

PRESS INFORMATION

**GRANDE DECORAZIONE. ITALIAN MONUMENTAL PAINTING IN GRAPHIC ART
STAATLICHE GRAPHISCHE SAMMLUNG MÜNCHEN AT THE PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE**

PRESS CONFERENCE | 12 OCTOBER 2018, 11.00 A.M.

OPENING | 12 OCTOBER 2018, 6.30 P.M.

DURATION OF EXHIBITION | 13 OCTOBER 2018–06 JANUARY 2019

Andrea Mantegna, Raphael, Michelangelo, Primaticcio, Annibale Carracci, Pietro da Cortona, and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo are world famous for their achievements in monumental painting. Mantegna's *Triumph of Caesar* from around 1500 is one of his most important works, soon rivalled by Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling and Raphael's *Stanze* in the Vatican. These and later frescoes were taken up by printmakers and reinterpreted in their own uniquely graphic style.

This exhibition offers the first overview dedicated to the **subject of Italian monumental painting in prints from the late 15th century through to the 18th century**. It features 120 artworks that are uncommonly striking, appealing, and artistically mature in both scale and form. Single sheets, some with highly unconventional interpretations of, for example, Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* and compositions by Giulio Romano and Parmigianino, are on display alongside cycles of multiple sheets depicting gallery decorations such as Carlo Cesio's view of Annibale Carracci's frescoes at the Galleria Farnese, a powerful masterpiece of the Roman Baroque. A softer effect is achieved by Pietro Antonio Cotta in his delightful pairs of cherubs after Guido Reni. A number of the painterly models were never actually realized. For instance, the death of Pope Paul V in 1621 put a stop to Lanfranco's proposed painting for the Benediction loggia at St. Peter's, but his preparation drawings were in great demand as prints and became widely known through this medium.

One particular challenge that printmakers faced was the reproduction of decorative paintings that had been created on spherical surfaces, especially domes. The exhibition presents different approaches to this problem, ranging from a 'fake', i.e., the square vault fresco transformed into a circle by copper engraver Cornelis Cort to simulate a cupola in his version, to renditions of dome paintings in layered strips and works in which the circular dome is divided into vertical, trapezoidal sections. Joined together like a globe, but viewed from the inside, these reproductions provide vivid impressions of works such as Lanfranco's colossal dome painting in the Roman church of Sant' Andrea della Valle.

The exhibition takes us on a journey through the history of Italian monumental painting told through the graphic medium. At a time when travelling was still the privilege of just a few, the prints – conceived as artworks in their own right – had a more enduring influence on people's perceptions of these decorations than the originals. The reproductions reveal the paintings from an individual perspective and served numerous additional functions that are nearly always disclosed to the viewer on direct observation in new and ever changing ways.

CATALOGUE

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PINAKOTHEKEN PRESS DEPARTMENT

Tine Nehler M.A. | Head of Communications

Pinakotheken | Pinakothek der Moderne | Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen
Barer Straße 29 | 80799 München

T +49 (0)89 23805-122
presse@pinakothek.de

www.pinakothek.de/presse
www.facebook.de/pinakotheken
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