the upcoming exhibition *Medieval to Modern: Recent Acquisitions of Drawings, Prints,*

and Illustrated Books, on view May 4 through November 2, 2008, in the West Building Prints and Drawings Galleries.

The 209 objects on view range from the 15th century, including one of the earliest European engravings and the first image printed in multiple colors to 21st century works by Chuck Close (b. 1940), Martin Puryear (b. 1941), Ed Ruscha (b. 1937), and Fred Wilson (b. 1954). Among the most important works exhibited will be the finest surviving drawing by Antonio Canaletto (1697–1768), *The Maundy Thursday Festival before the Ducal Palace in Venice* (c. 1765), from the recently acquired Wolfgang Ratjen Collection of 185 Italian and German drawings from 1530 through 1900.

"We have been incredibly fortunate in the past few years to have acquired so many outstanding works on paper," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "This exhibition offers visitors a chance to see these recent acquisitions, which reflect the quality and breadth of our larger collection of works on paper."

Exhibition Support

The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art. The exhibition is supported in part by a generous grant from the Thaw Charitable Trust.

The Exhibition

The exhibition is arranged chronologically through eight rooms. The first room will feature late Gothic and Renaissance works, including Hieronymus de Sanctis' *The Eclipse of the Moon and The Eclipse of the Sun* (1485), printed in multiple colors by innovative publisher Erhard Radolt. One of the earliest European engravings by the Master of Saint John the Baptist (1440s) and one of the first European books with printed illustrations, the blockbook *Biblia Pauperum*, (1460s) are also on view.

Drawings will include Albrecht Dürer's (1471–1528) exquisite gouache heightened with gold, *A Pastoral Landscape with Shepherds Playing a Viola and Panpipes* (1496/1497), and one of the earliest French drawings on paper, the delicate and sensitive landscape watercolor *The Coronation of Solomon by the Spring of Gihon* (c. 1500) by Jean Poyet (c. 1445–before 1504). Among the German and Italian

Renaissance drawings exhibited will be works by Fra Bartolommeo (1472–1517), Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), Domenico Beccafumi (c. 1485–1551), and Giulio Clovio (1498–1578).

The second room will feature works from the 17th century, including two etchings by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669): the charming, light-filled *A Peasant Family Walking* (c. 1634) and the moving *Abraham Entertaining the Angels* (1656). Jean Morin's (c. 1600–1650) etching with engraving *Still Life with a Skull and a Vase of Roses (after Philippe de Champagne)* (1645/1650) is both rare and filled with symbolic realism.

The third room will highlight 18th century works, including a stunning chalk drawing by François Boucher, *Aurora Heralding the Arrival of the Morning Sun* (1765/1767), Johann Christoph Deitzsch's (1710–1769) prickly still life *A Thistle with Insects* (c. 1750), and Richard Cosway's (1741–1821) portrait of his wife Maria, who had infatuated Thomas Jefferson. Charles Moette's etching *The Dog Paddle* (1696) from Melchisedech Thevenot's (1620 or 1621–1692) *L'Art de Nager*, is one of the first books to teach people how to swim.

The fourth room will present works from the early 19th century, including one of Joseph Mallord William Turner's (1775–1851) most beautiful late watercolors, *Oberwesel*, (1840), recently on view in last fall's *J.M.W. Turner* exhibition. Early panoramas of New York City are interpreted in John Hill's (1770–1850) hand-colored etchings *New York from Weehawk* (1823) and *New York from the Heights near Brooklyn* (1823), which are widely considered among the most beautiful views of the city from the period. Charles de Wolf Brownell's (1822–1909) dreamlike watercolor *East River, Sunrise* (1862) offers an impressionistic perspective of the city and the river.

The fifth room will include works from the second half of the 19th century and will introduce a series of masterworks in pastel by Edgar Degas (1834–1917), Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), Lovis Corinth (1858–1925), and William Merritt Chase (1849–1916). Dante Gabriel Rossetti's (1828–1882) eerie and emotionally intense chalk drawing *Desdemona's Death-Song* (c. 1875/1880) will be surrounded by two haunting symbolist drawings by Frederick Trap Friis. A series of intriguing and unique works by Jacques Villon (1875–1963) will reveal how he reused plates over time, altering form

and color to simplify his etching *La Parisienne* (1902/1903). Another group of Villon images depicts the artist's stylistic transition from art nouveau to cubism. In Camille Pissarro's (1830–1903) *Trees and Meadows at Eragny* (1895/1900), the artist gently moves chalk across the uneven surface of his paper, creating a shimmering pointillist-like effect for this post impressionist landscape.

The sixth room will contain classic works from the early 20th century. Key among these will be a portfolio of constructivist lithographs from Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948) entitled *Merz 3* (1923). It is the only known surviving complete proof set and is the set Schwitters' kept for himself and has been in his family since that time. Major cubist works are represented in *Still Life with a Bottle of Marc* (1911) by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), *Nude* (1906) by Henri Matisse (1869–1954), *Mental Reactions* (1915) by Agnes Ernst Meyer and Marius de Zayas, *Yvonne D. from the Front* (1913) by Jacques Villon, and *Solar Prism* (1914) by Sonia Delaunay-Terk. A dramatic watercolor, *Stormy Sea* (c. 1930) by Emil Nolde (1867–1956), expertly uses the medium to create roiling clouds and heaving waves.

The seventh room will offer works from 1920 through 1960, including a series of Russian constructivist works. The photcollage *All-Soviet Military Railroad* (1930) by Solomon Telingater celebrates modern transportation, while *Propaganda Stand (Workers of the World Unite)* (1922) by Gustav Klutssis (1895–c.1944) creates a dynamic composition of diagonal lines and multiple languages to convey its message. Surrealists are well represented, through works by Max Ernst (1891–1976) and Kurt Seligmann (1900–1962), while developments from surrealism to abstract expressionism will be illustrated through major drawings by Adolph Gottlieb (1903–1974), Franz Kline (1910–1962), and Philip Guston (1913–1980).

The eighth room will showcase works from 1960 through the present. Highlights include selections from a unique complex of artist's working proofs by Jasper Johns (b. 1930); outstanding prints of the 1990s by Kiki Smith (b. 1954) and Louise Bourgeois (b. 1911); 21st-century prints by Martin Puryear and Sean Scully (b. 1945); and powerful drawings by Philip Guston (1913–1980), Franz Kline, and Robert Morris (b. 1931), concluding with Ed Ruscha's *The End #68*, (2006).

Curator and the Collection

The exhibition curator is Andrew Robison, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Art. The National Gallery's collection of prints, drawings, and illustrated books consists of more than 97,000 Western European and American works on paper and vellum dating from the eleventh century to the present day. Since works on paper are highly susceptible to damage by overexposure to light, they can only be exhibited for short periods. For that reason, the Gallery maintains a schedule of changing exhibitions drawn from its own collection or borrowed from other institutions and private individuals. Drawings and prints not on view may be seen by appointment by calling (202) 842-6380.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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