

From Neoclassicism to Futurism

ITALIAN PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 1800 – 1925

National Gallery of Art

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The visual arts in Italy were extraordinarily diverse and dynamic during the long, tortuous formation of the modern Italian state—from the first stirrings of nationalism around the time of Napoleon’s campaigns (1796–1797) through unification as the Kingdom of Italy (1861) until the country’s descent into fascism (1925). Nonetheless, Italian art of this era has been overshadowed by the monumental achievements of the past, from ancient Rome through the baroque period. Moreover, Italian art after the eighteenth century has been neglected in the usual histories of modern art, which have emphasized the more consistent direction and

developments in other countries, especially France. Recognizing the importance and richness of the period’s art, the National Gallery of Art has begun to build a collection of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italian prints and drawings. Broad in scope, deep in a number of areas, and excellent in quality, this collection is unparalleled outside Italy itself.

This exhibition is an introduction to both this little-known period and the Gallery’s initiative. It consists of some seventy prints, drawings, and illustrated books from the nearly two hundred acquired in recent years, divided into three sections.

