



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Kerri VanderHoff
Grand Rapids Art Museum
616.831.2914
pr@artmuseumgr.org

**GRAM ANNOUNCES IMPORTANT ACQUISITION
OF DÜRER SERIES, *THE ENGRAVED PASSION***

New Study Room Invites Access to Masterworks in Museum's Print Collection

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., November 28, 2007 – The Grand Rapids Art Museum announced today the acquisition of *The Engraved Passion*, among Albrecht Dürer's most important and earliest engraving series. The series, dating from 1507 to 1513, are engravings on laid paper. Dürer marks the beginning of printmaking history in Europe, and influences many later printmakers, including Rembrandt van Rijn.

The Engraved Passion describes The Passion of Christ, beginning with *The Man of Sorrows Standing by the Column* (1509) and tracing the story of the Passion through 16 works. Dürer's series was acquired by GRAM with support from Sid and Joanne Jansma who have already made possible several recent print acquisitions by Rembrandt.

Dürer was the first artist to elevate printmaking to the level of fine art, and he quickly established a reputation across Europe while still in his twenties. Working with both woodcuts and engravings, he attained a level of detail that is virtually unsurpassed. Dürer is recognized as one of the greatest printmakers in the history of the western print, an honor he shares with Rembrandt van Rijn, Francesco Goya and Pablo Picasso. These engravings by Albrecht Dürer are among the earliest dated works in GRAM's collection of prints and drawings, which spans the 16th through 20th centuries.

"Dürer's prints are at the core of all serious print collections, so it is a fitting distinction to open the Jansma Family Works on Paper Study and Reading Room with *The Engraved Passion* series," said Celeste Adams, GRAM museum director. "Combined with the recent acquisition of Rembrandt's *Three Crosses*, and other great Rembrandt prints, GRAM is establishing itself as an invaluable resource for the community with a growing collection of national importance."

Between 1507 and 1512, Dürer created *The Engraved Passion*, featuring a total of sixteen plates. Dürer's engravings for *The Small Passion* are more subtle and restrained in their presentation of Christ's Passion than either his small or large woodcut versions of this subject. The fineness of the engraved lines enabled Dürer to suggest in these scenes an almost spiritual light. The same fineness also made possible a greater exploration of facial expression, endowing these images with greater psychological dimensions. Dürer's engravings significantly influenced the early works of Rembrandt.

A key innovation introduced in *The Engraved Passion* series is the grey middle tone, which provides a greater variety of color between black and white than in previous editions. By combining the fine detail and color tones, Dürer establishes a deliberate experience for the viewer with each image prioritizing the whole narrative from scene to scene.

GRAM's complete of *The Engraved Passion* was assembled more than a century ago by Paul Davidsohn, a German collector.

1. The Man of Sorrows Standing by the Column, 1509
2. Christ on the Mount of Olives, 1508
3. Betrayal of Christ, 1508
4. Christ before Caiaphas, 1512
5. Christ before Pilate, 1512
6. Flagellation, 1512
7. Christ Crowned with Thorns, 1512
8. Ecce Homo, 1512
9. Pilate Washing his Hands, 1512
10. Christ Carrying the Cross, 1512
11. Crucifixion, 1511
12. Lamentation, 1507
13. Entombment, 1512
14. Christ in Limbo, 1512
15. Resurrection, 1512
16. St. Peter and St. John Healing a Cripple, 1513

The Jansma Family Works on Paper Study at GRAM opens on Sunday, December 2, 2007 at 12:00 p.m. It will be open thereafter with weekly hours Tuesday thru Friday 1:00-4:00 p.m.

The opening of the Works on Paper Study on December 2 will include a special lecture at 2:00 p.m. by Richard Axsom, GRAM senior curator for prints and photographs. Axsom will discuss Rembrandt's vision and revolutionary printmaking technique as well as the impact of Rembrandt's prints on major artists who followed after him.

Dürer's *The Engraved Passion* is available for viewing in the Study along with other major works on paper in GRAM's collection.

About the Grand Rapids Art Museum

The mission of the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) is to provide a gathering place where people of all ages and backgrounds can enrich their lives through interaction with works of art in a thought-provoking and creative way. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, GRAM is one of region's premier art museums. Established in 1910 as the Grand Rapids Art Association, GRAM has grown to include more than 5,000 works of art, of which more than half are works on paper. Embracing the city's legacy as a leading center of design and manufacturing, GRAM's collection reflects a growing number of design and modern craft pieces. Completion of GRAM's new building in October 2007 makes it the world's first LEED-certified art museum.

###