



Serge Sorokko Gallery to Host Rare and Important Collection of Drawings by Renowned 16th Century Italian Artist Jacopo Strada.

Exclusive Installation “Jacopo Strada (1510 – 1588) Mannerist Splendor: Extravagant Designs for a Royal Table” at Serge Sorokko Gallery September 27 - November 10, 2007

SAN FRANCISCO (September 6, 2007) -- Serge Sorokko Gallery is pleased to present the premiere public showing of a rare and highly important collection of Jacopo Strada drawings. While a collection of this depth and quality would customarily be exhibited at a world-class museum, “Mannerist Splendor: Extravagant Designs for a Royal Table” will be on display at the Serge Sorokko Gallery from September 27 through November 10, 2007 at 231 Grant Ave. in San Francisco. It is the world's largest known collection of Jacopo Strada court designs.

“I am very excited and, indeed, proud to exhibit for the first time ever this remarkable collection,” said gallery owner Serge Sorokko. “These extraordinary ink and brown wash drawings give us a rare peek into the lives of Europe’s most wealthy and powerful families of the 16th century – primarily royals who often commissioned and collected objets d’art as a way of increasing and displaying their wealth.”

Jacopo Strada (1510 – 1588) was an illustrious artist who lived in Italy and Germany in the 16th century. Originally trained as a painter, Strada was a true Renaissance man, excelling as an architect, illustrator, inventor, linguist and goldsmith. But Strada’s primary career was as an antiquarian and art dealer for many of the most powerful families and rulers of 16th century Europe, including two popes and the Habsburg court in Vienna. Strada’s considerable status at court is notable in his portrait by Titian, commissioned in 1568 and now in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

The drawings that comprise this exhibit are from Strada’s career as a goldsmith. Typifying the elaborate mannerist style of the time, this collection is essentially a catalogue of designs for extravagant gold dining service items from which only exceptionally wealthy patrons could commission pieces directly from Strada’s workshop. While recognizable as drinking cups, salt cellars, trays, and other components of a dining service, most of these highly ornate objects would have been displayed to convey wealth and influence rather than put to use. Many of the designs, however, were never realized and their execution would have most certainly been nearly impossible.

There are a few incomplete albums of these designs held by various museums, containing on average between 20 and 33 designs: one in Brunn in the Universitätsbibliothek, one in Florence in the Museo delle Scienze, one in the Oestereichischen Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, and one in London at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The 37 drawings on display at Sorokko Gallery are, remarkably, the largest such collection. Intricately rendered in ink and brown wash for a painterly effect, the drawings are a showcase for Strada’s mastery of design and invention – as well as draftsmanship – and speak to his considerable talent and influence across media.