

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art  
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WASHINGTON, July 12: The National Gallery of Art in cooperation with the Samuel H. Kress Foundation has decided to release photographs and preliminary information on a number of new acquisitions which will be exhibited at the Gallery next March. The gift of these works of art, numbering more than 150 examples of painting and sculpture, and representing the important European Schools from the 13th century to the beginning of the 19th century, will be the climax of a 10-year plan undertaken by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation for the reorganization and development of the Samuel H. Kress Collection in Washington. More than half of these new donations have not been seen before in America; the others were shown for a few months in 1951. To commemorate the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Gallery, which opened on March 17, 1941, they will be placed on permanent display on March 17, 1956.

David E. Finley, Director, said: "When the National Gallery of Art was opened in 1941, it contained, in addition to the Mellon Collection, a large and important collection of Italian paintings and sculpture given by Mr. Samuel H. Kress. Since that time the Samuel H. Kress Collection has been greatly enriched by the addition of famous works of the Italian, Flemish, French, Spanish, Dutch and German Schools. Now, as the climax of 10 years' effort on the part of Mr. Kress and his brother, Mr. Rush H. Kress, and the Trustees and Staff of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the Gallery has received the gift of more than 150 examples of painting and sculpture,



representing the important European Schools from the 13th century to the beginning of the 19th century. Among these recent additions are many works of the first importance, so that the Samuel H. Kress Collection is now, in quality and scope, one of the greatest in the world and adds immeasurably to the prestige and interest of the National Gallery. These recent gifts are being incorporated in the Samuel H. Kress Collection and will be placed on view on March 17, 1956, the 15th anniversary of the opening of the National Gallery of Art."

As an indication of the importance of this new donation, 6 paintings have been selected for release at this time; others will be announced during the autumn and winter. Three of these canvases are from the Golden Age of Venetian Art. The portrait of Doge Andrea Gritti by Titian, painted about 1538, was acquired by Charles I of England in 1626. It later became part of the famous Czernin Collection in Vienna. From Vienna also comes the painting of Rebecca at the Well by Paolo Veronese, which once belonged to the great collector Archduke Leopold Wilhelm. In the 18th century it entered the Vienna Museum, whence it came to the Samuel H. Kress Collection. The 3rd Venetian picture, The Conversion of St. Paul by Jacopo Tintoretto, a canvas almost 8 feet in length, is one of the superlative achievements of an artist whom a contemporary described as having "the most terrific imagination ever given to painting."

Of art north of the Alps, The Small Crucifixion by Matthias Grünewald may well rank as the most significant German painting in America. Grünewald was a towering genius of the beginning of the 16th century who anticipated



modern expressionism. Only 15 paintings by him are known; these include the present picture, his famous altarpiece in Colmar, a panel in Basel and the rest in German churches and museums. Yet Grünewald's importance in Germanic art can be measured by the fact that since 1914 over 400 important studies of his paintings have been published.

Zurbarán, one of the four outstanding masters of 17th-century Spain, is, on the other hand, well represented in American museums. But his portrayal of St. Jerome lecturing to St. Paula and St. Eustochium is among the most important of his works to come to this country. This large canvas was probably painted for a convent in Seville about 1640.

The sixth painting dates from the 18th century and is an allegorical work by Watteau, representing Ceres, or Summer. Of the 4 seasons which he painted for the dining room of Pierre Crozat's mansion in Paris, this alone has survived. The National Gallery has already received from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation Watteau's Italian Comedians, the artist's last great undertaking. The two pictures will hang side by side and will provide a fascinating contrast: the Ceres overflowing with that exuberant pleasure in feminine beauty which marked Watteau's early work, and the Italian Comedians, in spite of the gaiety of its subject, tinged with the melancholy of illness and approaching death. These two canvases open brilliantly the Gallery's representation of 18th-century French painting, which next March will occupy the greater part of five rooms and will offer the visitor one of the most distinguished collections of this period to be seen outside France.