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compelling paradox that although the maps had the express purpose of representing a site as accurately as possible, and the inscriptions often underline that they are 'vrai', the hybridity of the techniques and viewpoints means that they are effectively constructs. Like later landscape painting, these maps question the definition of realism in art.

It is not within the remit of the exhibition to compare this material to that preserved in other countries or to draw any conclusions as to its importance.⁴ From an art-historical perspective, it seems clear that it throws new light on a heterogeneous body of sources that came into being before Ptolemy's rediscovery and both contributed to and was enriched by the rise of landscape painting.

¹ See, recently, T. Michalsky: *Projektion und Imagination: die niederländische Landschaft der frühen Neuzeit im Diskurs von Geographie und Malerei*, Munich 2011.

² See N. Büttner: *Die Erfindung der Landschaft: Kosmographie und Landschaftskunst im Zeitalter Bruegels*, Göttingen 2000, p.49; for Ptolemy, see L. Federzoni: 'The "Geographia" of Ptolemy between the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and beyond', in T. Michalsky, F. Schmieder and G. Engel, eds: *Aufsicht – Ansicht – Einsicht: Neue Perspektiven auf die Kartographie an der Schwelle zur frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin 2009, pp.93–115.

³ Catalogue: *Quand les artistes dessinaient les cartes: Vues et figures de l'espace français, Moyen Âge et Renaissance*. Edited by Juliette Dumasy-Rabineau, Nadine Gastaldi and Camille Serchuk. 240 pp. incl. numerous col. ill. (Éditions Le Passage, Paris, 2019), €25. ISBN 978-2-84742-427-0.

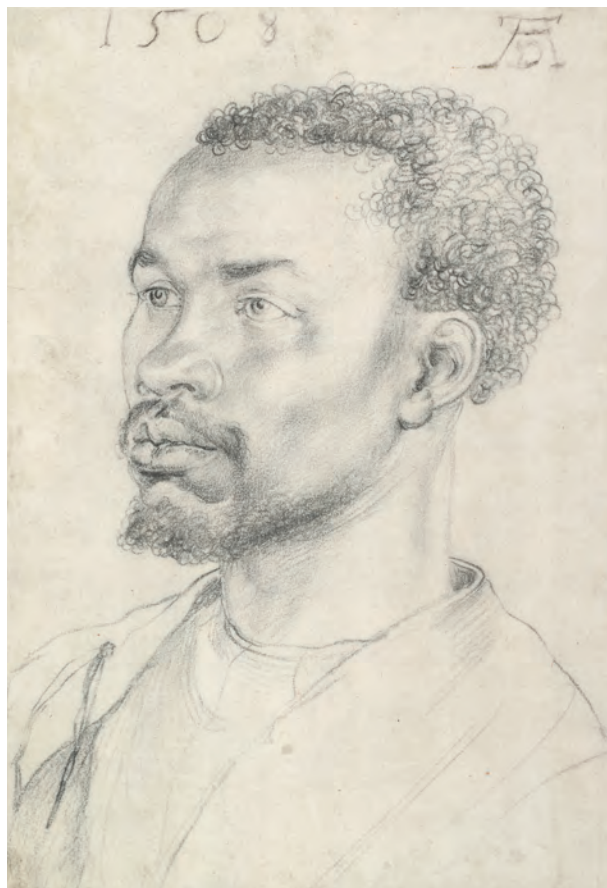
⁴ See the forthcoming study *Lies of the Land* by Camille Serchuk.

Albrecht Dürer

Albertina, Vienna
20th September 2019–
6th January 2020

by ARMIN KUNZ

Admirers of Germany's 'Second Apelles' (as Albrecht Dürer was termed by the imperial poet laureate Conrad Celtes) are fortunate that they have not needed to wait a generation before the Albertina, Vienna, decided to open its vaults again. The present exhibition follows only sixteen years after the museum's last comprehensive survey of Dürer's graphic work, in 2003, which was the first since its celebration of



10. Head of an African, by Albrecht Dürer. 1508. Black chalk, 31.8 by 21.7 cm. (Albertina, Vienna).

the quincentenary of the artist's birth in 1971.¹ Given the age and fragility of these works on paper or vellum and the susceptibility of watercolour to light, it might be asked if we needed another Dürer show.² A first, resounding 'yes' is based on the sheer aesthetic pleasure that awaits visitors to the exhibition. But there are plenty of less self-indulgent reasons to answer in the affirmative, among them the historical contextualisation of the Albertina's collection that has been undertaken by the show's curator, Christof Metzger (assisted by Julia Zaunbauer). Metzger uses meticulously reconstructed provenances to review questions of attribution and to propose fresh answers regarding the function of some of Dürer's most celebrated works.

The 2003 exhibition was a strictly chronological survey aimed at retracing the trajectory of Dürer's career. Although retaining a roughly chronological arrangement, the present exhibition makes the history of the Albertina's collection its central focus. One of Metzger's essays in the imposing catalogue explains the provenances

of these rich holdings, with detailed information provided in three important appendices.³ A substantial portion of the roughly 140 works originate from a single album, the *Kunstbuch*, which was acquired in 1588 by Emperor Rudolf II from the heirs of the wealthy merchant Willibald Imhoff, the most important collector of Dürer's works in sixteenth-century Nuremberg and the grandson of Dürer's humanist friend Willibald Pirckheimer. Imhoff had assembled this album, which contained 'excellently drawn pieces, which Dürer has painted' ('*trefflich gezeichnete Stücke, die Dürer gemalt hat*'), through purchases made from various sources that can all be traced back to the artist's estate.

The grouping of those works and Dürer's frequent later annotations on his drawings show that many of them were present in his studio at the time of his death in 1528. He must have selected them to illustrate aspects of his multifaceted oeuvre, both thematic – early works, self-portraits and portraits of family members as well as landscapes – and technical, with studies on coloured paper and drawings in black chalk. Standing out among the latter for its sensitive yet highly economical handling is the *Head of an African* (cat. no.63; Fig.10). The drawings can therefore be seen as part of the artist's effort to commemorate his own life in a way that is not unlike the comprehensive family chronicle he wrote in late 1524. Brought together in the exhibition, they recreate at least in part Dürer's retrospective view of his oeuvre, presenting the artist as he saw himself: Dürer as the first curator of his own collection.

After leaving the imperial collection in Prague, the drawings, which had been reassembled in two albums, became part of the Habsburg court library in Vienna until Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen (1738–1822) offered an exchange of works to incorporate them into his imposing collection in 1796. During the French occupation of Vienna in 1805–09, and probably with the collusion of Albert's curator, François Lefébvre, one of the albums was stolen. Its contents provided to a large extent the supply of drawings by Dürer on

11. *Praying hands and Head of an apostle*, by Albrecht Dürer. 1508. Brush and black and gray ink, gray wash, heightened with white, on blue prepared paper, 29.1 by 23.6 cm. and 29.1 by 19.7 cm. (Albertina, Vienna).

12. *Muzzle of a bull*, by Albrecht Dürer. c.1502. Watercolour and bodycolour, 19.7 by 15.8 cm. (British Museum, London; exh. Albertina, Vienna).



the art market in the nineteenth century and is the main source of the Dürer holdings in, among others, the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, and the



Kunsthalle Bremen. The contents of the remaining album form the core of the Albertina's holdings. Guided by this history Metzger requested the loan of drawings from the dispersed album, which enabled him to show works that are not well represented in the Albertina, most notably landscape watercolours and the powerful head studies in black chalk.

With this historical context securely established, the exhibition then probes deeper, enquiring about the purpose of these works, which were so carefully arranged by the artist. Perhaps Metzger's most important reassessment is his identification of the many surviving studies of heads and hands on Venetian *carta azzurra*, or prepared blue paper. Immensely admired, they have always been seen as preparatory drawings for such paintings as the *Feast of the rose garlands* (1506; the poorly preserved original in Prague is represented here by a good copy of c.1606–12, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; no.108), the unfinished *Christ among the doctors* (1506–07; Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; no.104)

and a lost altarpiece, the *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin*, which was commissioned by the Frankfurt merchant Jakob Heller in 1507.

Emphasising the refinement of these brush drawings, with their delicately applied white highlights, Metzger points out that their extraordinary level of detail would not have been much use for preparatory works. Instead they should be seen as *ricordi* made from the finished paintings that often surpass them in the perfection of their execution. This interpretation is further supported by the highly calculated way in which the motifs – usually in pairs – are laid out on each sheet. Even that most over-reproduced piece of devotional kitsch known as the *Praying hands* (1508; Albertina; no.133) is one half of such a sheet, from which the other half, depicting the head of an apostle (1508; Albertina; no.132), was cut and mounted separately in the eighteenth century. The original *mis-en-page* is reconstructed in an illustration in the catalogue (Fig.11).

The exhibition also returns the series of pen-and-ink drawings on

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prepared green paper illustrating the Passion of Christ (the so-called *Green Passion*) wholly to Dürer, without the recently applied qualifier ‘and workshop’ (1503–04; nos.148–60). Metzger’s suggestion that they were probably made to accompany a deluxe Passion treatise is by far the best solution proposed so far to the question of what their original function might have been. They were, after all, still bound in a quarto-size book when Joachim von Sandrart wrote his description of the imperial *Kunstkammer* in 1651–53, in which he remarked that this series of drawings, ‘of all of his Passions [. . .] should be considered the best’ (*von allen seinen Paßsionen für die bäste zu halten*).

The exhibition’s generously spaced presentation of an unrivalled line-up of masterpieces – the *Great piece of turf* (1503; no.55), the *Young hare* (1502; no.59), the *Wing of a blue roller* (c.1500; no.56) – allows close study of the precision of the artist’s observation, a quality that is equally evident in lesser-known gems, such as the astonishing *Muzzle of a bull* (no.58; Fig.12). Yet the presence of these works is also a reminder of their *Künstlichkeit* (artistic artificiality). On the one hand, Dürer unflinchingly records damage to the wing of the blue roller (probably caused by the bird becoming entangled in the net that caught it, causing a few small feathers to be ripped out). On the other hand, he only pretends that a hare has posed for us. Dürer must have made sketches – now lost – that helped him create the image of the hare as if it were sitting in the studio – the window of which is reflected in the animal’s pupils – and as if it were throwing a shadow onto the piece of blank paper on which it is drawn. Dürer undertakes here a sophisticated play with different levels of representation, which Metzger intriguingly links to the proverb *Polygnoti lepus* (‘Polygnotus’s hare’), used in the sixteenth century to describe such a *trompe l’œil*, which refers to a hare painted so convincingly by Polygnotus in a fresco in Athens in the fifth century BC that everyone thought it alive.

Situated at a threshold between drawing and painting, these highly

13. Snuff box, by Louis Roucel. 1772–73. Sèvres porcelain plaques with paintings attributed to Louis-Denis Armand l’aîné after Jean-Jacques Bachelier, c.1760. Gold and soft-paste porcelain, 35 by 72 by 58 cm. (Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire; photograph Waddesdon Image Library / Mike Fear).

finished watercolours were never meant for sale. Showpieces then and now, they remained in the artist’s studio as *exempla* that demonstrated his mastery. By instrumentalising his powers of observation and developing an unparalleled skill in translating what he saw into art, Dürer was brilliantly able to illustrate the famous dictum from his posthumously published *Four Books on Human Proportion* (1528): ‘For truly, art is implanted in nature, if you can draw it out then it will be yours’.

1 The 2003 exhibition was reviewed by Jeroen Stumpel in this Magazine, 146 (2004), pp.63–65.

2 This concern is even more valid since two other exhibitions were held between these major overviews: *Albrecht Dürer und die Tier- und Pflanzenstudien der Renaissance* at the Albertina, Vienna, in 1985 and the fairly comprehensive *Albrecht Dürer: Master Drawings, Watercolors, and Prints from the Albertina* at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in 2013.

3 Catalogue: *Albrecht Dürer*. Edited by Christof Metzger. 488 pp. incl. 260 col. ills. (Prestel, Munich, 2019), £49.99. ISBN 978-3-7913-5930-4. English edition: ISBN 978-3-7913-5931-1.

A Rothschild Treasury

Waddesdon Manor,
Buckinghamshire
7th September–27th October

by MICHAEL HALL

There is always something new to see at Waddesdon Manor. The latest addition to the house is the Rothschild Treasury, a permanent installation opened in September in one of the exhibition galleries on the

attic floor (Fig.15). This glitteringly seductive display of small-scale precious objects, ranging in time from ancient Greece and Rome to the twentieth century, was conceived by Lord (Jacob) Rothschild as a gallery in which items from his family’s collections, including his own, could be enjoyed and studied by visitors in an intimate setting.

The Treasury is another result of the unusual relationship between the house and the dynasty for whom it was built. In 1957 James de Rothschild, the third and last generation of his family to live at Waddesdon, bequeathed the house, its collections and gardens to the National Trust, to ensure their long-term preservation. However, he made certain that the Rothschilds would continue to have a close involvement by bequeathing Waddesdon’s estate to his widow, Dorothy, and, instead of giving the endowment for the house’s upkeep to the Trust, he vested it in independent trustees, of whom she was one. On her death in 1988 the estate and her role in the family trust were inherited by her cousin Jacob. As a result, although a possession of the National Trust, Waddesdon is run by – and to a great degree funded by – the Rothschilds.

Over the past thirty years the benefits of this combination of stable ownership with family leadership and finance have been immense, not least in the influx of works of art that complement the collections bequeathed to the National Trust. In the 1960s former bedrooms were converted into museum spaces, to which Dorothy de Rothschild lent works. This initiative has been greatly developed by Lord Rothschild, who – unlike Dorothy – is a collector himself. As well as paintings loaned from his family, such as Joshua Reynolds’s *David Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy* (1760–61), he has acquired works specifically for display at Waddesdon, including a state portrait (1781–82) of Louis XVI by Antoine-François Callet and J.S. Chardin’s *Boy building a house of cards* (1735).

These additions are displayed in the house’s museum spaces so as not to interfere with the historic integrity of the show rooms. There is one

