RISD
MUSEUM

European Galleries (Dec-June PDP Rotation), December 22, 2014-June 1, 2015

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION



Italian
Monk in Adoration, early 1600s
Pen and ink on paper
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.498

This drawing maybe a copy after a painting by Titian. The draftsman used pen and ink to render the monk's hands and face as he exclaims in wonder and gazes upwards toward a divine figure. Less interesting to the artist was the bottom half of the figure, which was left unfinished. Typical of many Old Master drawings, the sketch was cut from a larger sheet by one of its owners, given a number, and placed into a collecter's album.



Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari
Italian, 1654-1727
Ceres (Summer), Flora (Spring), Bacchus (Autumn) with Apollo and the Hours of Day, ca. 1710
Red chalk on paper, squared for transfer with graphite
Purchased with the Frederick Lippitt Bequest 2008.32

At the center of a flurry activity, Flora, goddess of spring, finds a peaceful seat. Ceres to her left and Bacchus to her right indicate earth's plentiful bounty through the year. Apollo's horses pull the sun across the sky above. Together these figures suggest the passing of time in the cosmos. Grid lines in graphite over the red chalk demonstrate that the drawing was intended to be transferred to monumental scale for the arched wall of a palazzo, most likely as a part of a series. No corresponding work has been identified, but the grandiose mythological program would have lent an air of status and elegance to any 18th-century patrician room.

RISD
MUSEUM



Albrecht Dürer
German, 1471-1528
*Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene, From the series "Small Woodcut Passion"*1511
Woodcut on paper
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2014.37.1

Dürer made the 36 woodcuts comprising Small Woodcut Passion in less that two years. The series portrays the Passion of Christ and the fall and redemption of humankind. In this scene, Christ sppears as a gardener to his devoted follower, Mary Magdalene, after his death and resurrection. Mary does not recognize him until he tells her not to touch him ("Noli me tangere"). Dürer framed and cropped the scene so that the poignant narrative moment occurs in the foreground, providing a close-up view of the event. Taking maximum advantage of a small format, he also opened up the background space with a secondary scene and a dramatic, light-filled sky.



William Blake
British, 1757-1827
St. Paul Preaching at Athens, 1803
Watercolor with touches of black chalk and scraping on paper
Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.280

Commissioned by Thomas Butts in 1803, William Blake painted this watercolor as one of a hundred intended for an illustrated Bible that was never realized. Distinctive of Blake's style is the hieratic composition and strict formality of Paul as he reaches to the figures below, representing the Ages of Man. Blake focused on the rapt intensity of the apostle's face and on his arms outstretched in exaltation. His application of stippled watercolor suggests a spiritual power that radiates around the saint.

RISD
MUSEUM



Johann Theodor de Bry
Netherlandish, 1561-1623
After Theodor de Bry
Netherlandish, 1528-1598
Newly Fashioned Alphabet (Nova Alphati Effietio), 1595
Engraved on laid paper
Museum Works of Art Fund 46.510

By the 16th century, Gothic lettering had gone out of style, and artists were experimenting with new, more ornamental types of lettering. For this letter T, Theodor de Bry combined closely observed flora and fauna--such as tulips, gourds, a snake, a snail, and a scorpion-- with a figure of Saint Thomas, who holds on to the letter's shaft. De Bry's fanciful combination draws from nature and architecture, but emphasizes above all his skill in creating a pleasing and decorative whole. While the saint's role is not strictly religious, De Bry's association between Thomas and a letter, thus langauge, places emphasis on the importance of the written word, espedcially the Bible, in religious practice.



Richard Houston
Irish, 1721-1775
After Jean-Étienne Liotard
Swiss, 1702-1789
Portrait of the Right Honorable Maria Countess of Coventry, ca.1749-1775
Mezzotint on paper
Museum Purchase: Anonymous gift 51.010

Maria, wife of the sixth Earl of Coventry, was known for her beauty and dedication to fashion. So extreme was her devotion that poisoning from lead-based makeup caused her death in 1760 at the age of 27. This print shows her transformation from an Irish girl of average means into a worldly English Countess. The textiles and treasures around her signal Britain's fascination with Eastern Exoticism in an age of exploration and colonization.

This print is loosly based on a group of pastels by Jean-Etienne Liotard that depicts women in similar settings. Houston capitalized on a curious public, clearly titling this image after the famed countess, whether or not it resembled the real woman.

RISD
MUSEUM



Attributed to Sebastiano Folli
Italian, 1568-1621
Female Martyr Saint, mid 1500s-early 1600s
Pen and ink, brush and wash over chalk on paper
Museum Works of Art Fund 57.023

These small drawings depict female saints who were also martyrs, as indicated by the palm leaves, and could have been made for any number of purposes. Chalk drawings were often used for drapery studies or studies from life. The chalk drawing here uses both red and white chalks on a middle-tone paper to explore light and shadow on the figure in a cursory way. Pen and ink was often used for copy drawings (drawings after the composition of another artist), as well as for exploratory sketch. The niche given the saint in the pen and ink drawing suggests that the artist may have been looking at a work of art in situ.



Francesco Guardi
Italian, 1712-1793
Villa Loredan a Paese (Villa Loredan at Paese), ca. 1774-1786
Pen and ink, brush and wash, and red chalk on paper
Anonymous gift 57.250

Freely sketched contour lines and the wash of shadow cast across the lawn make for an orderly and unembellished vedute, or view, of this lavish country home. Francesco Guardi produced views of the streets, piazzas, churches, and villas in and around Venice, including the painting to the right, in a characteristically loose style. This drawing was made for a specific patron: John Strange, a British gentleman scholar, diplomat, and the resident of this home. It is probably a preparatory study for one of the four paintings of the Villa Loredan commisioned from Guardi by Strange. The diplomat's ambitions to document the villa speak to his interest in the architectureof Italy.

RISD MUSEUM



Italian
Kneeling Figure, ca. 1550-1575
Black and white chalks on prepared paper
Anonymous gift 58.076

Composed on prepared paper (paper colored with a wash, creating a blue-gray, or middle-tone, background) a drapery study such as this was typically executed by an artist conceptualizing a larger composition full of many figures. Here the drapery and pose of a kneeling saint or patron is drawn with quick, sketchy strokes of black chalk. Highlights of white chalk indicate where light will fall in the final work.



Philippe Auguste Hennequin
French, 1762-1833
Allegory in Honor of Napoleon (Allégorie sur la Liberté de l'Italie), ca. 1797
Pen and ink, and graphite on paper
Anonymous gift 58.077

In this preliminary sketch for a print, General Napoleon Bonaparte stands between Minerva, who represents a liberated Italy, and a Herculean figure that presents a statue symbolizing Equality. The subject matter pertains to Napoleon's imperial ambitions: after defeating the Austrians in a battle for Italian territories, the future emperor granted freedom to Italy in 1797, thereby creating an indebted ally. Napoleon recalled: "[In Italy] I realized I was a superior being and concieved the ambition of performing great things, which hithero had filled my thoughts only as a fantastic dream". Hennequin's deliberate neoclassical style evokes the glory of earlier empires, and rulers such as Hannibal, Alexander, and Caesar Augustus.



Italian
Study of a Saint, 1600s
Red and white chalk on beige paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Scheiner 77.106