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Northern Mannerist Prints from the Kainen Collection to be Presented at the National Gallery of Art, Washington

September 1, 2013–January 5, 2014



Jan Muller, after Bartholomaeus Spranger, *Minerva and Mercury Arming Perseus*, 1604, engraving, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth Cole Kainen

Washington, DC—A spectacular selection of northern mannerist prints from the Kainen Collection will be showcased at the National Gallery of Art this fall. *Northern Mannerist Prints from the Kainen Collection* will be on view in the West Building's Ground Floor galleries from September 1, 2013, to January 5, 2014. In 2012, the Gallery received 781 works as the bequest of Ruth Cole Kainen, including this school as one of its strengths. The exhibition includes every major artist of this extraordinary style and features many of their masterpieces, including Hendrick Goltzius' early *Mars and Venus*, Jacob Matham's monumental *Table of Cebes*, Jan Muller's heroic plates of *Bellona* and the *Apotheosis of the Arts*, and Aegidius Sadeler's portrait of Bartholomaeus Spranger with his deceased wife Christina in both a rare, unfinished state and an impression of the completed print.

"We are honored and delighted to present the first of several exhibitions dedicated to Ruth Cole Kainen's generous bequest of hundreds of works," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "Jacob and Ruth Cole Kainen were among the Gallery's most generous benefactors, and we celebrate their achievements with this series of exhibitions."

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art.

The Exhibition

This exhibition concerns the incredibly sophisticated and virtuoso style of printmaking that flourished in the northern Netherlands during the last two decades of the 16th century and became an international phenomenon that lingered into the next century. Of nearly 100 northern mannerist prints bequeathed by Ruth Cole Kainen in 2012, the exhibition presents some 50,

providing so many fine examples that this celebration of the bequest is equally an excellent introduction to the style.

Hendrick Goltzius, the pioneer of the style, defined this language in works of his own design and in translations of the rarified, often erotically charged subjects of Bartholomaeus Spranger, who served as official painter to Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II at Prague. Trained by Goltzius, a circle of engravers featuring Jacob Matham, Jan Saenredam, and Jan Muller developed variations on this style for interpreting their master's designs, those of other leading Dutch artists, and many more inventions of Spranger. Inspired by this school, Flemish master Aegidius Sadeler went to Prague and collaborated directly with court artists to create some of the most extraordinary works of this style. Together the works of these printmakers constitute the last great expression of mannerism. In turn they expanded both the formal vocabulary of European art and the technical possibilities of the medium of engraving.

Augmenting superb impressions of several of Goltzius' own engravings—rivaling the excellence of Albrecht Dürer—are two complete sets of Goltzius' most elegant designs rendered by Saenredam. Also featured are Spranger's most significant inventions, alternating between sensuous mythologies and complex allegories. As a counterpart to these works of the Prague school is an exceptional group by the principal artists in the northern Netherlands, from Goltzius' audacious set of four transgressors from ancient mythology, to Saenredam's exquisitely refined plates after Abraham Bloemaert's designs.

Jacob and Ruth Cole Kainen

Jacob and Ruth Cole Kainen were among the most important friends and benefactors of the Gallery. From 1975 until Ruth Cole Kainen's death in 2009 they gave the Gallery a total of 1,289 European and American works, principally prints and drawings. To celebrate Ruth Cole Kainen's 2012 bequest, and more broadly the Kainens' achievement as collectors and benefactors, the Gallery will present a series of three exhibitions dedicated to areas of their greatest interest: northern mannerism; German prints and drawings, especially by the expressionists; and American modernism through abstract expressionism.

Ruth Cole Kainen (1922–2009), who began collecting art in the early 1960s, married Jacob Kainen, a painter, draftsman, and printmaker. She served on the National Gallery of Art Trustees' Council from November 1989 to December 1995 and again from March 2008 until her death in September 2009.

Jacob Kainen (1909–2001), who had numerous gallery and museum shows to his credit, was also an internationally known curator and scholar. He helped to build and manage the print collections at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, arranged numerous exhibitions, and published research on subjects as varied as 16th-century mannerism, 18th-century Venetian etchings and woodcuts, and German expressionism.

Ruth Cole Kainen's recent bequest of 781 European and American works of art covers five centuries, ranging in date from 1531 through the 1980s. The 10 paintings, 39 watercolors and drawings, and 732 etchings, engravings, woodcuts, lithographs, and illustrated books represent a comprehensive range of schools, styles, and subjects, reflecting her delight in many different types of art.

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

The Gallery's collection of prints, drawings, and illustrated books consists of more than 105,000 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

This exhibition is curated by Jonathan Bober, curator and head of old master prints, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

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. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/modern-art-during-renovation.html>.

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 www.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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