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"Ideas Made Flesh" in 16th-Century Italian Prints Revealed at the National Gallery of Art, Washington
June 7 through October 4, 2015



Gian Jacopo Caraglio after Rosso Fiorentino
Fury, c. 1525, engraving on laid paper, sheet: 25.1 x 18.7 cm (9 7/8 x 7 3/8 in.), National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Ruth Cole Kainen, 2006, 2006.162.4

Washington, DC—The union of extraordinary imagination with pioneering execution in 16th-century Italian printmaking will be celebrated in a focused exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, Washington. On view in the West Building from June 7 through October 4, 2015, **Recent Acquisitions of Italian Renaissance Prints: Ideas Made Flesh** features some 30 engravings, etchings, woodcuts, and illustrated books by or after the designs of celebrated Renaissance artists acquired by the Gallery in the last four years.

"These exquisite works remind us not only the fundamental role of Italian prints in the origin and transmission of European visual style, but their own brilliant aesthetic qualities," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Italian Renaissance prints are treasured for their sophisticated invention and composition, as opposed to the celebrated craft and material beauty of northern European prints. The exhibition will showcase a rare selection of prints from this period that not only express complex ideas and demonstrate extravagant design, but also reveal the distinctive visual appeal, even the sensuous form, their complex content could assume.

Recent Acquisitions of Italian Renaissance Prints: Ideas Made Flesh is arranged in two galleries according to broad chronological development and regional centers of production. The exhibition opens with two books: Robertus Valturius's treatise on military equipment (Verona, 1472), the very first book with technical illustrations, and the *Hypnerotomachia Polifili* (Venice, 1499), considered by many the most beautiful of all Italian books. It continues with key examples from early 16th-century Rome, notably a group of extravagant designs by the virtuoso sculptor Baccio Bandinelli, unusually fluent engravings by Gian Giacomo Caraglio, and prints in several techniques that convey the supernaturally elegant style of Francesco Parmigianino, which became the foundation of a European court style.

The second gallery represents developments in the second half of the 16th century in northern Italy. Themes explored in this gallery include: the greater naturalism and closer approximation of pictorial values of printmakers in Venice and the cities of her territories, the lavish plates and bravura technique of Giorgio Ghisi and the engravers of the school of Mantua, and the emphasis upon more accessible subjects and convincing religious expression in prints following the Counter-Reformation notably those of the Carracci family in Bologna. Highlights in this section include Cornelis Cort's engraving *The Assassination of Saint Peter Martyr*, after Titian (1567), Nicolò Boldrini's multiblock color woodcut *Hercules and the Nemean Lion* (c. 1566), and Annibale Carracci's extremely rare engraving *The Crucifixion* (1581).

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 115,000 European and American works on paper and vellum, dating from the 11th century to the present. 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. Prints and drawings not on view may be seen by appointment by calling (202) 842-6380.

Curator

This exhibition is curated by Jonathan Bober, head and curator 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. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.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:

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