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from the Wolfgang Ratjen
Collection, 1580–1900*

Press Event

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Press Contact:

Anabeth Guthrie

(202) 842-6804

a-guthrie@nga.gov

Chief Press Officer

Deborah Ziska

ds-ziska@nga.gov

(202) 842-6353

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**FINEST AND MOST COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION
OF GERMAN DRAWINGS ON VIEW AT THE
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON
MAY 16–NOVEMBER 28, 2010**

**Adolph Menzel, German, 1815 - 1905*****The Artist's Sister Emilie, 1851***black chalk and stumping with pastel on brown wove paper, corners pricked
Wolfgang Ratjen Collection, Purchased as the Gift of Ladislaus and Beatrix von
Hoffmann

Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art, Washington, will present for the first time worldwide 120 stunning German watercolors and drawings from the Wolfgang Rätjen Collection—one of the finest private European holdings of old master drawings. On view in the Gallery's West Building from May 16 to November 28, 2010, ***German Master Drawings from the Wolfgang Ratjen Collection, 1580–1900*** will include rare and influential examples of German works on paper encompassing 16th-century mannerism, the 17th-century baroque, the 18th-century rococo, early 19th-century romanticism, and late 19th-century realism.

In 2007, the National Gallery of Art acquired 185 German and Italian

works from the Ratjen Collection with the help of a dozen generous private donors as well as the Paul Mellon Fund and the Patrons' Permanent Fund.

"Throughout its history the National Gallery of Art has collected the justly famous drawings by German artists of the late Middle Ages through the Renaissance, and major works by the German expressionists," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "In recent decades we have also attempted to build a bridge, to include outstanding German drawings that epitomize the styles and centuries of art between those two fields. With the acquisition of the Ratjen Collection, the Gallery now possesses the most thorough portrayal of the best in German draftsmanship outside Europe. The Gallery is indebted to the vision and generosity of its donors, who made very special contributions to acquire this renowned collection."

Exhibition Support

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art.

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the STIFTUNG RATJEN, Liechtenstein.

The Exhibition

Works included in the exhibition are by artists from Germany and German-speaking areas of Europe, German-born artists practicing abroad, and artists born in other areas who spent time working in Germany and adapting to German culture.

Organized chronologically throughout five rooms, the exhibition begins with outstanding early works by three of the most notable German mannerists: Friedrich Sustris (c. 1540–1599), living primarily in Munich; Hans von Aachen (1552–1615), working at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II in Prague; and Hans Rottenhammer (1564/1565–1625), living in Venice and Augsburg.

Sustris' sophisticated drawing *An Elaborate Altar with the Resurrection of Christ and the Martyrdom of Saint Andrew* (1570/1580) is one of the earliest Bavarian responses to Italian mannerist altars. Von Aachen's *The Madonna Enthroned with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist* (1589), a *sacra conversazione* (devotional scene) produced soon after his return from Venice, was a favored Venetian motif at the time.

Rottenhammer's colorful watercolor *Minerva and the Muses* (c. 1610) is directly inspired by Tintoretto, whose work he studied in Venice.

From the baroque period, Adam Elsheimer (1578–1610), a favorite artist of both Rubens and Rembrandt, is represented by an extremely rare atmospheric gouache—*Ceres Changes Stellio into a Lizard* (1605/1608)—perhaps his finest work in the United States.

Ratjen especially pursued watercolors from the 18th century by the great painters—including Cosmas Damian Asam (1686–1739), Matthäus Günther (1705–1788), and Johann Baptist Enderle (1725–1798)—who filled Bavarian churches and palaces with elaborate rococo altarpieces and stunning ceiling frescoes. A remarkable series of Augsburg rococo drawings includes Johann Elias Ridinger's (1698–1767) charming portrait of the first rhinoceros to come to northern Europe, endearingly nicknamed "Miss Clara" (1748).

Around the turn of the 18th century, German artists developed a particular fondness for nature, as represented here by an extensive series of luminous drawings and watercolors. Highlights include five evocative landscape watercolors by Johann Georg von Dillis (1759–1841) as well as Caspar David Friedrich's (1774–1840) romantic masterpiece *New Moon above the Riesengebirge Mountains* (1810 or 1828/1835).

All major movements of the 19th century are represented, from romanticism to realism to impressionism and symbolism. A stunning group of realist drawings and pastels by Hans Thoma (1839–1924), Max Liebermann (1847–1935), and Adolph Menzel (1815–1905) includes his famously bold but sensitive pastel portrait of his sister, *Emilie* (1851).

Wolfgang Ratjen

Wolfgang Ratjen (1943–1997), one of the most discerning collectors of the 20th century, was born to a banking family in Berlin, but moved as an infant with his parents to Liechtenstein. While at university, his love for classical music was followed by a passion for old master drawings. That passion, he once said with his characteristic humor, was "the most wonderful disease you can imagine," and it led him to become a professional collector. Ratjen pursued art-historical knowledge as well as connoisseurship, and with remarkable objectivity refined his collection throughout his life, frequently upgrading or replacing works with better ones. After

Ratjen's sudden death in 1997, the collection was cared for by the Ratjen Foundation in Liechtenstein, from which the Gallery acquired it in 2007.

German Master Drawings from the National Gallery of Art, 1580–1900

Parallel to the Ratjen exhibition, three additional galleries will showcase some 80 works from the Gallery's holdings of German drawings from the same periods, in the same styles, and by the same artists. With the addition of the extraordinary drawings from the Ratjen Collection, the Gallery is now able to offer visitors an outstanding overview of German art during these centuries.

Prints, Drawings, and Illustrated Books at the National Gallery of Art

The National Gallery's collection of prints, drawings, and illustrated books in the department of prints and drawings consists of more than 97,000 Western European and American works on paper and vellum, dating from the 11th century to the present day. Because works on paper are highly susceptible to overexposure to light, they can be exhibited only for short periods. For that reason, the Gallery maintains a schedule of changing exhibitions drawn from its own collection or on loan from other institutions and private individuals. Drawings and prints not on view may be seen by appointment by calling (202) 842-6380.

Curator and Exhibition Catalogue

The exhibition curator is Andrew Robison, Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Art.

Published by the National Gallery of Art in association with Paul Holberton publishing, London, a fully illustrated catalogue includes essays and comprehensive entries by international scholars, including Peter Prange, Robison, and Hinrich Sieveking. The 332-page hardcover catalogue includes 193 color and 22 black-and-white illustrations and will be available for purchase in the Gallery Shops in May. To order, please visit our Web site at <http://shop.nga.gov/>; call (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; fax (202) 789-3047; or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov.

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

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Press Office
National Gallery of Art
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785
phone: (202) 842-6353 e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Deborah Ziska
Chief of Press and Public Information
(202) 842-6353
ds-ziska@nga.gov

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