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Release Date: October 13, 2008

EARLY EXCAVATION STUDIES OF ANCIENT ROMAN SITES AND ARTIFACTS ON VIEW IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART LIBRARY; COMPLEMENTS *POMPEII AND THE ROMAN VILLA: ART AND CULTURE AROUND THE BAY OF NAPLES* OCTOBER 19, 2008, THROUGH MARCH 22, 2009



Lithograph from Antonio Niccolini, *Real Museo Borbonico* (Naples, 1824–1857)
National Gallery of Art Library, Gift of Paul Mellon, Esq.

The discoveries of ancient cities heavily influenced the culture of the 18th and 19th centuries, helping to spark the Enlightenment and an interest throughout the Western world in ancient art and design, classical philosophy, and literature. **Documenting Discovery: The Excavation of Pompeii and Herculaneum** showcases a selection of 17 works on paper that depict the finds at two of the most important sites: Herculaneum, first excavated in 1738, and Pompeii, first excavated in 1748. **The exhibition is on** view in the East Building Library of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from October 20, 2008, through March 20, 2009.

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The display complements the Gallery's exhibition ***Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture around the Bay of Naples***, which includes some 150 works of sculpture, painting, mosaic, and luxury arts, most of them created before the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 AD. They include recent discoveries on view in the U.S. for the first time and celebrated finds from earlier excavations. Exquisite objects from the richly decorated villas along the shores of the Bay of Naples and from houses in the nearby towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum reveal the breadth and richness of cultural and artistic life, as well as the influence of classical Greece on Roman art and culture in this region.

Documenting Discovery: The Excavation of Pompeii and Herculaneum provides insight into how archaeologists at these sites interpreted the ancient world. The installation presents a cross section of the types of works produced from the mid-18th through the 19th century, including books on interior design, collection catalogues depicting artifacts found at the sites, accounts of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, studies of daily life in the ancient cities, and souvenir photograph books for travelers on their Grand Tour.

Library and Rare Books Collection

The National Gallery of Art Library contains more than 350,000 books and periodicals, including more than 8,000 volumes in the rare book collection, with an emphasis on Western art from the Middle Ages to the present. Founded in 1941 when the West Building opened to the public, the library moved to the East Building in 1979. The photographic archives and slide library contain more than 11 million black-and-white prints and 300,000 slides of painting, sculpture, architecture, and the decorative arts. Call (202) 852-6511 for access to the library.

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.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering the East and West Buildings. 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 x 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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