

Printing The World: Representations of Places by European Artists, 1470-1720.
Proposal for a partnership between the National Gallery of Canada and the British Museum, presented to Mark McDonald on 1 May 2008.

Venues

My hope would be to exhibit *Printing the World* at both the BM and the NGC complete with a scholarly catalogue, as happened with Bury's *Print in Italy* exhibition. The latter exhibition fit nicely into our own p&d galleries (582 m²), whereas the size, the diversity and the number of objects in *Printing the World* would be geared to our more extensive downstairs space (1,490 m²). I think it would also need to be a downstairs show at the BM, along the lines of Kim Sloan's very handsome exhibition on John White. Loans permitting, a third venue might not be out of the question, but two seems more feasible given the rarity and sensitivity of the material. The catalogue would require multiple authors under my editorship, along the lines of your Columbus volumes or *Landmarks in Print Collecting*.

Scope

With the title *Great Prospects* this project began life as a proposal for an exhibition of city views (chiefly prints, but also drawings and paintings), with particular attention to hybrid images combining aspects of map and view. In its current form the focus is exclusively on printed representations of places, ranging in scale from the cosmic (e.g. celestial and terrestrial globes) to the national or regional (in maps & atlases) and to locales as specific as a city, a square, a building or a monument. This ecumenical scope would be combined with a place-based organization for the bulk of the exhibition, thereby evincing the topographical section of an early modern print collection. As such the exhibition would take us back to a time when there was no sense of opposition between the categories of map and view, art and science, or aesthetics and information. The objects we have in mind are amazingly varied in their physical format, representational conventions, compositional type and point of view. We want to show examples of large *vs.* small, bound *vs.* loose, flat *vs.* spherical, sequential *vs.* synthetic, historiated *vs.* unhistoriated, inscribed *vs.* uninscribed, coloured *vs.* uncoloured, elaborate *vs.* simple, transcendent *vs.* ground-level, and so on. Comparisons among various images of a given place will offer an excellent vehicle for understanding the mechanisms by which representational conventions originate, proliferate, stabilize and subside.

Format

The first of two parts, **Technology & the Culture of Print** would constitute a brief and highly selective introduction to the materials and practices giving rise to the prints surveyed in the second section. A case or two on the *Technology of Printing* would show methods of printing images and texts, with artefacts and period illustrations explicating both relief and intaglio methods. (Ideally this would include such spectacular artefacts as a printing press, the assembled copperplates for a Callot siege, and woodblocks from Jacopo de' Barbari's Venice.) Next would come *Hand and Eye: Seeing, Measuring, Drawing, Showing*, laying out various tools (surveying instruments, optical devices, drawing instruments) and period manuals (for drawing,

writing, surveying, perspective). The visitor would learn about some of the more common methods of projection (one- and two- point perspective, plan, profile, panorama, bird's eye view) and modes of representation (synthetic view, series, itinerary, procession). The subsection *Putting it Together*, dealing with format, layout and compilation, might contrast the morphology of a loose view, a bound set of views, a book illustration, a large-scale album, and a printed globe (shown as sphere and as uncut gores), along with a full-dress wall map replete with inset views, decorative cartouches, legends, histories and instructions for use. A final subsection on *Dissemination & Ordering Systems* would serve as an introduction to the print trade, and to practices of arranging prints in compendia ranging from atlases and albums to entire libraries.

The bulk of the exhibition would be the section **The World on Paper**, which would show how these diverse technologies and practices come together in depictions of particular places. This section would open on a cosmic scale, complete with a coloured example of Antonio Saliba's spectacular *Nuova figura di tutte le cose* and examples of the competing models of the solar system (Ptolemaic, Copernican, Tychoic). By way of Claude Mellan's *Moon* we would zoom in on the world, for instance by juxtaposing a 1534 woodcut by Oronce Finé in cordiform projection with Pieter van der Keere's *Nova totius orbis mappa* of 1611. From there the focus would narrow to the Mediterranean basin and Europe, including such general views as Etzlaub's *Rom Weg* (1492) and Peter Overadt's *Germania* (1600). By way of regional views (such as Matteo Greuter's view of Frascati and other villas outside Rome) we would move to portrayals of individual cities. These would be arranged topographically, beginning with Jerusalem and environs (e.g. Reuwich's Venice and Jerusalem woodcuts in Breydenbach's 1486 *Sanctarum peregrinationum*), and moving through Rome, which would be shown in big synthetic representations of the ancient and modern city (for instance by du Perac and Tempesta respectively), but also in series of views (e.g. those by Giovannoli, Cruyl, or Falda), 'comic strips' (e.g. scenes of the papal Possesso and Rouhier's plague scenes) and guidebooks (e.g. those published by the Franzini). The next subsections would include iconic or otherwise noteworthy depictions of cities across Italy, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain. Although our exclusive interest in European printmakers would obviously privilege views of Europe and the Mediterranean (including relevant areas of the Ottoman empire), we would venture into the new world with the image of Tenochtitlán (Mexico City) attached to the second letter of Hernán Cortés (Frankfurt, 1524), and to Hochelaga (Montréal) by way of the woodcut in G. B. Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi*.

UPDATE: Following polite refusal by the British Museum this project was the subject of advanced negotiations later in 2008 with Dr. Jenny Gaschke, curator at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, England. Following drastic budget and staff cuts it project was no longer adequately supported by the National Gallery of Canada, hence it is in need of a second venue.