

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art
Washington, D. C.

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WASHINGTON, March 17: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announces the acquisition of the painting Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens by Albert P. Ryder, which now becomes part of the Mellon Collection in the National Gallery of Art.

This well-known painting by one of America's greatest artists was acquired with funds provided by the late Andrew W. Mellon and the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust. It is being placed on view on March 17th, the fifth anniversary of the opening of the National Gallery.

Ryder has not been represented heretofore in the Gallery's Collection, and the acquisition of this distinguished example of his work - one of the few remaining in private hands - makes an important addition to the collection of American paintings which can now be seen in the National Gallery.

John Walker, Chief Curator of the National Gallery, commenting on this painting, said that it was one of the five or six canvases which most clearly reveal the originality and stature of Ryder, who is now generally considered the most poetic of American painters. The

spellbound valley, the gaunt trees silhouetted against stormy clouds, the suggestion of the mystery and elemental power of nature, are all characteristic of Ryder's romantic imagination. Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens, as the late Roger Fry once wrote, suggests the poetry of Poe and Coleridge and the music of Schubert. "But", Mr. Walker added, "it also finds a closer analogy to that very personal and symbolic beauty, which distinguishes the writings of another great American Romantic, Herman Melville".

The painting, which has been in all the important exhibitions of Ryder's work, was acquired from the artist by Sir William Van Horne and remained in his collection until it was purchased for the National Gallery of Art.