

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
Washington, D. C.

The Trustees of the National Gallery of Art announced that the President and Mrs. Roosevelt would attend the dedication ceremonies, to be held on Monday evening, March 17th, of the new building for the National Gallery of Art which has been erected by the Trustees of The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust with funds given by the late Andrew W. Mellon.

On the following day, March 18th, the building will be opened to the public and the collections of painting and sculpture donated by Mr. Mellon, Mr. Samuel H. Kress and others will be on exhibition.

Jan. 25, 1941

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In December 1936, the late Andrew W. Mellon offered to build and give to the Nation a National Gallery of Art at Washington and also to give his collection of paintings and sculpture, which he hoped would become the "nucleus" of a great National Collection. The gift was accepted by the Act of Congress of March 24, 1937.

The project for the National Gallery, calling for the construction of a building to be located on a site on the Mall at 6th Street appropriated by Congress, and the landscaping of the area within the site, have been carried to completion under the direction of Paul Mellon, Donald D. Shepard, and David K. E. Bruce, Trustees of The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust.

Congress constituted the National Gallery of Art as a Bureau of the Smithsonian Institution, but it is administered separately from the Institution by a Board of Trustees consisting of the Chief Justice of the United States (who is Chairman of the Board of Trustees); the Secretary of State; the Secretary of the Treasury; the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, all ex officio; and five general Trustees, who now are David K. E. Bruce (President), F. Lamot Belin (Vice President), Duncan Phillips, Joseph E. Widener, and Samuel H. Kress. The other present officers of the Gallery

are Donald D. Shepard, Secretary-Treasurer and General Counsel; David E. Finley, Director of the Gallery; Harry A. McBride, Administrator; John Walker, Chief Curator; and Macgill James, Assistant Director.

The landscaped area for the building extends over two city blocks near the Capitol on the Mall. It is 785 feet long and contains half a million square feet of floor area, providing ample space for exhibition galleries designed with special attention to proper and attractive scale. The lighting of these galleries is to be normally supplied by daylight; and artificial lighting, based on exacting tests of existing systems, will be used at night. The building is air-conditioned.

The building may be entered on the street level on Constitution Avenue, or it may be approached on the Mall side and up a flight of steps to the portico. Through this portico one enters the main gallery floor and passes on to the rotunda, 100 feet high and the same in diameter. From an oculus in the dome light streams down upon a marble fountain surmounted by Giovanni da Bologna's famous bronze figure of Mercury, one of the important pieces of sculpture in the Mellon Collection. Leading from the rotunda are the East and West halls for larger pieces of sculpture with smaller galleries for paintings and smaller sculpture opening from these halls and terminating on garden courts. These two garden courts, each with a fountain from the Versailles Palace gardens, will provide restful interludes for visitors.

On the ground floor, or street level, are other exhibition spaces and an auditorium to be used for lectures by members of the Gallery staff and guest lecturers; also an art reference library, and offices for the staff.

Mr. Mellon's initial gift included 111 paintings of the foremost artists from the first half of the 13th century through the early 19th century; also 23 pieces of sculpture. Later 11 paintings by outstanding American artists were given by the Trustees of The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust. Among the paintings in the Mellon Collection are: El Greco's Saint Ildefonso of Toledo; Goya's Portrait of the Marquesa de Pontejos; The House of Cards by Chardin; Marchesa Balbi by Van Dyck; The Girl with a Red Hat by Vermeer; Edward VI as Prince of Wales by Hans Holbein the Younger; Rembrandt's Self-Portrait; Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire by Gainsborough; Lady Caroline Howard by Reynolds; Botticelli's The Adoration of the Magi; Raphael's Saint George and the Dragon, also the Alba Madonna and the Cowper Madonna; The Annunciation by Jan van Eyck; Pope Innocent X by Velazquez; and The Washington Family by Savage.

In July 1939, Mr. Samuel H. Kress of New York gave to the Nation his important and priceless collection of 375 Italian paintings and 18 pieces of sculpture. Unique in character and scope, the Kress Collection is a magnificent contribution which provides an Italian section unrivaled in this country.

A few of the most famous paintings in the Kress Collection are: the Adoration of the Shepherds by Giorgione; Madonna and Child by Gentile da Fabriano; Portrait of a Girl by Titian; Fra Angelico's Entombment; The Annunciation by Giovanni di Paolo; Matteo di Giovanni's Madonna, Child, Saints and Angels; Madonna and Child by Domenico Veneziano; Portrait of Condottiere Bartolommeo Colleoni by Giovanni Bellini; Madonna and Child by Giotto; Portrait of Maxmilian Sforza by Veneto; Portrait of Giovanni II Bentivoglio and Portrait of Ginevra Bentivoglio by Ercole Roberti; Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini; Allegory by Titian; Calling of Saint Peter and Saint Andrew by Duccio.

Still a third great collection is to be added to the Gallery at some time in the future, according to an announcement by Mr. Joseph E. Widener of Pennsylvania, and will include over one hundred world-famous paintings, together with outstanding sculpture, whose assembling was begun by his father, the late Mr. P. A. B. Widener. Some of the most famous paintings in the Widener Collection are: Saint Martin and the Begger, and the Virgin and Santa Ines and Santa Tecla, both by El Greco; the Saint Anne Altarpiece by Gerard David; A Woman Weighing Gold by Vermeer; Rembrandt's Mill, and the Yousoupoff Portraits, also by Rembrandt; Vermeer's Young Girl with a Flute; Giovanni Bellini's The Feast of the Gods; Marchesa di Brignole-Sala and Her Son, and Marchesa Elena Grimaldi, both by Van Dyck; the Small Cowper Madonna by Raphael; Judith and Holofernes by Mantegna; the Dancer by Renoir; and Turner's Meeting of the Waters.

Among the artists represented in the Gallery are --
American School: Stuart, West, Copley, Savage, Trumbull;
Dutch School: Rembrandt, Hals, Vermeer, Hobbema, de Hooch;
British School: Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney, Hoppner,
Turner, Constable, Raeburn; Flemish School: van Eyck,
van der Weyden, Gerard David, Memling, Van Dyck, Rubens;
French School: Chardin, Lancret, Legros, Clodion; German
School: Holbein, Dürer; Italian School: Duccio, Giotto,
Masaccio, Simone Martini, Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Botticelli,
Perugino, Pinturicchio, Raphael, Giorgione, Bellini, Carpaccio,
Titian, Nantegna, Correggio, Tiepolo, Guardi, Longhi, Canaletto,
Donatello, Verrocchio, Desiderio, Jacopo Sansovino, Giovanni
da Bologna; Spanish School: El Greco, Velazquez, Goya.

As its collections continue to grow, the National Gallery of Art will be a repository of the highest achievement in Western art, stressing painting and sculpture created from the 13th century to the 20th. Relatively recent art will constantly be added, since a rule permits the showing of an artist's work twenty years after his death.

In Washington, the National Gallery will enter into a balanced group of specialized institutions: The National Collection of Fine Arts and The Corcoran Gallery of Art with their important collections of decorative arts and their representative collections of old masters as well as Colonial and 19th century American painting and sculpture; The Freer Gallery of Oriental art; the Phillips Memorial Gallery of modern art

and its sources; the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections devoted to early Medieval and Byzantine art; and the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, outstanding in its field.