

NATIONAL
GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL GALLERY ACQUIRES
FIRST PAINTING BY OLD MASTER
JAN VAN DER HEYDEN

Washington, D. C. December 12, 1968. A Dutch old master was added to the collection of the National Gallery of Art this week. Director John Walker announced the purchase, through the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, of An Architectural Fantasy by Jan van der Heyden (1637-1712).

The panel, which was painted around 1670, will go on view Friday (December 13) in Lobby D.

The only painting by van der Heyden to enter the collection in Washington has been recorded in famous European collections during more than two centuries. It was included in the great exhibition of Dutch art at the Royal Academy, London, in 1952-53 and, more recently, in the memorable exhibition "In the Light of Vermeer," held at The Hague and in Paris in 1966-67.

"The National Gallery is fortunate indeed to have acquired this beautiful example of Jan van der Heyden's work," said Dr. Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, Dutch painting authority who is Kress Professor-in-Residence at the National Gallery. Dr. Begemann noted the painting's careful detail and the

painter's feeling for light. "The artist has placed imaginary classicized buildings in a rural setting, thereby creating an architectural capriccio that precedes by several decades the imaginary views of Guardi and Canaletto."

It is a curious fact that Jan van der Heyden, the outstanding architectural painter of his time in Holland, was the inventor of a fire fighting machine. In middle age he became engrossed with problems of urban fire control, devoting much of his time to this civic responsibility. Eventually, he assumed the post of General Fire Chief of Amsterdam. In 1690, together with his son, van der Heyden published Brandspuitenboek (the Fire Engine Book) which contains a number of etchings based on his drawings.

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