



EMORY

MICHAEL C.
CARLOS
MUSEUM

MUSEUM OF BIBLICAL ART
MOBIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Priyanka Sinha

Office: 404-727-4291

Cell: 404-822-5019

priyanka.sinha@emory.edu

**DUTCH AND FLEMISH MASTERPIECE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BIBLE
FALL EXHIBITION AT EMORY'S CARLOS MUSEUM**

ATLANTA, June 16, 2009—The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University presents *Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century*, a collection of approximately 80 engravings and woodcuts by the foremost Dutch and Flemish masters of the sixteenth century, on view from October 17, 2009 to January 24, 2010. The exhibition, featuring works by Lucas van Leyden, Maarten van Heemskerck, Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert, and Hieronymus Wierix among others, explores the ways in which printed illustrations of Biblical and other religious themes supplemented and magnified the texts they accompanied during a period of dramatic religious and political upheaval. Atlanta is the only other destination for *Scripture*, currently on view at the Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA) in New York. The exhibition has already received an excellent review in the [New York Times](#).

Popular function of Scripture

In the sixteenth-century Netherlands, the translation of biblical texts into biblical images went hand-in-hand with the translation of scripture into the common language. Antwerp and Amsterdam became major centers where vernacular Bibles and their woodcut and engraved illustrations were published. The exhibition demonstrates how, as co-curator [Walter Melion](#), Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Art History at Emory, points out, “pictorial images. . . offered a clarifying lens through which the word of God was received, pondered, and interpreted” by a growing audience at the time of tumultuous struggles between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Exhibition highlights

Scripture for the Eyes is organized by MOBIA and curated by Walter S. Melion and James Clifton, director, Sarah Campbell Blaffer. Illustrations are on loan from 13 institutions including the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Antwerp's Plantin Museum, and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Also included are key items from Emory University Libraries, including five rare volumes of the [Antwerp Polyglot Bible](#)--side by side translations of biblical text in several languages including Latin and Hebrew. [Educational events](#) accompanying the exhibition will also examine how visual images affect religious worship and experience.

Notable works include *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (c. 1510) by Lucas van Leyden, regarded as one of the greatest engravers in the history of art. The engraving dramatizes the New Testament parable of the Prodigal Son with the events of the story taking place within a richly detailed, panoramic landscape. The central message of the parable, the father's forgiveness of his repentant son, would have been clear to both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Each could, however, interpret the image in the light of their own beliefs, defining for themselves just who the Prodigal Son personified and exactly which sins were to be

forgiven. Margaret Shufeldt, Curator of Works on Paper at the Carlos Museum, notes that “Just as many images in themselves betrayed no particular sectarian bias, so the artists’ personal beliefs did not necessarily enter into their work. Particularly noteworthy is the case of the Lutheran Wierix brothers whose talent as engravers was much in demand by Catholic patrons.”

In a series of six scenes from Hendrick Goltzius’ *Life of the Virgin*, three of which are in the *Scripture* exhibition, the artist surrendered his own virtuosic engraving style to assume the styles of six earlier masters, signifying the multiple forms of beauty required to evoke the Virgin’s physical and spiritual perfection. In the case of *The Adoration of the Magi* (c. 1593-1594) Goltzius imitates the style of Lucas van Leyden.

The exhibition is organized according to function of the prints rather than the subject or chronology. For instance, in the section on meditative prayer or worship, prints explore the process of self-reformation through the imitation of Christ. One interesting example of this is Hieronymus Wierix’s engraving of the *Circumcision Enframed by the Text of Psalm 6*. The words of this penitential psalm are arranged in an elaborate looping pattern surrounding the central image of Christ’s circumcision, one of seven instances of his spilling his blood for the redemption of sinners. By reading the psalm, following the turnings of the scrolling text, a worshipper would enact the turning or conversion of the soul from sin.

About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets art and artifacts from antiquity to the present in order to provide unique opportunities for education and enrichment in the community, and to promote interdisciplinary teaching and research at Emory University. The Carlos Museum has grown to become one of the Southeast’s premier museums with major collections of Greek and Roman, Ancient Egyptian, Near Eastern, Nubian, Ancient American, African, and Asian art, as well as a collection of works on paper from the Renaissance to the present.

Location: 571 South Kilgo Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30322, U.S.A. **Telephone:** 404-727-4282 **Fax:** 404-727-4292 **Hours:** Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday 12 noon - 5 p.m. (Closed on Mondays and university holidays) **Admission:** \$7 donation. Free for Carlos Museum members and Emory University faculty, students, and staff. **Public Tours:** Free docent-led tours of the Museum depart from the Rotunda on Level One every Sunday at 2:30 p.m. during the Emory academic year (call 404-727-4282 to confirm).

www.carlos.emory.edu

###