

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art
Washington, D. C.

RELEASE:

AMS: Sunday, December 26, 1943

WASHINGTON, December 26: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that the Board of Trustees had accepted an important American painting Breezing Up by Winslow Homer (1836-1910), as a gift from the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation, of Pittsburgh.

Mr. W. L. Mellon, a nephew of the late Andrew W. Mellon, has thus given evidence of the continuing interest of the members of the Mellon family in the growth and development of the Gallery.

The painting is an outstanding work by this great American artist. Shortly after he had painted this picture in 1876, Homer sold it to Mr. Charles Stewart Smith, of New York, in whose collection it was described by a contemporary critic, Edward Strachan, as "the best example of American art." The work possesses that elemental vitality that underlay Homer's art and made it a significant contribution to the American School of the Nineteenth Century.

Painted in 1876, Breezing Up reveals the freshness and candor of Homer's early works, in which the healthy life of youth appears as a recurring motif. The picture is filled with the homespun quality of Huckleberry Finn or Longfellow's verses on childhood.

Homer has painted three small boys who have set off on a sail with a fisherman from Gloucester. With their weather-beaten skipper, the boys gaze at the limitless horizon with a look of contentment. Oblivious of everything but the exhilaration of the moment, they have abandoned themselves to the joys of sailing, carried along by a lively breeze through a sunny, spray-filled sea.

The painting will be put on exhibition at the Gallery immediately.