

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON 25 DC • REpublic 7-4215 extension 248

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 16, 1963: John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that the Gallery will continue to be open, for those wishing to see the Mona Lisa, from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. every day until February 3, the last day the picture will be exhibited in Washington. On Sundays, January 20, 27, and February 3, the Gallery will be open a full twelve hours, from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. "I urge the public to come to the Gallery during weekdays, especially in the evening," Mr. Walker said. "Last week end the crowds were so large that visitors had to wait up to two hours to see the picture."

Hour-by-hour counts of the visitors to the Gallery show that, since the Mona Lisa went on exhibition, the least crowded time, except for Friday night, has been between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Lunch hour, also, is apt to show a dropoff, and at times there has been a lull about 5:00 p.m. Waiting time is often as little as 3-5 minutes. However, the mid-afternoon is apt to be crowded, and by far the most crowded hours are invariably the first two, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

An extension of hours was previously contemplated only through January 17, but crowds have been such that the Gallery has decided to continue the extension.

For those wishing to visit the permanent collection of the Gallery but not the Mona Lisa, the Gallery will be open its normal hours, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sundays.

The Gallery Cafeteria will also continue its extended hours through February 3. It will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 12 noon to 7:00 p.m. on Sundays.

The Gallery will also continue to open from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. for school groups through February 3. However, all possible appointments for these groups were booked within 2 days of the announcement on January 6. Groups of all kinds are still welcomed to the Gallery, but are advised to come on weekdays and take advantage of the less crowded times.

Under an agreement with the French Government, photography of the Mona Lisa on the part of the public is not permitted. Every effort is made to allow visitors to spend as much time in front of the picture as they like. Admission is free at all times. END



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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w/ JAN 16
RELEASE

Dear Friend of the National Gallery of Art:

Thank you for your letter inquiring about our exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. I am enclosing a copy of a recent announcement by the Director of the Gallery which I think should clarify several points.

The picture also will be shown in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from February 7 through March 4, before returning to France on March 8.

With thanks for your interest in the National Gallery of Art,

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Assistant to
the Director

Mona Lisa
Jan 16 release

Inquiries re Mona Lisa

WHEN IS THE MONA LISA GOING ON EXHIBITION?

It goes on exhibition Wed. January 9 at 10:00 a.m. (There will be a private showing for members of Congress, the Supreme Court and chiefs of diplomatic missions the previous night at 9:45 p.m. Any requests for invitations to the private opening should be referred to Mr. Brown's office on Monday.)

HOW LONG WILL THE PICTURE BE AT THE GALLERY?

It has been announced that the Mona Lisa will be here for 3 weeks. There may be a possibility that the French Government would want to extend that for a few days.

IS IT GOING ANYWHERE BESIDES WASHINGTON?

It will be in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in February. The exact dates have not been determined. It is planned for it to visit no other American city and it will return to Paris early in March.

WILL ANY PHOTOGRAPHS BE ALLOWED?

The French Government has specified that no photographs of the picture may be taken while it is on view.

WILL THERE BE ANY CHARGE TO SEE THE PICTURE?

No. Entrance to the Gallery and all its special exhibitions is free at all times.

WILL REGULAR HOURS OF THE GALLERY BE EXTENDED?

There is a possibility that they will. The exact hours have not yet been worked out, but they will be announced in the newspapers when they are determined.

WHY ISN'T THE PICTURE BEING PUT ON VIEW BEFORE THE 8th?

This is a decision of the French Government. (The members of Congress will not all be back in Washington until the 8th, which is the day before Congress reconvenes, and they wanted the opening to be in the presence of the President and of the entire Congress. The last trip of the liner France before that date was its arrival in New York on December 19.)

WHO WILL PAY FOR THE TRAVEL, etc.

(Refer to Mr. Brown's office Mon.)