

Caricatura and Character: Satire in Italy and Britain in the 18th Century,

April 11, 2003-June 29, 2003

The term "caricature" derives from the Italian *caricare*, "to load or exaggerate," and was first used in the late 16th century to describe portrait sketches that comically exaggerated an individual's facial and other features. Caricatures celebrated the skill of the artist's hand, emphasizing rapid lines and quick, insightful observation of specific people. Satire is a broader term, encompassing humorous images of social types, not just individuals. In the 18th century, caricatures became popular in Rome, and visitors on the "Grand Tour" eagerly sought caricature drawings from the painter Pier Leone Ghezzi. Many visitors also tried drawing caricatures themselves, and when they returned home, they spread this entertaining new drawing practice throughout Europe, particularly to Britain.

With the introduction of caricature to Britain, the meaning of the word gradually changed. In Italy, caricatures were private portrait drawings created for individual owners. In Britain, professional as well as amateur artists created caricature prints, which circulated to a broader public. By the end of the century, brightly colored caricature prints were prominent in London printshop windows, where all classes of society could laugh at the foibles of society and ridiculousness of politicians. Members of the middle and noble classes avidly collected caricature prints and even borrowed albums of caricatures for a small fee for an evening's entertainment.

By the end of the century, James Gillray's political caricatures were seen as emblematic of British freedom of the press. The title of this exhibition, "Caricatura and Character," is inspired by a print published by William Hogarth in April 1743. Hogarth vehemently disliked the influence of foreign art and foreign artists in Britain and disparaged both the style and content of Italianate caricatura, preferring the term "characters." Rejecting the loosely drawn lines of caricatures, Hogarth worked with elaborate crosshatching and engraving techniques to emphasize the importance of his moral tales. Despite Hogarth's opposition, the appeal of caricature was too strong. The distinction between caricatures of individuals and satirical drawings of social types was lost, and the combination of British printmaking and Italian style produced a new genre of art, which delights us still today.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Thomas Rowlandson, English, 1756-1827

George Moutard Woodward, British, ca. 1760-1809

Thomas Tegg

The Corsican Spider in His Web, 1808

Etching and hand coloring on paper

Museum Works of Art Fund 44.082

Napoleon is represented as a spider, drawing all the countries of Europe into his treacherous web. Only the British fly declares he will not be caught. Caricature prints were often hand colored by the print publishers, who sold them for twice the price of plain prints; however, the choice of colors in this print indicates that they may have been added later.



RISD MUSEUM

Thomas Rowlandson, English, 1756-1827
A Meeting of Cognoscenti (After Dinner), ca. 1790-1800
Pen and ink, watercolor, over graphite on wove paper
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.504



American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.12

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.5

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.9

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.7

RISD MUSEUM

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.8

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.2

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.3

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.4

RISD MUSEUM

William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764

The five orders of PERRIWIGS as they were worn at the late CORONATION measured Architectonically, 1761

Etching on laid paper

Gift of Mrs. Walter Smith and Mrs. Reginald Patota 72.112

Depicting the various wigs worn at the coronation of George III and Queen Charlotte on September 22, 1761, Hogarth organizes them in a parody of the five classical orders of architecture: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Composite, and Tuscan.



James Gillray, British, 1756-1815

Hannah Humphrey

An Old English Gentleman Pester'd by Servants Wanting Places,

Published 1809

Etching and hand coloring

Jesse Metcalf Fund 76.171

The British coalition government formed in 1806 was nicknamed "the Broad-Bottomed Administration" for the breadth of the coalition and the size of some of the politicians. Gillray represents King George III as an old gentleman surrounded by fawning servants (all identifiable politicians) seeking jobs. Secretary of State George Canning, who had secretly arranged an annual pension for Gillray of 200 pounds from 1797 to 1801, is seated in the upper gallery, second from the right.

James Gillray, British, 1756-1815

Hannah Humphrey

Democracy or a Sketch of the Life of Buonaparte, Published 1800

Etching and engraving with hand coloring on paper

Mary B. Jackson Fund 77.008

Not long after Napoleon seized power on November 9th (18th Brumaire), 1799, Gillray created this print, an inflammatory outline of Napoleon's childhood with Corsican brigands, education at military school, support of the revolution, and treachery to all.



RISD MUSEUM

Thomas Rowlandson, English, 1756-1827

Flirtation, mid 1700s - mid 1800s

Pen and ink; wash technique; chalk

Anonymous gift 69.154.21

Although also an etcher of political caricatures, Rowlandson is best known for his comic watercolor drawings portraying the follies and pretensions of all levels of English society. A Meeting of Cognoscenti spoofs those who, after their return from the "Grand Tour" of Europe, often met to discuss Italian art, including Italian caricatures. Another favorite theme was the misadventures of those seeking a cure at the fashionable spa of Bath, as can be seen in Pump Rooms, Bath, where the lecherous old parson and military officer seek more than just good health.



Thomas Rowlandson, English, 1756-1827

Race Course, mid 1700s - mid 1800s

Pen and ink with brush and watercolor over graphite

Anonymous gift 71.153.36



Thomas Rowlandson, English, 1756-1827

Reception at a Castle, mid 1700s - mid 1800s

Pen and ink with brush and watercolor over graphite

Anonymous gift 73.204.41



Thomas Rowlandson, English, 1756-1827

Pump Room, Bath, mid 1700s - mid 1800s

Pen and ink with brush and watercolor over graphite

Anonymous Gift 70.118.43



RISD MUSEUM

American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.11

Pier-Leone Ghezzi, Italian, 1674-1755
Le Chevalier de Lamothe, ca. 1725
Pen and ink over traces of chalk on laid paper
Gift of Janos Scholz 52.128

Foreign visitors to Rome eagerly sought such unflattering caricatures of themselves. this portrait came from an album of approximately seventy-three caricatures by Ghezzi and is identified with the inscription "M. le Ch. De Lamothe," which might refer to either the French historian N. LaMothe (ca. 1690-1740) or to the captain of a papal galley, Cavaliere de la Motte (dates unknown).



William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Plate 8, from the series *A Rake's Progress*, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.8



RISD MUSEUM

William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Plate 7, from the series A Rake's Progress, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.7



William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Scene in a Gaming House (plate six), from the series A Rake's Progress, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.6



William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Plate 5, from the series A Rake's Progress, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.5



William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Plate 4, from the series A Rake's Progress, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.4



RISD MUSEUM

William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Plate 3, from the series A Rake's Progress, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.3



American
Bracket, 1800s
Metal
Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.1

William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Plate 1, from the series A Rake's Progress, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.1



Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, Italian, 1727-1804
The Badminton Victory, Divertimento per li ragazzi (Diversion for the Children), ca. 1797
Pen and ink, wash and brush over black chalk on white paper
Bequest of George Pierce Metcalf 57.240



RISD MUSEUM

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Italian, 1696-1770

Caricature, ca. 1740-1745

Pen and ink on paper

Gift of Mrs. Helen Danforth Buchanan 1991.021



Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, Italian, 1727-1804

Lady Dressing, ca. 1780-1790

Pen and ink with brush and wash on cream paper

Anonymous gift 57.139

This drawing demonstrates Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo's skill at both satirical observation and the graduation building of watercolor washes. Tiepolo comically notes the wide pannier supporting the petticoats and the tall framework for the elaborate hairstyle, which were fashionable in the 1780s.



Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, Italian, 1727-1804

Country Dance, Divertimento per li ragazzi (Diversion for the Children), ca. 1797

Pen and ink, wash and brush over chalk on paper

Bequest of George Pierce Metcalf 57.239

At the end of his life, Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo created the series "Diversion for the Children," a group of 104 drawings depicting the commedia dell'arte stock character Punchinello in a society of fellow Punchinelli. Drawn over a period of years around 1797, when Napoleonic troops occupied Venice, there may be a political element to this celebration of the popular Italian clown. The series loosely chronicles the life and adventures of Punchinello from birth to death, developed thematically, rather than in a strict narrative.



RISD MUSEUM

Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, Italian, 1727-1804

The Birthday Party, Divertimento per li ragazzi (Diversion for the Children), ca. 1797

Pen and ink, wash and brush over black chalk on white laid paper

Gift of Murray S. Danforth, Jr. 1987.017



George Moutard Woodward, British, ca. 1760-1809

Isaac Cruikshank, British, 1764-1810/11

Original caricature water-colour sketches, ORIGINAL CARICATURE WATER-COLOUR SKETCHES, ca. 1792

Pen and ink with brush and watercolor

Transfer from the RISD Library. Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 48.110

These two drawings are designs for a print entitled *Symptoms of Matrimony*, etched by Isaac Cruikshank and published by Samuel Fores on January 1, 1796. Each group comically represents a different symptom of the state of marriage. The album contains drawings by Woodward for 39 different caricature prints, almost all of which were etched by Isaac Cruikshank and published by Samuel Fores between 1790 and 1800. At the back of the album is a print by Cruikshank bearing the collection stamp of Samuel Fores. It is possible that Fores kept the drawings as workshop models for applying watercolor to the prints, then later, ca. 1820-30, bound the drawings into this album.

American

Bracket, 1800s

Metal

Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.6

American

Bracket, 1800s

Metal

Mary B. Jackson Fund 44.082X.10

William Hogarth, English, 1697-1764
Print, from the series *A Rake's Progress*, 1735
Etching and engraving on paper
Purchased and Presented by George P. Metcalf 52.228.2

