

Release Date: January 18, 2013

Albrecht Dürer Watercolors and Drawings from the Albertina on Loan for Unprecedented Exhibition at the National Gallery of Art -Washington Is Sole Venue- March 24–June 9, 2013



Albrecht Dürer, *Praying Hands*, 1508
brush and gray wash heightened with white on blue prepared paper
Albertina, Vienna

Washington, DC—Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) is widely considered the greatest German artist. From March 24 through June 9, 2013, the Albertina Museum in Vienna, Austria, will lend to the National Gallery of Art 118 works on paper by Dürer for a magnificent exhibition that will be on view only in Washington. ***Albrecht Dürer: Master Drawings, Watercolors, and Prints from the Albertina*** features nearly all of Dürer's finest watercolors and drawings from the collection of the Albertina, Vienna, as well as 27 of the museum's related engravings and woodcuts. The exhibition also includes 19

drawings and prints from the Gallery's own collection.

Albrecht Dürer: Master Drawings, Watercolors, and Prints from the Albertina is a culmination of decades of acquisition, study, and exhibition of early German art at the Gallery. In 1999, the Gallery presented ***From Schongauer to Holbein***, a splendid survey exhibition of early German drawings based on the collections of the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and the Kunstmuseum Basel. This loan from the Albertina, Vienna is the only other exhibition from a single collection of similar visual impact, quality, and importance.

"The generosity of the Albertina, Vienna in lending their superb works on paper by Albrecht Dürer is overwhelming, and augmented by our own works, this exhibition allows the Gallery to present a fresh and compelling look at Dürer's practice of drawing," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "We offer our visitors the opportunity to share in the knowledge, appreciation, and pleasure of this extraordinary artist's work."

Exhibition Organization and Support

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with the Albertina, Vienna.

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation. Additional funding is kindly provided in memory of Melvin R. Seiden. The Exhibition Circle of the National Gallery of Art is also supporting the exhibition.

The exhibition is made possible by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Exhibition Highlights

Dürer's paintings are highly prized, but his most influential works are his drawings, watercolors, engravings, and woodcuts, executed with his distinctively northern sense of refined precision and exquisite craftsmanship.

The exhibition is organized chronologically in 14 thematic groups that convey Dürer's talent as a draftsman as well as his artistic life, interests, and development. From detailed renderings of the natural world and investigations of proportion and the human body to family members and official portraits, landscapes, religious and allegorical themes, intensely personal reflections, and even studies of drapery and designs for decorative arts, the 137 works by Dürer on view give insight into his artistic development and creative genius. Finished compositions that functioned as independent works of art, colorful watercolors of nature and costumes, as well as quick sketches and studies for paintings and prints, woodcuts, engravings, and etchings all illustrate the full range of his subjects.

The exhibition includes many of the artist's most breathtaking works on paper, such as the watercolor *The Great Piece of Turf* (1503), a sublime nature study of the Renaissance; the chiaroscuro drawings *An Elderly Man of Ninety-Three Years* (1521) and *The Praying Hands* (1508), surely one of the most famous drawings in the world; and the amazingly precocious silverpoint *Self-Portrait at Thirteen* (1484), possibly the earliest self-portrait drawing by any artist. Such complete and finished works are balanced by quick sketches of, for example, his young bride-to-be or the Antwerp harbor.

In drawing, with the possible exception of colored chalks, Dürer used the complete range of traditional techniques to record convincing details of nature, people, and places as well as to re-create historical and mythological events and fantastic visions. In printmaking Dürer revolutionized the art of woodcut to achieve ranges of subject and scale, light, and form. He created engravings not only powerful in image but also unparalleled in craftsmanship and technique, and he experimented with etching and drypoint.

Albrecht Dürer and the Albertina

Albrecht Dürer was the reigning genius of the Renaissance in northern Europe, just as Leonardo da Vinci was for the Renaissance in Italy. Born in Nuremberg in 1471, Dürer grew up in an environment of late Gothic courtly grace and religious intensity as the city, a center of imperial politics, economics and trade, scholarship and culture, was being

transformed by new influences. He traveled to Italy twice to pursue the new learning and artistic advances surging there.

The collection of Dürer's drawings and watercolors at the Albertina, Vienna is unequalled. It is not only one of the largest collections of works by Dürer in the world, but it is also distinguished by the number of the artist's greatest masterpieces. The Albertina's works by Dürer have been acquired over many years, but the museum's ability to amass such a collection of world masterpieces results from primary sources that go back directly to the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II. Dürer was his favorite artist. Rudolf II used imperial ambassadors and the machinery of state to succeed in his purchases, including acquisitions from the Imhoff family in Nuremberg, whose works were among Dürer's personal estate. In 1588 the emperor offered Willibald Imhoff's family an entire domain of Bohemia in exchange for being able to acquire these works.

Exhibition Curator and Catalogue

The exhibition curator is Andrew Robison, A. W. Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Art.

Published by the National Gallery of Art and DelMonico Books, an imprint of Prestel Publishing, the fully illustrated catalogue presents the Albertina's magnificent collection of Dürer's watercolors, drawings, and prints, as well as the Gallery's related works.

The volume features essays by Robison; Klaus Albrecht Schröder, director of the Albertina, Vienna; and Ernst Rebel, former professor at the School of Arts, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, as well as entries by scholars such as Berthold Hinz, former professor for the history of art, Kunsthochschule Kassel; Alice Hoppe-Harnoncourt, research associate, Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Matthias Mende, former chief curator of the graphic art collection and Dürer's House, Museen der Stadt Nürnberg; Christof Metzger, curator of German drawings and prints, Albertina, Vienna; Eva Michel, curator of Netherlandish drawings and prints, Albertina, Vienna; Anna Scherbaum, associate at the Kunst- und Kulturpädagogisches Zentrum der Museen in Nürnberg; Karl Schütz, former director of the Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Maria Luise Sternath, deputy director and chief

curator, Albertina, Vienna; Heinz Widauer, curator of French drawings and prints, Albertina, Vienna; and Jutta Zander-Seidel, chief curator, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

The 328-page catalogue includes 205 color plates and is available in March 2013 in softcover and hardcover for purchase in the Gallery Shops. To order, please visit <http://shop.nga.gov/>; call (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; fax (202) 789-3047; or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov.

Related Programs

Robison will present an opening day public lecture entitled "*Introduction to the Exhibition Albrecht Dürer: Master Drawings, Watercolors, and Prints from the Albertina* (<http://www.nga.gov/programs/lectures/#durer-exh>)" on March 24 at 2:00 p.m. in the East Building Auditorium. Eric Denker, senior lecturer, will lead Gallery Talks about the exhibition at noon on March 31; April 1-4, 9-12, 18, 19, 25, 26, 29, 30; and May 16-17, 21-24 in the West Building. A German Renaissance ensemble will perform a special concert of music from the time of Dürer on May 15 at 2:00, 3:00, and 4:00 p.m. on the East Building Mezzanine. The concert is made possible by support from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany.

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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 along 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. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>).

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at twitter.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.

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