

PRESS RELEASE COVERING GROUP OF PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE LOANED TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART BY MR. SAMUEL H. KRESS TO BE SHOWN WITH THE KRESS COLLECTION

Mr. Samuel H. Kress, of New York, a Trustee of the National Gallery, who in 1939 donated his large and outstanding collection of Italian art to the National Gallery, has added to his contribution to the art world and the Nation by placing on indefinite loan at the National Gallery forty-three <sup>additional</sup> paintings and twenty-two additional pieces of sculpture of the greatest interest and importance.

Included among the paintings are important works by Raphael, Botticelli, Filippo Lippi, Filippino Lippi, Giovanni Bellini, and others. The sculpture includes many of the famous Renaissance masters and also such later artists as Bernini and Coysevox.

The paintings, all Italian, extend in period from the XIII Century to the end of the XVIII Century. The sculpture is chiefly by Renaissance masters, but also includes two fine examples of Italian and French Baroque portraiture and two important pieces by Carpeaux, who is recognized as one of the most remarkable of the XIX Century French sculptors.

The original Kress gift, consisting of 375 paintings and 18 pieces of sculpture, and considered the finest private collection of Italian art in existence, is important not only because of the many fine works of art it contains but also because it so well illustrates the development of the various schools of Italian painting.

To be exhibited for the first time in this country is a very beautiful portrait of Bindo Altoviti by Raphael. This painting, the most famous in the group of loan pictures, was one of the two which, according to Vasari, Bindo Altoviti commissioned Raphael to paint. The other, the Madonna dell' Impannata, is now in the Pitti Gallery in Florence. The portrait of Bindo Altoviti remained in the Altoviti Palace until 1808 when it was bought by King Ludwig of Bavaria, and from his collection passed to the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. It came to America several years ago and its exhibition at the opening of the National Gallery, March 18th, will be an event of the greatest interest.

The earliest painting among these new additions to the Kress Collection, and one of the earliest pictures in the National Gallery, is a Madonna and Child from Central Italy, recently exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The XIV Century section of the National Gallery has also been enriched by the addition of two panels by Bernardo Daddi, and one by Pietro Lorenzetti.

The Florentine School as represented in the Gallery will be more complete with the addition of the Kress loan paintings. Lorenzo Monaco, who exerted a considerable influence on Fra Angelico and Masolino, will now be represented in the National Gallery by a fine example of a Madonna and Child.

The National Gallery has lacked examples of the architectural decorations and larger altarpieces of the Renaissance masters, and this phase of Italian painting will be well represented by several works added by Mr. Kress. These include an Annunciation by Fra Filippo Lippi, which has been identified as one of two over-doors painted for the Palazzo Vecchio, the town hall of Florence; a lunette by Filippino Lippi, which is one of the earliest important works by that master; and an altarpiece by Raffaele dei Carli, which because of the signature and date is a key picture in the reconstruction of the artistic personality of that rare painter.

Mr. Kress has placed in the Gallery a large Madonna and Child by Botticelli, one of the artist's finest works, which will illustrate the late style of that master, and will allow his full development to be studied at the National Gallery. It was executed at a time when Botticelli, under the influence of the religious fervor of Savonarola, was devoting himself entirely to religious subjects, and painting with a new emotional intensity.

Another important Madonna and Child which Mr. Kress placed in the Gallery is signed by Giovanni Bellini, and increases to eleven the number of paintings by that master to be exhibited at the Gallery.

Foremost among the sculpture is one of the most beautiful of all XV Century creations in stone, the Young Saint John the Baptist by Antonio Rossellino, formerly in the Church of San

Francesco dei Vanchettoni in Florence. This marble bust is probably the greatest work of art permitted to leave Italy permanently in recent years, and its showing at the opening of the National Gallery will be of interest to all lovers of Renaissance art.

Other examples of sculpture added by Mr. Kress include a number of pieces well known to scholars when they were exhibited in the Mackay Collection at Roslyn, Long Island, and the famous Dreyfus Collection in Paris. Among the pieces from the Mackay Collection are the terra-cotta Bust of a Warrior attributed to Pollaiuolo, the Portrait Bust of a Florentine Statesman, credited to Benedetto da Maiano; and the exquisite marble Bust of Saint Catherine of Siena, characteristic of Mino da Fiesole.

From the Dreyfus Collection there are important terra-cotta versions of marbles by Donatello and Antonio Rossellino, and a marble relief of Filippo Maria Visconti by Amadeo. There is also a terra-cotta statue of David closely related to the famous bronze statue by Verrocchio in the Bargello Museum, Florence, which was recently shown with a group of masterpieces loaned by the Italian Government to the Golden Gate exhibition at San Francisco, and later exhibited in Chicago and New York.

Two other remarkable examples of Florentine sculpture are also included. One is a terra-cotta Bust of Saint John corresponding to the marble bust by Donatello in the Louvre, and the other a particularly interesting version of Mino da Fiesole's portrait bust of Rinaldo della Luna in the Bargello Museum in Florence.

The section of the Gallery devoted to sculpture outside of the Florentine School will be strengthened by additional pieces. The leading artist of Lucca, Matteo Civitale, will be represented by a large terra-cotta group showing the Madonna adoring the Child, and a small Saint Sebastian. The style of Pietro Lombardo, the chief sculptor of Venetian tombs in the XV Century, may be studied at the National Gallery in a very beautiful Singing Angel, once doubtless the most attractive part of some large monument. Venetian sculpture of a later period is also to be seen in a fine terra-cotta bust by Alessandro Vittoria, and the Milanese School of the same period by the cosmopolitan contemporary of Titian--Leone Leoni.

The dominant figure in European sculpture of the XVII Century was Lorenzo Bernini. The National Gallery will be fortunate in being able to show one of his most important masterpieces, the early bronze of his famous portrait of Louis XIV, one of the most distinguished examples of Baroque portraiture in this country.

The additions include Italian and French sculpture. Mr. Kress has loaned to the National Gallery a marble bust by Charles-Antoine Coysevox who, like Bernini, received the patronage of Louis XIV. The bust has been identified with a lost work of great importance: the portrait of the Duc de Chaulnes. Its reappearance adds further interest to the opening of the National Gallery. Mr. Kress also has included another example of French sculpture, an Allegory of Victory

attributed to Germain Pilon, one of the great French sculptors of the XVI Century.

The first examples of XIX Century sculpture to be exhibited in the National Gallery are represented in Mr. Kress' contribution. They are two marble statues by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, whose famous decorations for the Opera House of Paris are familiar to all travellers to France. The marbles to be shown are the Neapolitan Fisherboy and the Girl with a Shell, shown as a pair at the Paris Salon of 1867, although the Fisherboy had appeared as a single piece in the Salon of 1863. Both statues were acquired by the Empress Eugénie, and have remained in the possession of her descendants until recently.