

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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HOLD FOR RELEASE: Sunday Papers  
June 23, 1963

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 23, 1963. John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that a pair of early Flemish portraits by Joos van Cleve (active 1511-1540/41) has been purchased by the Gallery. Since the 17th century both portraits have been in the collections of the Princes of Liechtenstein.

By some recent scholarly detective work, the identity of the sitters has been discovered. The portraits were mentioned in correspondence in 1653 between an Amsterdam art dealer and Constantijn Huyghens, a learned art critic, friend of Rembrandt's, and art advisor to the Dutch court. Huyghens owned copies of the two Liechtenstein portraits, which according to the letters represented Huyghens' great-grandparents. The sitters have thus been identified as Joris W. Vezeler and his wife, Margaretha Boghe.

The man and his wife are each represented against a glowing green background. The woman holds a rosary, indication of her religious faith, and a pink, symbol of her betrothal. The man is portrayed in the act of putting on his glove. The pair can be dated to about 1520 by their closeness in style to the famous van Cleve portrait of a woman putting on a ring in the Uffizi in Florence. All of these pictures bear witness to a new self-consciousness in portraiture, when the sitters began to be depicted as actively engaged in doing something.

"European museums are often at an advantage in having works of art that have remained in the same collections for hundreds of years," Mr. Walker said. "Their authenticity is thus assured, their condition protected, and portrait pairs remain together. The National Gallery is extremely fortunate in acquiring these sensitively modelled portraits, which have remained for so long in a single collection. They are in a state of preservation that is truly exceptional for panels of their age. And in today's art market, it is a rare and delightful occasion to find a married couple still together after nearly four hundred and fifty years."

Black-and-white glossy photographs and color transparencies available through J. Carter Brown, REpublic 7-4215, ext. 248.