

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

FOR RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Sunday, February 21, 1943.

Gift of Etchings

The National Gallery of Art announced today that the Board of Trustees has accepted a gift of thirty-eight etchings by James A. McN. Whistler. They were presented by Mr. and Mrs. J. Watson Webb of New York in honor of Mrs. Webb's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer.

These etchings were published in London in two sets, one of twelve prints in 1880, known as the 'First Venice Set', and the other of twenty-six in 1886. The latter is sometimes referred to as the 'Second Venice Set', as all but five are Venetian. Both sets belonged to the well-known Havemeyer Collection, from which the National Gallery of Art has two Goya paintings, given by a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Havemeyer, Mrs. P.H.B. Frelinghuysen of Morristown, New Jersey.

Whistler is here represented at his best, in his lightness and simplification and in all his technical brilliance. In his Venetian etchings he developed to new heights the art of interpreting landscape in black and white by means of copper-plate and needle. To insure perfect results, Whistler did his own printing. After completing a limited edition, the plates were destroyed, as a safeguard against possible later issues of inferior prints from worn plates.

The same donors have also presented the Gallery with a fine impression of Durer's engraving, his well known "St. Jerome in His Study". This print is one of the great works of this master.

This outstanding gift, which adds greatly to the Gallery's growing collection of prints and drawings, will be placed on exhibition in the near future.