

by divine intervention to a happy one.

What are the implications of Rembrandt's decision to not only "Christianize" the pagan theme of Lucretia, but to even go further and paint his beloved Hendrickje as a kind of emblematic figure of Christ? Lucretia's sacrifice saved her nation from tyranny; Christ's saved the human race from sin and death. Hendrickje merely saved Rembrandt. In these paintings, he comes to terms with the awesome responsibility of advocating the case of the whole human race through his art, the only way he could have been worthy of such a sacrifice.

One key advantage to the small *Lucretia* show is that the two paintings could be viewed in their original rich colors, because both have been cleaned of the dark varnish which still obscures many Rembrandts and thereby influences our common notion of his art. Thanks to modern conservation techniques, today we can see Rembrandt as he was never seen by the great Rembrandt scholars of the past, indeed as he has not been seen since his own lifetime.

In the 19th century, the Romantic belief in the "golden" tone of Rembrandt's pictures even caused restorers to cover them with a "toning varnish" and a brown glaze. But in his own lifetime, Rembrandt was considered a great colorist, and this is visible in the yellow, red, greenish, and white highlights applied to the sleeves in the Washington painting. In the Minneapolis *Lucretia* the lime-green color of her sleeve is astonishing, bringing out the deathlike pallor of her face all the more in contrast to the oranges and golds of her dress.

Arthur Wheelock, in describing the technique of the late Rembrandt to members of the Washington press last fall, pointed out that the changes in his approach to painting have a philosophical, not merely technical, content. He showed how the National Gallery's 1633 portrait of Saskia, Rembrandt's first wife, is painted with a fine, delicate technique where every nuance is deliberately brushed in by the artist. In contrast, in the late "Lucretias," Rembrandt relied heavily on the palette knife to suggest planes of color building up over the brown ground. This is even more accentuated in the second picture, dating from 1666. A single blob of white paint describes a highlight and, as Wheelock pointed out, this approach forces you, the viewer, to "complete the painting" which the artist has left unfinished, in your own eye.

This is one of the ways in which Rembrandt powerfully pulls the viewer into a dialogue with the image. "We don't hang pictures by other artists in the same room with Rembrandt," Wheelock added. "They just can't stand up to them," because Rembrandt's pictures place such demands on the viewer.

Italian masters in New York, Fort Worth

Two unique exhibitions, which feature rare works by major masters of the Italian Renaissance, will open in early May in U.S. cities. Although nearly two generations separate them, both artists were active when Columbus sailed west in 1492. Both the scientific mastery and religious depth of their works, are well befitting the quincentenary of the evangelization of the Americas.

An exhibition of some 130 paintings, drawings, and prints designed or carried out by **Andrea Mantegna** (ca. 1430-1506) will be mounted at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art from May 7 to July 12, 1992. Mantegna was one of the first north Italian artists—he worked chiefly in Padua and Mantua—to dominate the ideals and techniques of the Florentine Renaissance. Through his engravings and drawings, he became one of the most influential artists of the period.

Mantegna was so talented as a youth that at age 20 he was earning the praise of writers, and eventually received more poetic tributes than any other painter of his day. He grew up in Padua, a university city and home to numerous scholars. There he developed his striking use of perspective in dramatic views from below. In 1460 he entered the service of the Marquis Ludovico Gonzaga in Mantua. His artistic career lasted more than half a century.

The show *Andrea Mantegna* was organized jointly with the Royal Academy of Arts, London. It is the first monographic exhibition of his work in America. Besides numerous paintings, the exhibition will present a wide array of drawings by, after, or related to Mantegna and over 50 engraved prints. The New York show will have an extensive selection of his portraits.

On May 9, an exhibition of drawings by **Fra Bartolommeo** (Baccio della Porta, 1472-1517), will go on view at the Kimball Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. He is the fourth painter of the Florentine High Renaissance after Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo. This particular show is drawn from a collection of figure studies for paintings, recently removed from the bound albums where they were preserved for nearly 300 years.

A Dominican monk, Fra Bartolommeo painted almost exclusively devotional subjects, but imbued them with a glorious humanism. He not only rivals the three more famous Florentines in the beauty and skill of his figure drawings, but is unparalleled as a landscape draughtsman. The show first opened in Boston in January. It will stay in Fort Worth until Aug. 2. It travels to New York City's Pierpont Morgan Library, Sept. 11-Nov. 29, 1992.