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**RENAISSANCE TO REVOLUTION
THREE CENTURIES OF STUNNING AND
SIGNIFICANT FRENCH DRAWINGS ON VIEW AT
THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON,
OCTOBER 1, 2009–JANUARY 31, 2010**

**Antoine Watteau*****A Man Reclining and a Woman Seated on the Ground, c. 1716***

red, black, and white chalk on brown paper

overall: 24.1 x 35.9 cm (9 1/2 x 14 1/8 in.)

National Gallery of Art, The Armand Hammer Collection

Washington, DC—Some 135 of the most significant and beautiful drawings made over a period of three centuries by the best French artists working at home and abroad and by foreign artists working in France will be on view in ***Renaissance to Revolution: French Drawings from the National Gallery of Art, 1500–1800*** in the Gallery's West Building from October 1, 2009, through January 31, 2010. This is the first comprehensive exhibition and catalogue to focus on the Gallery's permanent collection of French old master drawings, which is remarkable for its breadth, depth, and individual

masterpieces.

"One of the true glories of the National Gallery of Art's holdings of graphic art is its outstanding collection of French old master drawings," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "The exhibition *Renaissance to Revolution* and the accompanying catalogue celebrate the singular originality, elegance, and spirit of French draftsmanship."

French Drawings at the National Gallery of Art

Among the National Gallery of Art's extensive holdings of approximately 100,000 works on paper, the collection of 6,000 European drawings includes more than 900 French old master drawings which stand out as a particular treasure. The French group has deep roots in the earliest days of the museum's existence, with the first of these works arriving in 1942, just a year after the Gallery opened its doors to the public. Over the next 67 years, thanks to the generosity of innumerable donors, the collection has evolved into one of the Gallery's strongest and most comprehensive, and one of the finest in the Western Hemisphere.

The Exhibition

Organized chronologically, *Renaissance to Revolution* presents a visual journey through the development of drawing in France, from its first flowering during the Renaissance through its neoclassical incarnation during the political and social upheavals of the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century.

Lorrain, and Antoine Watteau, as well as many less well-known artists. All major stylistic trends and many of the greatest and best-known artists from these centuries are represented by a rich array of works executed in a variety of styles and media and covering a wide range of functions, subjects, and genres.

Many rare and extraordinary masterpieces are featured, such as the exquisite landscape watercolor that is the oldest work in the exhibition—*The Coronation of Solomon by the Spring of Gihon* by the miniaturist Jean Poyet (c. 1500), who worked for Anne of Brittany, queen of France.

Sixteenth-century highlights include Benvenuto Cellini's drawing of *A Satyr* (1544/1545), made in connection with a sculpture he designed

for the entrance to King François I's chateau of Fontainebleau but never completed, and beautifully wrought designs for pieces of parade armor by Cousin and Étienne Delaune.

Works from the 17th century include an excellent representation of the exaggerated version of mannerism that sprang up in the duchy of Lorraine, with important works by Jacques de Bellange and Claude Deruet, and an appealing group of studies by the exceptionally inventive printmaker Jacques Callot.

The turn to French classicism is demonstrated in stellar works by Simon Vouet and Laurent de La Hyre, while the timeless calm of Claude Lorrain's classical landscapes is beautifully represented in a group of drawings that includes the serenely evocative *Landscape with Ruins*, *Pastoral Figures*, and *Trees* (c. 1650).

Within the exceptionally rich collection of 18th-century drawings, the major artists— Boucher, Fragonard, Jean-Baptiste Greuze, Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, Hubert Robert, and Watteau, among many others—are each represented by several works of outstanding quality. Some magnificent pieces by less familiar masters are featured as well, including François-André Vincent's *Drawing Lesson* (1777), arguably the most perfect representation of 18th-century French elegance, taste, and gallantry; Étienne-Louis Boullée's monumental neoclassical design for a metropolitan church from 1780/1781; and a large and beautiful pastoral scene executed in pastel and gouache, *Shepherds Resting by a Stream* (1779) by Jean-Baptiste Pillement.

Also noteworthy is a striking group of portraits by several of the leading pastellists of the period, including outstanding examples by Maurice-Quentin de La Tour and Jean-Baptiste Perronneau, as well as a particularly dashing portrait of a young woman by Adélaïde Labille-Guiard from 1787. One of the youngest drawings in the exhibition is the neoclassical portrait *Thirius de Pautrizel* (1795) by David, an active participant in the revolution, made when he was imprisoned for his radical politics.

A particular strength within the Gallery's collection of French drawings is the genre of book illustration. This is represented throughout the exhibition beginning with the work by Poyet and includes distinctive pieces by such famous masters as Boucher, Fragonard, Jean-Michel Moreau the Younger, and Saint-Aubin, as

well as outstanding examples by other supremely gifted but less widely known artists, such as Hubert-François Gravelot and Charles Eisen.

Curator, Catalogue, and Lecture

Margaret Morgan Grasselli, curator of old master drawings, National Gallery of Art, is curator of the exhibition.

Published by the National Gallery of Art in association with Lund Humphries, *Renaissance to Revolution: French Drawings from the National Gallery of Art, 1500-1800* features an introductory essay and comprehensive entries on the exhibited drawings by Grasselli with 260 full-color illustrations. The 320-page hardcover catalogue will be available mid-September for purchase in the Gallery Shops. 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.

On Sunday, December 13, 2009, at 2:00 p.m., Grasselli will deliver the lecture *"Playing Favorites: A Personal Selection of French Drawings from the National Gallery of Art"* and sign copies of the catalogue.

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.

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