

## Exhibitions

the Reformation; the Buggery Act of 1533; a brief account of Edward VI (again short on portraits); images of Queen Elizabeth I; portraits of her male courtiers; Mary, Queen of Scots; the Tudor conquest of Ireland (powerful language used here); Gráinne O'Malley (c.1530–1603) the 'Pirate Queen'; the age of exploration (including the story of 'Diego', an enslaved Black African who joined Francis Drake's ship in 1573); transatlantic slavery in the sixteenth century; the defeat of the 1588 Spanish Armada – including two of the recently discovered map drawings from c.1589 of its various encounters (Fig.6); other international courts – comprising an unexpected selection, mixed in quality, of rulers contemporary with the Tudors; and finally, 'Tudor Innovation' – a perfunctory account of the creative writers of the age, in which William Shakespeare is represented by a single very small print (1632 or 1663–64; NPG 185).

The portrait of Henry VIII's sixth and final queen Katherine Parr (c.1545; NPG 4451) has been newly conserved for the show. A star of the exhibition is the remarkable illustrated Westminster Tournament Roll (Fig.7), made to mark an event that is little remembered today: the Great Tournament of Westminster, held on the 12th and 13th February 1511 to celebrate the birth of a son to Katherine of Aragon and the

**7. Installation view of *The Tudors: Passion, Power and Politics* at Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 2022, showing the Westminster Tournament Roll, 1511 (The College of Arms, London).**

nineteen-year-old Henry VIII (the infant was to die at a few weeks old). It depicts a procession of court figures, including the king's trumpeters. One of them is John Blanke, a Black trumpeter at the Tudor Court; he appears twice in it, at the opening and at the close of the tournament; these have become the best-known images of a named African person living in Tudor England. In the show, it has been unrolled at the second depiction of Blanke. A video screen above it shows the entire roll, section by section, which takes a total of ten minutes to view.<sup>4</sup> The creation of this video will be a significant legacy of this exhibition. The College of Arms, London, is to be commended for lending this long, fragile and vulnerable treasure, which has been in their careful stewardship for around five hundred years, and which is an important reminder that some key images from this period do not come in framed portrait form. An exhibit that has recently received much exposure is the altar cloth from St Faith, Bacton, Herefordshire. This may explain the decision to display it here inside a cave-like shelf that made it hard to view. A luxurious silver silk fabric embroidered with gold and silver thread, it may have been recycled from a garment associated with Elizabeth I, whose loyal attendant Blanche Parry is commemorated in the church; following the cloth's recent conservation, this long-held proposal

has gained wider credence, but is not accepted by all.

The show concludes with a self-contained section on the John Blanke Project, curated by Michael Ohajuru, who founded it in 2015. Alongside illustrated panels on the historical Blanke, contemporary works on paper respond to his life and legacy; all are monochrome, and are accompanied by words from their makers. Thus, a 2016 verse by Temi Odumosu describes Blanke as being 'like Dizzy Gillespie's twin'.

<sup>1</sup> Accompanying publication: *The Tudors: Passion, Power and Politics*. Edited by Charlotte Bolland, with contributions by Susan Doran, Gillian Kenny, Catharine MacLeod, Michael Ohajuru, Cassander Smith and Frederick Smith. 168 pp. incl. 80 col. ills. (National Portrait Gallery Publications, London, 2022), £18.95. ISBN 978-1-85514-598-6.

<sup>2</sup> This work, in oil on paper laid on panel, was rediscovered for an exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London, see K. Hearn, ed.: exh. cat. *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530–1630*, London (Tate Gallery) 1995–96, p.120, no.67. It was later acquired by the National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 6353).

<sup>3</sup> See A. Ailes and R. Tittler: 'Arms painting and the life of Sir Henry Unton', *British Art Journal* 20, no.3 (Winter 2019/2020), pp.12–17.

<sup>4</sup> Available at [www.johnblanke.com](http://www.johnblanke.com), accessed 8th July 2022.

### Hans Hoffmann: A European Artist of the Renaissance

Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg  
12th May–21st August

by ARMIN KUNZ

The banners and flyers advertising this exhibition, like the cover of its beautifully designed catalogue, depict a watercolour of a resting hare (cat. no.54; Fig.8) by Hans Hoffmann (c.1545/50–1591/92), but instead of the artist's monogram, 'Hh', it is signed with the well-known 'AD' of his famous Nuremberg predecessor Albrecht Dürer.<sup>1</sup> This is a predictable choice by the museum's press department, since Hoffmann is known first and foremost as a copyist of the works of Dürer, especially of his drawings and watercolours. Nonetheless, in the exhibition Yasmin Doosry, the recently retired head of the museum's department of prints and drawings, sets out to correct, or



at least question, Hoffman's abiding reputation as a mere epigone of the so-called Dürer Renaissance.

Little is known about Hoffmann's origins and his life. His earliest signed painting, a portrait of Barbara Möhringer, née Herz, is dated 1573 (Fränkische Galerie, Kronach; no.1), suggesting that he must have been born between 1545 and 1550. Although it is unclear where Hoffmann served his apprenticeship, stylistically his portraits show the influence of Nicolas Neufchâtel, a painter from Antwerp, who had arrived in Nuremberg in 1561. Even the notion that he was born in Nuremberg is a conjecture based on the fact that in the extensive archives of the city no evidence survives that Hoffmann ever applied for citizenship. His origin in Nuremberg is corroborated by two other pieces of evidence: in 1576 he is mentioned as a burgher of the free imperial city, and he was generously given permission twice to extend his right of residence after being appointed court artist to Emperor Rudolph II in Prague in July 1585. Rudolph's last payment to Hoffmann is dated October 1591 and in June of the following year the emperor authorised funds to be transferred to the artist's widow, Eva, which suggests that Hoffmann had died toward the end of 1591 or during the first half of 1592.

The exhibition sets the stage with an overview of Nuremberg portraiture in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, since it was Hoffmann's skill as a portraitist that introduced him to many of the city's influential families. His relationships with the art collectors Willibald Imhoff and Paulus II Praun had particularly important consequences for the artist's career. Imhoff, whose likeness is presented in both a finished pen and ink drawing (1580; Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest; no.9) and an unfinished, astonishingly vivid study on blue paper (no.10; Fig.10), owned a large number of Dürer's drawings, assembled in a single album (*groes puech*), which he was known often to show to 'foreign painters and artists' (*fremden Molern und kunsther*) (p.16). Virtually all of Hoffmann's copies after Dürer were based on works from this album, and the artist's friendship with the family – Imhoff's son, Willibald



the Younger, addresses him in a letter as 'dear friend' (*lieber Freund*) (p.16) – probably played a significant role in his Prague appointment. Consequently, Hoffmann then served as the main intermediary when Willibald Imhoff's widow, Anna, and her three sons agreed to the sale of the album with Dürer's works to the emperor in December 1588.

The other avid art collector of the period in Nuremberg was Paulus II Praun (1548–1616). His collection

**8. Resting hare, seen from the front, by Hans Hoffmann. 1580–85. Brush, watercolour and opaque paint with white highlights on vellum, 32.5 by 25.6 cm. (Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin; exh. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg).**

would ultimately comprise the largest corpus of works by Hoffmann, many of them copies after Dürer that undoubtedly functioned as stand-ins for works by the great master that were no longer obtainable even for the well-heeled Praun. Since Praun decreed that the collection could not be broken up after his death, it was preserved for nearly two hundred years. During this time it was regularly inventoried, making it one of the best-

## Exhibitions

documented collections of the period. When it was ultimately dispersed by the Nuremberg dealer and publisher Friedrich Frauenholz, who had bought the entire *Kunstkabinett* from the Praun family in 1801 to sell both privately and at auction, Nicolaus II Esterházy acquired a considerable number of drawings *en bloc* in 1804. These are now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, which, with fifty works, can boast one of the world's most comprehensive holdings of Hoffmann's works as part of its superb collection of early German drawings.

The significance of the Nuremberg exhibition lies not only in its assessment of the wider aspects of Hoffmann's work, but also in the effort the show makes to examine more closely the various ways in which he engaged with the art of

his famous predecessor. Behind the pejorative label of 'Dürer imitator' is an artist who appropriated and emulated Dürer's art in often highly original ways. Indeed, close copies are far more the exception than the rule among Hoffmann's drawings; they include his *Wing of a blue roller* (c.1574–85; Staatsbibliothek Bamberg; no.58) and a lion and lioness (both 1577; Germanisches Nationalmuseum; nos.49–50). The latter two works are based on Dürer's pair of watercolours from 1521 (Albertina, Vienna; no.48; and Musée du Louvre, Paris). Comparisons like these form the basis for the valuable technical observations of Roland Damm, a paper conservator at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum. Damm describes in the catalogue how Hoffmann, in his true-to-size copies, carefully traced the

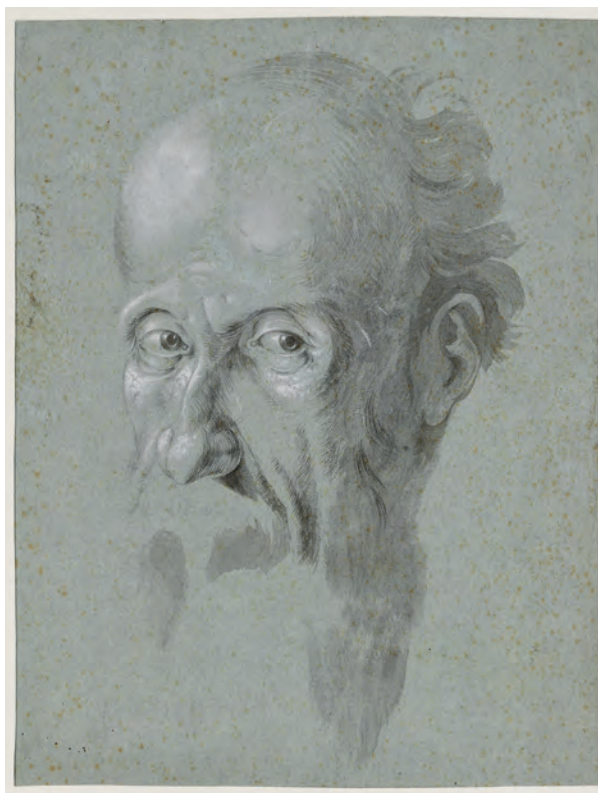
**9. *Christ among the doctors*, by Hans Hoffmann. c.1580–85. Black brush, watercolour and black chalk on paper, 24 by 31.4 cm. (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest; exh. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg).**

contours of his models but drew far more freely when filling in the internal details. In the watercolours, those tracings were often executed with diluted ink and are therefore hardly detectable in the finished works. For the line-based drawings, especially the copies after drawings that Dürer had made on *carta azzura* during his stay in Venice in 1505–07, Damm assumes the use of pricked templates. The faint chalk dots must have been washed away by the brush, which would explain why they are no longer visible. Here, the telltale sign of a copy is the straightforward course of the line, which lacks the more searching quality of Dürer's original.

Few of the religious works that are listed in large numbers in the Praun inventories survive. In the exhibition, this group is represented



by the painting *Christ among the doctors* (1585–90; National Museum, Warsaw; no.34), after a work of the same subject by Dürer (1506; Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid). It serves to illustrate the multitude of strategies Hoffmann deployed in his appropriations. He expanded the composition, adding figures to the background and rendering it less dense than his model. Only the scene's compositional core – the hands of the twelve-year old Christ – remain unchanged in all of Hoffmann's surviving versions.<sup>3</sup> Nuremberg owns Dürer's *ricordo* of the hands, drawn on *carta azzura* (1506; no.32); the attribution to Hoffmann of a rather pedestrian copy (no.38) on prepared paper from Budapest is somewhat hard to believe but clearly supported by the drawing's provenance in the Praun collection. In a drawn version of *Christ among the doctors* included in the exhibition (no.35; Fig.9), Hoffmann substituted the head of the central figure of Christ with the head of the lute-playing angel in the foreground of Dürer's *Feast of the rose garlands* (National Gallery, Prague), an altarpiece he painted in 1506 for the German merchants associated with the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, Venice (there is also a painted version of this compositional variant in a private collection). Dürer's *ricordi* on *carta azzura* of both of the head from the Madrid altarpiece and that from the Rose Garland Altarpiece (both 1506; Albertina) were in Imhoff's collection and provided Hoffmann with templates. It is interesting to note that the artist also made individual copies of these two head studies (both Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest; nos.36–37) using prepared paper intended to evoke the Venetian blue paper used by his predecessor. Having thereby established a trove of individual motifs, Hoffmann could continue to use them as models even after his move to Prague, mixing and matching them to create works in Dürer's manner without having access to a specific finished painting or composition. In this case, it is the always precisely repeated gesture of Christ's hands that connects all versions of *Christ among the doctors* with the older master's canon.



The *Young hare* (1502; Albertina) remains one of Dürer's most recognisable motifs. Although some relatively close copies of it are attributed to Hoffmann, the prototype is represented in the exhibition by Joris Hoefnagel's version (c.1580–90; Musée du Louvre, Paris; no.56). Displayed alongside are two watercolours by Hoffmann, which depict the animal from a slightly different angle, one on paper (1580–87; Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin; no.55) and one on vellum, which is the above-mentioned 'poster child' of the exhibition. Its deceptive Dürer monogram may well trick the public just as Hoffmann intended it would his contemporaries. Doosry suggests that the artist signed works meant for the closer circle of Dürer aficionados with his own monogram but was not above applying Dürer's 'AD' on works aimed at buyers that were unlikely to come to Nuremberg and consult Imhoff's album. Yet Hoffmann also incorporated the hare into depictions of more complex natural environments, a development that culminated in a large watercolour on vellum from 1582 (private collection; no.53), arguably a highlight of Praun's collection and of Hoffmann's work in

**10. Willibald Imhoff, by Hans Hoffmann.** c.1580. Graphite, black brush with white highlights on blue paper, 32.4 by 25.1 cm. (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest; exh. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg).

general. The composition is filled with an abundance of plants and insects, all so meticulously represented – down to a tick nestled in the fur above the hare's hindleg – that it has allowed botanists to determine from the growth of the depicted flowers the time of year as the second half of June.

Today, we tend to read Dürer's hare as a visual essay in make-believe that questions the very nature of representation. In Hoffmann's version, the animal becomes part of a larger study from nature (*Naturstück*). Such a visual diorama would have been fit for any cabinet of wonders and natural curiosities, otherwise filled with a variety of precious objects. Doosry has taken full advantage of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum's rich and varied holdings of decorative arts to present examples of such works, which are dramatically displayed on a podium that diagonally transverses the gallery space. They include a miniature landscape by Martin Stieber (1563; Germanisches Nationalmuseum; no.100), created from a specimen of ore (*Erzstufe*) decorated with scenes made of small silver figures, and casts of precious metal made from both plants and animals. On display are a flower and three astonishingly delicate plant stems as well as two lizards, all cast in silver and originating from the circle of the Nuremberg goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer (c.1540–50; Germanisches Nationalmuseum; nos.104 and 106).

#### WHAT'S ON

Our online Calendar is the best guide to art events around the world.

#### VISIT

[burlington.org.uk/whats-on](http://burlington.org.uk/whats-on)



## Exhibitions

The podium also functions as a convenient bridge to the show's section on plant and animal studies. Here, the comparison with the slightly earlier drawings made by the Swiss physician Conrad Gessner around 1555–65 for his planned *Historia Plantarum* (Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen; nos.86a–c; the book was printed only in 1750) elucidates the gradual division of the approach to nature during the early modern period into the separate epistemological perspectives we now call 'scientific' and 'artistic'. Whereas Gessner's main aim was documentation, Hoffmann's use of his powers of observation was only the first step toward an artistically composed whole. For him, an isolated specimen became part of a carefully considered *mise en page*.

In establishing this kind of context, the show transcends the confines of the 'Dürer Renaissance'. In a succinct and thought-provoking essay in the catalogue, Rainer Schoch questions the usefulness of this term as an art-historical classification. He reminds us that 'renaissance' (meaning rebirth) implies a period of oblivion that preceded it – something that never happened in the case of Dürer. The appreciation of his art, widely disseminated through his prints, never ceased, either at home or abroad. His admirers included Raphael and the Florentine Mannerists in the early sixteenth century and the artists of the Low Countries, both in the north (for example, Hendrik Goltzius and his school) and in the south (for example, the brothers Wierix) in the second half of the century. Schoch suggests, therefore, that we speak instead more generally of a Dürer reception that culminates around 1600. Hoffmann is undoubtedly its key figure, but his art, as the exhibition convincingly demonstrates, is far more varied and complex than that of a mere Dürer imitator.

1 Catalogue: *Hans Hoffmann: Ein europäischer Künstler der Renaissance*. Edited by Yasmin Doosry. 424 pp. incl. 235 col. ill. (Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, Nuremberg, 2022), €49. ISBN 978-3-946217-30-5.

2 There are four surviving versions. Aside from those included in the exhibition, one is in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig, the other in a private collection.

### From Donatello to Alessandro Vittoria, 1450–1600: 150 Years of Sculpture in the Republic of Venice

Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro, Venice  
22nd April–30th October

by DEBORAH HOWARD

Running in parallel with exhibitions of Donatello's works at Palazzo Strozzi and the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, this exhibition of sculpture in Venice between 1450 and 1600 is sponsored by Venetian Heritage, whose director, Toto Bergamo Rossi, a former stone conservator, has contributed the introductory essay to the catalogue.<sup>1</sup> The Ca' d'Oro provides a memorable setting for the sculptures, which occupy the entire *piano nobile*. Most of the works on show are from the museum's holdings, but they are complemented by important loans from various other galleries and private collections. An illuminating catalogue essay by the director of the Ca' d'Oro, Claudia Cremonini, narrates the history of the gallery with particular reference to the acquisition of sculpture. In such a setting there is an inevitable tension between the present function

11. *Domenico Duodo*, by Alessandro Vittoria. c.1596. Carrara marble, height 80 cm. (Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro, Venice; photograph Matteo De Fina).

of the palace as a national museum and the display of a historic and personal collection, that of Baron Giorgio Franchetti (1865–1922), who bought the Ca' d'Oro in 1894 and restored it to house his works of art. Cremonini reflects on changing approaches to this potential conflict of interest over time. For the period of the current exhibition, the museum's collection of paintings has been reinstalled in the newly refurbished second floor. The walls of the rooms on both storeys are painted in bold plain colours, with no attempt to recreate – or even evoke – Franchetti's hang.

To augment Franchetti's collection, the first director, Gino Fogolari, added numerous other pieces, especially between the Baron's death in 1922 and the museum's opening five years later. They include works that once belonged to tombs or altars and were taken from churches when they went out of use in the Napoleonic period, such as S. Maria dei Servi or S. Maria della Carità. Out of context these objects are easier to study, better lit and less encumbered by distracting features, yet sadly divorced from their original function. An example is Giovanni Battista Bregno's kneeling *Angel* (c.1511; no.23) from the church of the Servi, now in the sacristy of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, its crumpled drapery beautifully contrasted with its smoothly polished limbs. Although the exhibition aims to place each work at the appropriate height, in some cases the viewer feels obliged to crouch down or stretch to find the best viewpoint. To enliven the display, some of the sculptures stand on pieces of period furniture, such as large tables or sideboards.

The exhibition is arranged broadly chronologically, with a strong focus on the period 1480–1520. This review will consider the exhibits from the perspective of their materials: terracotta, bronze and marble. As Jeremy Warren notes in his catalogue essay, at the fulcrum of the period, the treatise *De Sculptura*, written by Pomponio Gaurico in Padua and published in 1504, described sculpture in clay as the 'mother of all the arts' (p.44). Indeed, the expressive possibilities of terracotta as a medium emerge strongly from this exhibition. The visitor is greeted by a serene terracotta bust of *St Lawrence* (c.1440; private collection; no.1), recently

