

*European Galleries (Jun-Dec PDP Rotation)*, June 3, 2013-December 2, 2013

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, designer  
Italian, 1720-1778

*View of the south wall interior of the Frigidarium at the Baths of Diocletian, now incorporating the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, from the series "Vedute di Roma (Views of Rome)", 1774*

Etching on laid paper

Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 16.594



Giovanni Battista Piranesi created this print as one of more than 130 views, or vedute, representing significant sites in Rome. Prints such as this one provided pilgrims, scholars, artists, and tourists with an affordable souvenir of their visit to Rome. Piranesi's popular views defined the European perception of Roman landmarks to the extent that the German writer Goethe (1749–1832), who had come to know Rome through Piranesi's prints, claimed to be somewhat disappointed on his first encounter with the real thing. This view shows the well-preserved remains of the south wall of the interior of the frigidarium (cold room) of Diocletian's baths (306 CE). Piranesi emphasizes the dramatic scale of the structure. Attached is the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, dedicated in 1561 to the Christian martyrs who allegedly worked to build the baths.

Jacob Hoefnagel

Flemish, 1575 - c.a. 1630

After Joris Hoefnagel, designer

Netherlandish, 1542-1600

Workshop of Theodor de Bry, printmaker

Netherlandish, 1528-1598

*The locusts have no king, yet all of them march in rank. Proverbs 30, 27, from the book Archetypa studiaeque patris Georgii Hoefnagelii, Frankfurt, 1592*

Engraving on laid paper

Walter H. Kimball Fund 2006.117.2



# RISD MUSEUM

Swiss

*Manuscript*, ca. 1370

Ink on vellum

Museum Works of Art Fund 43.439

Before the invention of printing in Europe in about 1420, specialized craftsmen produced manuscript books entirely by hand. Animal skins were scraped, stretched, and whitened to make vellum, sheets of which were arranged and bound into books. Scribes then wrote the text with a quill pen in black, brown, or red ink. This leaf comes from a gradual, a book containing the full set of musical texts used by a cantor and choir during the Roman Catholic Mass. The presence of neumes (precursors to musical notes) and a staff (horizontal lines representing pitch) helps date the leaf to the later medieval period. The neumes indicate relative pitches but not necessarily rhythm. The red initials signal the start of new phrases, an aid to the small group of singers who would have crowded around the book.



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, etcher

Italian, 1696-1770

*A Human Skull and a Tibia Burning on a Pedestal, Scherzi di Fantasia*, 1750-1760

Etching on laid paper

Edgar J. Lownes Fund 47.013

The prints by the Venetian artist Giovanni Battista Tiepolo came to define the term capriccio in the 18th century, that is, a work of art with enigmatic subject matter that expresses an idea of invention or unfettered imagination. In this etching, a turbaned figure burns a fire on a rustic pedestal, using the remains of a human skeleton as fuel. The soldier and woman who surround him suggest rather than define a narrative. The crumbling surfaces and broken objects around them further stimulate the imagination. In the period, such elements may have referred to contemporary beliefs—at least in private circles—in the occult or witchcraft. If the subject matter leaves many questions unanswered, Tiepolo's deft handling of the etching needle provides visual enjoyment and immersion in an unsettling imaginary world.



# RISD MUSEUM

Michael Wolgemut, designer  
German, 1434-1519  
Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, designer  
German, ca. 1458-1494  
Anton Koberger, printer  
German, ca. 1445-1513  
Stephan Fridolin, author

*Daniel Sees the Splendor of God, from the book Schatzbehalter der wahren Reichtümer des Heils (Treasure Chest of the True Riches of Salvation), Nuremberg, 1491*

Woodcut with hand coloring on laid paper  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 47.022



In 1491, the Franciscan friar Stephan Fridolin (ca. 1430–1498) wrote the *Schatzbehalter*, a book telling the story of Christian salvation through 100 events. Illustrated with 96 full-page woodcuts—of which this sheet is one example—the book aided in the instruction, memory, and devotions of a growing literate audience, including the nuns in the Bamberg convent where Fridolin was preacher.

Here the Old Testament prophet Daniel, still in bed, records his prophetic dream in which God, Christ, and a host of angels arrive in answer to four apocalyptic beasts. The woodcut was made in the Nuremberg workshop of Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, whose technique is exemplified by the spare modulation of form and minimal shading and cross-hatching. Three-dimensionality is instead suggested by hand coloring, which obscures rather than enhances the definition of the lines underneath.

Lucas Cranach the elder, designer  
German, 1472-1553  
*Beheading of St. John the Baptist*, 1510-1516  
Woodcut on laid paper  
Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth 49.126



This woodcut depicts the moment following the gruesome decapitation of St. John the Baptist. King Herod, charmed by a dance performed by his stepdaughter, Salome, has just fulfilled her wish to see the saint executed. Lucas Cranach the Elder positioned the executioner's stage at an outward angle and rendered the severed body with horrific clarity at its edge, forcing the viewer to confront the scene. The spears and the printmaker's marks on the architecture, arranged in orderly horizontals, draw our attention to the dramatic narrative moment. At right, Salome holds a charger to collect the head of the saint, which she will present to Herod and to her mother, the mastermind behind the plot. Typical of his religious scenes, Cranach depicted the crowd in contemporary German costumes.

# RISD MUSEUM

Sebastiano Serlio, author and printmaker

Italian, 1475-1554

Giovanni Battista et Marchio Sessa brothers, publisher

Italian, 1559-1568

*All the works of architecture and perspective of Sebastiano Serlio, Bolognese (Tutte l'opere d'architettura, et prospetiva, di Sebastiano Serlio, Bolognese), First book [-fifth], Venice: Gio[vanni] Battista and Marchio Sessa brothers, 1559-1568, 1559-1568*

Bound book with woodcuts and engravings on laid paper

Transfer from the RISD Library 49.406

In this spread, Bolognese architect Sebastiano Serlio demonstrates the practical application of one-point perspective to stage design. This volume was the first illustrated collection of architectural styles printed in Europe and organized for practical use by architects. Serlio began with basic ideas (geometry and perspective) and moved on to complex applications (ancient monuments and temple, or church, designs). For the first time, the book provided architects and artists wide visual access to the scattered monuments of antiquity, thus obviating the need for travel. It did much to disseminate Italian Renaissance ideals of architecture to the North, ideas that were based, in turn, upon writings by the first-century BCE Roman architect, Vitruvius.

Luca Cambiaso

Italian, 1527-1585

*The Descent from the Cross, ca. 1570*

Pen and ink, brush and wash

Gift of Miss Ellen D. Sharpe 50.298

To our eyes, this compositional study appears strikingly modern with its cubistic rendering of forms and summary abstraction of faces, yet the prolific Genoese artist, Luca Cambiaso, produced this drawing in the late sixteenth century. Cambiaso's powerful and rapid graphic shorthand reflects his use of models made of clay or wax and the existence of a thriving workshop in which apprentices used his drawings to transfer general compositional outlines to canvas or board. Cambiaso himself painted the detailed facial expressions, textures, and effects of light. Although his graphic style may be called revolutionary, the composition itself sits firmly within Renaissance

conventions: it exhibits a pyramidal composition and a traditional rendering of the swooning Virgin Mary and the kneeling Mary Magdalene at Christ's descent from the Cross.

For more information on the materials used to make this drawing, see the case in the center of this gallery.



# RISD MUSEUM

James Barry, designer  
Irish, 1741-1806  
*King Lear and Cordelia*, ca. 1790 (reworked from a 1776 state)  
Etching with engraving on laid paper  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 76.033

Howl, howl, howl, howl!, You are men of stone  
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so,  
That heaven's vault should crack, She's gone for ever.  
(King Lear, Act 5, Scene 10)

This print illustrates Shakespeare's description of the death of King Lear's daughter Cordelia. So shocking to British audiences was this dismal conclusion that in 1756 the play was rewritten and performed with a happy ending at David Garrick's Drury Lane Theater. Barry, a history painter, may have intended this print and its related painting as an answer to public reservations about Cordelia's death. Embracing tragedy as a lesson and drawing upon Renaissance depictions of the pietà, his Cordelia is infused with Christ-like martyrdom, and Lear with almost psychotic agony. One contemporary critic lambasted Barry's composition, calling it "Burlesque: Cordelia represented by a Fat Billingsgate Fish-woman overpowered with Gin" (The Public Advertiser, May 3, 1774).

Flemish  
*St. Margaret and Dragon*, late 1400s - early 1500s  
Ink, tempera, and gold on vellum  
Anonymous gift 82.190.1

The subject matter and size of this illuminated miniature suggest that it was removed from a small prayer book or a book narrating the lives of the saints. The painting depicts St. Margaret in prayer, standing on a dragon; the saint's body type and high forehead and the carefully drawn parallel hatching on the faces and robes point to the origin of the illumination in the southern Netherlands, perhaps Flanders.

According to legend, St. Margaret was swallowed whole by a dragon but broke free from its womb unscathed. The resonance of this story meant that the saint was often the focus of prayer during pregnancy, her painted or printed image sometimes worn on an amulet or a clutched in the hand during childbirth.



# RISD MUSEUM

*Various artist's supplies displayed in a case in European Gallery  
rotation,*

TL124.2013

