

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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**PRESS PREVIEW:
JANUARY 17-18 1983
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DRAWINGS FROM THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE 1540-1680:
A SELECTION FROM NORTH AMERICAN COLLECTIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. December 6, 1982. Eighty-eight drawings by such artists as Bartholomeus Spranger, Roelandt Savery, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, and Johann Heinrich Schönfeld, go on view in the National Gallery of Art's new Ground Floor Galleries in the West Building February 3 to April 11, 1983. The exhibition explores a neglected period in art history--the era following the great Renaissance German masters and before the flowering of the baroque. Also presented is new scholarship about the influences of the Reformation and the Thirty Years' War on the artistic development of the Holy Roman Empire, an area encompassed today by East and West Germany, Austria, parts of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The drawings, exhibited chronologically and by region, illustrate a diversity of style, technique, and subject matter including biblical and mythological scenes, landscapes, animals, and natural history drawings.

Perhaps the most important works in the exhibition constitute one of the finest surviving collections of natural history drawings, The Four Elements, executed

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between 1575 and 1582 by George (Joris) Hoefnagel. A promised gift on deposit at the National Gallery of Art from Mrs. Lessing Rosenwald, this work consists of four albums of drawings depicting animals, birds, insects, fish, and plants in their natural environments. Commissioned by Rudolph II, the drawings were among his most prized possessions and are still in excellent condition in their original bindings.

Among other important drawings in the exhibition are the large Mountainous Landscape by Roelandt Savery from the Ian Woodner Family Collection, the anonymous Judgment of Solomon from the Collection of Professor Julius Held, the Hans Hoffmann watercolor of a Blue Jay from the Cleveland Museum of Art, as well as examples by Johann Rottenhammer and numerous other artists from the rich collection of German drawings at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento.

Also in the exhibition is a striking mid-sixteenth-century River Landscape (National Gallery of Art). Based on research by Andrew Robison, the Gallery's curator of Graphic Arts, the drawing has most recently been attributed to the Master HWG. The use of black ink with white highlights on red prepared paper combines to produce emphatic overtones of atmosphere and emotion.

The exhibition is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and has been organized by The Art Museum, Princeton University, where the exhibition opened earlier this year. Professor Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, guest curator at the Museum and formerly a Finley Fellow at

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the National Gallery, selected the drawings in the exhibition and wrote the fully-illustrated scholarly catalogue which accompanies the exhibition.

The exhibition will be seen in conjunction with the opening of the New Ground Floor Galleries, a 48,000 square foot museum-within-a-museum exhibiting works of art on paper, small sculpture, American naive paintings, and the decorative arts. The three tiers of galleries devoted to graphic arts will present on a permanent basis rotating anthologies drawn from the Gallery's own graphic arts collection, combined with highly focused loan exhibitions such as this.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Carolyn Engel Amiot, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, (202) 842-6353.