

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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HISTORIC THEATRE DESIGNS OF  
ARCHITECT INIGO JONES BEGIN  
FIRST U.S.--CANADIAN TOUR

Washington, D. C. March 10, 1967. In England of 1605, when Shakespeare was still writing plays for a plain Elizabethan stage, a young London landscape painter named Inigo Jones was asked by his Queen, Anne of Denmark, to stage a palace entertainment for the Court of her husband, James I. Jones had just returned to London from Denmark where he had been named first architect to Christian IV. With playwright Ben Jonson as his artistic partner, he proceeded to dazzle the British monarchs with "The Masque of Blacknesse."

Thus began what must have been the most lavish run of dramatic entertainments the English stage has ever known. The Jacobean Court Masque, as developed by Jones under the free-spending patronage of the Stuarts, became a new and exclusive art form in England. Such spectacles as "The Masque of Queens" and "Prince Henry's Barriers" introduced the proscenium arch to the British stage and were responsible for the invention of new and complicated stage machinery.

For the first time, an extensive exhibition of the theatrical designs of Inigo Jones, with 119 master drawings, five stage set models, and two costume reconstructions, is coming to America, lent from the famous Chatsworth Collection of the Duke of Devonshire for exhibition at the National Gallery of Art beginning March 19. It will travel to leading museums around the United States and Canada under the auspices of the International Exhibitions Foundation (itinerary attached).

Accompanying the exhibition is a profusely illustrated catalogue prepared by Roy Strong, Deputy Keeper, National Portrait Gallery, London. At the American opening in Washington there will be a concert of English music played by the National Gallery Strings conducted by Richard Bales. Mr. Bales has arranged a suite of pieces by Giles Farnaby, a contemporary of Inigo Jones.

Costume and scenery designs by Inigo Jones have long been of unusual interest, not only for the images they evoke of the great Stuart masques, but for their intrinsic quality as master drawings. In 1610 Jones was appointed surveyor of the works to Henry, Prince of Wales, and subsequently became arts advisor at Court as well as chief architect and the designer of the masques. Leonardo-like, he busied himself with diverse projects, among them the creation of the magnificent banqueting house at Whitehall and the writing of a treatise which tried to prove that Stonehenge was erected by Romans as a temple to the God Coelus. The partnership with Ben Jonson ended in 1631 with "Chloridia", the last extravaganza before their friendship dissolved in arguments and hard feelings. Jones, however, would go on to even more grandiose

heights for another twenty years, working with a succession of lesser but more cooperative poets. As the quality of the poetry and songs declined, the dramatic effects invented by Jones became ever more dazzling and complex. The stage and its movements finally smothered the literary theme which then served only to bind scenes together.

The subject of the Stuart masque was always the triumph of Crown and Court over base-minded enemies. Important roles were often played and danced by members of the Royal Family itself while such thankless parts as hags and witches, peasants, and demons were reserved for lesser members of the hierarchy. After a succession of scenes on the stage, these personages descended to the hall to dance before the King in a grand finale celebrating his benign rule. Roy Strong writes in the catalogue, "The aesthetic structure of Jones' work for the masque depended on recession, layer after layer of scenery being peeled away, each set by use of perspective accentuating distance to infinity. Finally the masquers would be revealed, spangled and glittering from afar. At that moment the process was reversed for, the spectator having moved towards them through layer after layer of scenery, they, in turn, moved toward the spectator."

A famous observer of the time lavished praise on the spatial and engineering devices Jones brought to his designs. Francis Bacon described and explained them as "things of great beauty and pleasure...they feed and relieve the eye before it be full of the same object."

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Catalogues and black-and-white photographs are available from William W. Morrison, Assistant to the Director, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, Area Code 202, 737-4215, ext. 225.

"FESTIVAL DESIGNS BY INIGO JONES"

ITINERARY

1967	March 19 - April 23	National Gallery of Art Washington, D. C.
	May 6 - June 4	Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Texas
	July 17 - August 31	Los Angeles County Museum of Art Los Angeles, California
	September 15 - October 15	Detroit Institute of Art Detroit, Michigan
	November 1 - 30	National Gallery of Canada Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
	December 15, 1967 - January 14, 1968	Krannert Art Museum Champaign, Illinois
1968	February 1 - 29	Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Richmond, Virginia
	March 15 - April 14	William Rockhill Nelson Gallery Kansas City, Missouri
	May 1 - 31	Minneapolis Institute of Arts Minneapolis, Minnesota
	June 15 - July 15	Open
	August 1 - 31	Open
	September 14 - October 15	Dartmouth College Hanover, New Hampshire
	November 1 - December 1	Yale University New Haven, Connecticut