

PRESS RELEASE

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GRAPHIC MASTERS: DÜRER, REMBRANDT, HOGARTH, GOYA, PICASSO, R. CRUMB OPENS AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM JUNE 9

SAM's first large-scale exhibition devoted to the graphic arts features more than 400 works spanning 500 years

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SEATTLE, WA - In its first large-scale exhibition devoted exclusively to the graphic arts, the Seattle Art Museum presents *Graphic Masters: Dürer, Rembrandt, Hogarth, Goya, Picasso, R. Crumb* (June 9–August 28, 2016). Featuring over 400 works by some of history's greatest printmakers, the exhibition offers an in-depth exploration of the more than 500-year history and process of printmaking.

Requiring less costly materials than painting or sculpture, printmaking gave artists the freedom to experiment, push boundaries, and express their own views with a much larger audience. The reproductive medium also gave rise to the popularity of the serial form; the several print series presented in this exhibition represent milestones of that form. From underground comic legend R. Crumb's masterwork *The Book of Genesis* to Francisco Goya's entire influential *Los Caprichos* print series to Pablo Picasso's important *Vollard Suite* etchings, the prints and drawings in the exhibition not only highlight some of the finest examples of the artists' work in the print medium, but also offer fresh perspectives on these exceptional artists.

"This exhibition is about how great artists tell stories through images and words—often together," says Chiyo Ishikawa, Susan Brotman Deputy Director for Art and Curator of European Painting and Sculpture. "These works are some of the greatest artworks ever made, and yet their light sensitivity means that they often stay in storage. It's a very rare treat to see these works presented together."

A free booklet illustrated by Seattle artist Tim Marsden will highlight the printmaking techniques on display in the exhibition, giving visitors an insight into these complicated processes—and the deftness these artists brought to the medium.

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THE ARTISTS

Albrecht Dürer, German
May 21, 1471 – April 6, 1528

The son of a Nuremberg goldsmith, Dürer became the most accomplished German artist of the Renaissance, transforming painting, printmaking, design, and artistic theory. Dürer's innovative work in woodcuts turned what had been a crude form of illustration into an achingly expressive medium. On view in this exhibition are 10 of a set of 12 woodcuts from *The Large Passion* (1497/1510). Produced in two stages separated by 13 years, it tells the story of the last days of Jesus Christ's life. Eventually issued as a publication—another example of Dürer's pioneering innovations—it set a new standard for the fine woodcut.

Rembrandt van Rijn, Dutch
July 15, 1606 – October 4, 1669

Picasso said "Every painter takes himself for Rembrandt. Everybody has the same delusions." Rembrandt's oeuvre displays a disarming intimacy; deftness with forms and volumes; and ingenious use of light, shade, and line that had an enormous influence on Picasso, Goya, and innumerable other artists. Several of his beautiful etchings are on view, including *Self-Portrait with Saskia* (1636) and *Christ Healing the Sick (The Hundred Guilder Print)* (1647-49).

William Hogarth, English
November 10, 1697 – October 26, 1764

Hogarth was a painter, printmaker, editorial cartoonist, and social critic. On view in this exhibition are 14 engravings from *The Harlot's Progress* (1732) and *The Rake's Progress* (1735), "moral progress" melodramas that chart the corruption of an innocent or gullible figure in the big city. With a facility for caricature, acute observation of the telling detail, and indignation at societal inequities, these "modern moral subjects" are ancestors of the modern comic strip. They were immensely popular, resulting in a proliferation of cheap imitations; this piracy led Hogarth to petition Parliament to pass the Engraving Copyright Act of 1734.

Francisco Goya, Spanish
March 30, 1746 – April 16, 1828

Named court painter to King Charles III and later, Charles IV, Goya painted countless portraits of the royal family and nobles. At the same time, he embarked on a radically subversive project, 80 prints called *Los Caprichos* (published 1799). The entire series of prints—variously using etching, aquatint, drypoint, and burin—will be on view. The prints and their enigmatic captions are often lacerating critiques of injustices—particularly within the Church and aristocracy—while others are mysteriously dreamlike or nightmarish. Tied to their time and place, these utterly original works continue to inspire and humble artists to the present day.

Pablo Picasso, Spanish
October 25, 1881 – April 8, 1973

In addition to groundbreaking paintings and sculptures, Picasso was a prolific printmaker. On view in this exhibition are all 100 etchings of the *Vollard Suite* (1930-37), commissioned by art dealer and publisher Ambroise Vollard. Unlike other series in this exhibition, the *Vollard Suite* has neither an explicit relationship with text nor a clear beginning or end. Some themes are treated in depth, others seem like one-offs; some are light-hearted and lyrical, others are brutally passionate. Of the more than 2500 etchings Picasso produced in his long career, the *Vollard Suite* is considered his most important work.

R. Crumb, American
Born August 30, 1943

A cartoonist since he was a teenager in Delaware, R. Crumb defined the “underground comix” world of the 1960s-70s with indelible characters such as Mr. Natural and Fritz the Cat. Crumb’s choice of subject matter has won him as many detractors as fans; he has used his incredible talent to create outrageous cartoons that unashamedly lay bare personal obsessions. Unlike the other artists in this exhibition who worked in many types of media, drawing is Crumb’s primary medium. On view in this exhibition are all 207 drawings from *The Book of Genesis*, a massive project in which he illustrated the first book of the Bible, creating a believable biblical world in comic book form.

RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Thursday June 9

Opening Night Celebration

Seattle Art Museum

We’re open late for a FREE celebration of *Graphic Masters: Dürer, Rembrandt, Hogarth, Goya, Picasso, R. Crumb*, featuring music, art, animation, and zines. Join us for screenings of animated shorts hosted by Clyde Petersen; a showcase of local illustrators, zinesters, and printmakers curated by Short Run; printmaking activities with local artists; and Art of Jazz with Happy Orchestra. Don’t miss the Fantagraphics R. Crumb-painted “Cartoon Van” parked outside the museum!

Every Sunday; June 12–August 28

Press & Print: Drop-in Studio

Seattle Art Museum

Join us as we invite local printmakers into our working studio space. Demonstrations and lessons will include relief printing, dry point, mono printing, and other techniques used by artists in the exhibition and still in use today.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by the Seattle Art Museum.

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ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a "museum without walls," free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of more than 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.