



# Aquatint: From Its Origins to Goya



The National Gallery of Art highlights some original works by Goya at its new exhibition about the history of the aquatint technique.

A new printmaking technique –aquatint–swept through 18th-century Europe, yielding an extraordinary range of works, from images of erupting volcanoes, amorous couples, and mysterious tombs, to Russian exotica, biting caricatures, and moonlit vistas.

The first American exhibition to survey the medium’s development in France, England, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain, *Aquatint: From Its Origins to Goya* presents some 100 early and exceptional impressions, many of which have recently been acquired by the National Gallery of Art. By supplementing the line work of etching, aquatint offered an exciting method for multiplying ink-and-wash drawings that render tone in subtle ways.

Aquatint flourished outside the official circles of European art academies in the hands of three kinds of artists –professional printmakers, amateurs (art lovers), and *peintre-graveurs* (painter-printmakers). Each played a distinctive and significant role in publicizing, disseminating, and advancing the aquatint medium. Professional printmakers combined it with other intaglio printmaking techniques to reproduce highly prized drawings by old master and contemporary artists.

Amateurs, an elite group of like-minded collectors, embraced drawing, etching, and aquatint to not only expand their art-historical and connoisseurial knowledge, but also cultivate relationships with artists. *Peintre-graveurs* revisited, re-created, and circulated their designs through aquatint to build their reputations and broaden their audiences, dramatically expanding the formal vocabulary and expressive potential of the medium.

VISUAL ARTS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sun, October 24–  
Mon, February 21, 2022

## Venue

National Gallery of Art, Constitution Ave.  
NW, Washington, DC 20565

[View map](#)

## Admission

Free

## More information

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## Credits

Organized by the National Gallery of Art with the support of the Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Charitable Trust. Image: *Fuerte cosa es!* by Francisco de Goya, 1810/1820.