PRESS INFORMATION

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Nuremberg Exhibits 2015: The Reformation and the Birthday of Lucas Cranach the Younger

Germany's Eye and Ear.
Nuremberg as a Meda Center in the Reformation

Place: Exhibit Forum in the City Museum Fembohaus

Dates: April 24 to October 31, 2015

The 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's posting of his theses in Wittenberg is foreshadowed in Nuremberg, a city which – with its 1525 "Nuremberg Religion Disputation" – early and relatively painlessly followed the Reformation. This decision made one of the most important trading and cultural centers of Europe Lutheran. This was important for the further course of the Reformation, because Nuremberg was also an important printing and publishing center at that time. Luther himself described the city in 1530 as the "eye and ear of Germany".

Using more than 100 prints, books, paintings, sculpture and early 16th century documents from the Nuremberg archives, this art- and cultural-history exhibit will make clear the relevance of this important chapter in the history of the Reformation – and shed light on what one might call the first international "media event".

Heralded in with a reproduction of a functioning historical letter press (*Room 1*), the first of the two main sections of the exhibit in *Room 2* (Hall I) is dedicated to pre-Reformation Nuremberg. Here, two sequences illuminate themes which

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created the necessary conditions for radical change. The first was the presence of paper production in Nuremberg, begun by Ulman Stromer in 1390 and carried out in the Hader and Kleinweiden mills. This was followed by the 1470 founding of Anton Koberger's printing house, which was recognized across Europe and set standards, especially in regard to illustrations. The first German-language Bible was published there in 1483. Both factors provided the ideal prerequisites to allow the European reform movement of humanism to establish an early foothold in Nuremberg. Dominated by famous names such as Konrad Celtis, Konrad von Staupitz and Willibald Pirckheimer, an interest in humanism was not just restricted to the members of the patrician families, but was also cultivated in Nuremberg's monasteries and convents, which had not fallen into decline as elsewhere. Increasing emancipation from the control of the bishop of Bamberg in the 15th century played an important role here.
Another factor in Nuremberg's cultural history around 1500 is its world-leadership as an art center. Important religious works of art will show the sophistication reached by 1525, just before the level abruptly sank or skills were turned to other art forms.

The second major focus of the exhibit begins in *Room 4*, where the course and protagonists of the "Nuremberg Religion Disputation" of 1525 is described, with a view to its function as a model for other cities in the Empire.

Room 5 (Hall II) treats the situation in Nuremberg after the radical change of the Reformation. Nuremberg's always significant role as a printing and publishing center is raised to a new level: Printers like Friedrich Peypus, Johann Petrejus or the Endters supply the German-speaking world with theological and normative texts. Broadsheets and the popular works of Hans Sachs are also part of the broad spectrum of Nuremberg's book, pamphlet and picture printing.
Another highlight will be the unique features of Nuremberg during the Reformation: The absence of iconoclasm in the churches, as exemplified by St. Sebald and St. Lorenz, and the continuing close relationship of the city to the Emperor and Empire. As early as 1520 the city began – through Dürer's new

design for the City Council Chamber, for example – to prepare for the inaugural visit of the Emperor Charles V. In 1530, as the time came for him to enter Nuremberg in a triumphal procession, a newly-Protestant city was host to a Catholic head of state; a once intimate relationship was a thing of the past.

It is only the generation after Dürer that is completely captured by the events of the Reformation. The “three godless painters of Nuremberg” are an example of the spirit of this era of change. Their technically brilliant prints include religious and Reformation topics and subjects from antiquity and moralizing tracts – but also pornography.
New forms of art such as the printed portrait, engravings or the mass-media broadsheet become popular. From then until the 19th century, Nuremberg was one of the most important publishing centers in the Holy Roman Empire.

The media used to illuminate this history includes not only superb originals, but also an advanced exhibit architecture that sets the stage using the historical sites of the Reformation in Nuremberg as a backdrop and offers reflections of them as they are today. Historical pictures of the Nuremberg persons and places of the Reformation will bring to life the events in all their publicity and media importance.

Black Art. White Art. Print and Paper in Nuremberg

Place: Museum of Industrial Culture

Dates: June 18 to October 11, 2015

Paper still plays an important role in daily life today – whether as a carrier of information, packaging or a hygiene product, as various examples will illustrate. From its origins in China in 105 AD, the material paper began its triumphal progress around the world. What followed was an improvement in its production, its development into a packaging material and carrier of the written

word and an expansion throughout the Arabian world. In the heyday of writing and book creation, large libraries developed.

In the 10th century, Moorish conquests brought the writing material paper from North Africa to Europe – Paper became a sought-after commodity. In 1390, Ulman Stromer built the first German paper mill in Nuremberg. The exhibit describes early means of producing paper (rags and gypsum, couching, etc.). Paper making will be demonstrated in a small workshop.

The world of printing itself – tracing developments from Gutenberg to book and newspaper printing to modern print media – is the focus of the second half of the exhibit. In the Renaissance, a time of intellectual awakening and the Reformation, the printed word changed the world. The 19th century witnessed a transition from traditional handicraft to industrial paper production. From 1878 onwards, rotary printing and typesetting machines were used. Nuremberg becomes Europe's "secret capital of printing".

The topics surrounding "print" will be presented in and around the museum's historical lead typesetting workshop.

Between Venus and Luther: Cranach's Media of Temptation

Presentation in the permanent exhibit: "Renaissance, Baroque, Enlightenment" of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum

Dates: May 21, 2015 – May 22, 2016

A top-class collection of the works of the Cranachs can be found in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum. Many paintings are displayed in their cultural-historical context in the permanent exhibit. During the Luther Decade program of 2015 they will be the focus of an extensive series of special programs.

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Tours and lectures for children, young people and adults will explain the Cranachs' art in a target-group orientated manner and in its historical context. A new series of tours link art historians and theologians together to approach individual works of art as a team and to discuss the content of the image from their perspective. A custom audio-guide imparts new knowledge and historical information, allowing visitors to explore the time of the Reformation independent of scheduled guided tours and events.

Images played an important role in the spread of Lutheran teachings, in education within different denominations and during the reform of the Catholic Church which followed. Parallel to the spoken and written word, they served to explain old and new content in matters of faith. As a friend of Martin Luther and an artist of the Reformation, Lucas Cranach the Elder was one of the most important and multifaceted artists of the German Renaissance.

Studio Exhibit of Prints and Drawings

A studio exhibit will show an additional 40 prints and drawings. They make clear how an artist can successfully blaze new trails in a time of changing concepts of religion and patronage of art by developing a wide spectrum of new subjects and visually stunning forms of expression. Through the relationship of Cranach and Luther, Early Modern art gains a new media significance, which remains until today.

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