

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

Washington, D. C. April 23, 1969. An imaginative self-service area, designed to answer sales needs of the future, opened last week at the National Gallery of Art. By utilizing techniques of modern retailing, this nonprofit facility is expected to meet a rapidly expanding consumer demand for art educational materials.

In 1958, the Publications Service of the National Gallery served 163,000 customers, a record for its day. Last year the figure passed 337,000, an average of one transaction every 34 seconds.

All items sold by the Gallery's Publications Service either relate to the collection or were written by a member of the staff. Prices are kept at a minimum, and receipts are used to increase the variety of reproductions and publications offered.

According to John Walker, Director of the Gallery, "The need for a revised sales system was demonstrated as early as 1963 when the Mona Lisa came to America on loan from France. We had a momentary glimpse of the future when over half a million people crowded into the Gallery in less than four weeks. Our

APR 23 1969

two traditional sales rooms simply could not handle the demand."

The unified facility which replaced them occupies three spacious rooms located conveniently in the center of the building, near the Constitution Avenue Entrance, on the ground floor. Almost all its stock may be self-selected from a display of 1700 reproductions of National Gallery paintings and sculpture, as well as books, catalogues, cards, jewelry, writing paper, and other related items.

The rooms harmonize with the classic design of the building, and are fitted out in teakwood, bronze, and marble. Large reproductions of paintings are shown against wall panels of rich Pompeian red, a color which is repeated in the carpeting. Lighting is subdued and is completely flexible for changing displays.

To buy a framed reproduction of the best selling Girl with a Watering Can by Renoir, for instance, the visitor no longer waits to be served at a counter. Instead, he consults a display panel to ascertain the reproduction's number, then reaches into the correspondingly numbered stall below to pick it out. He finds it wrapped, priced, and ready for checkout.

School children need not know how to cross reference in order to buy a reproduction of their favorite picture. In a separate children's section their choice can be made directly from tiers of inexpensive postcards and reproductions set out in scaled down fixtures.

Perhaps the most ingenious method of display was developed for self-service selection of photographic slides. More than a thousand color slides are mounted on large octagonal drums that can be rotated by the customer.

The rooms were planned and executed by the New York architectural firm of Copeland, Novak and Israel, with Nash M. Love and Associates of Washington serving as mechanical and lighting consultants. According to the architect, "The objective was to develop within the classic interiors of the National Gallery a contemporary retail shop that would utilize all of the up-to-date techniques of sales displays, housing, and stock control, yet remain in harmony with the Gallery's classic style. The total effect is one of excitement, order, and dignity."

The Gerber Construction Company, Inc., of New York, fabricated and installed the specially designed sales fixtures in rooms remodeled by Wm. P. Lipscomb and Company, Inc. of Washington.

For further information and black-and-white photographs, contact William W. Morrison, Assistant to the Director, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. 20565, Area Code 202, 737-4215.

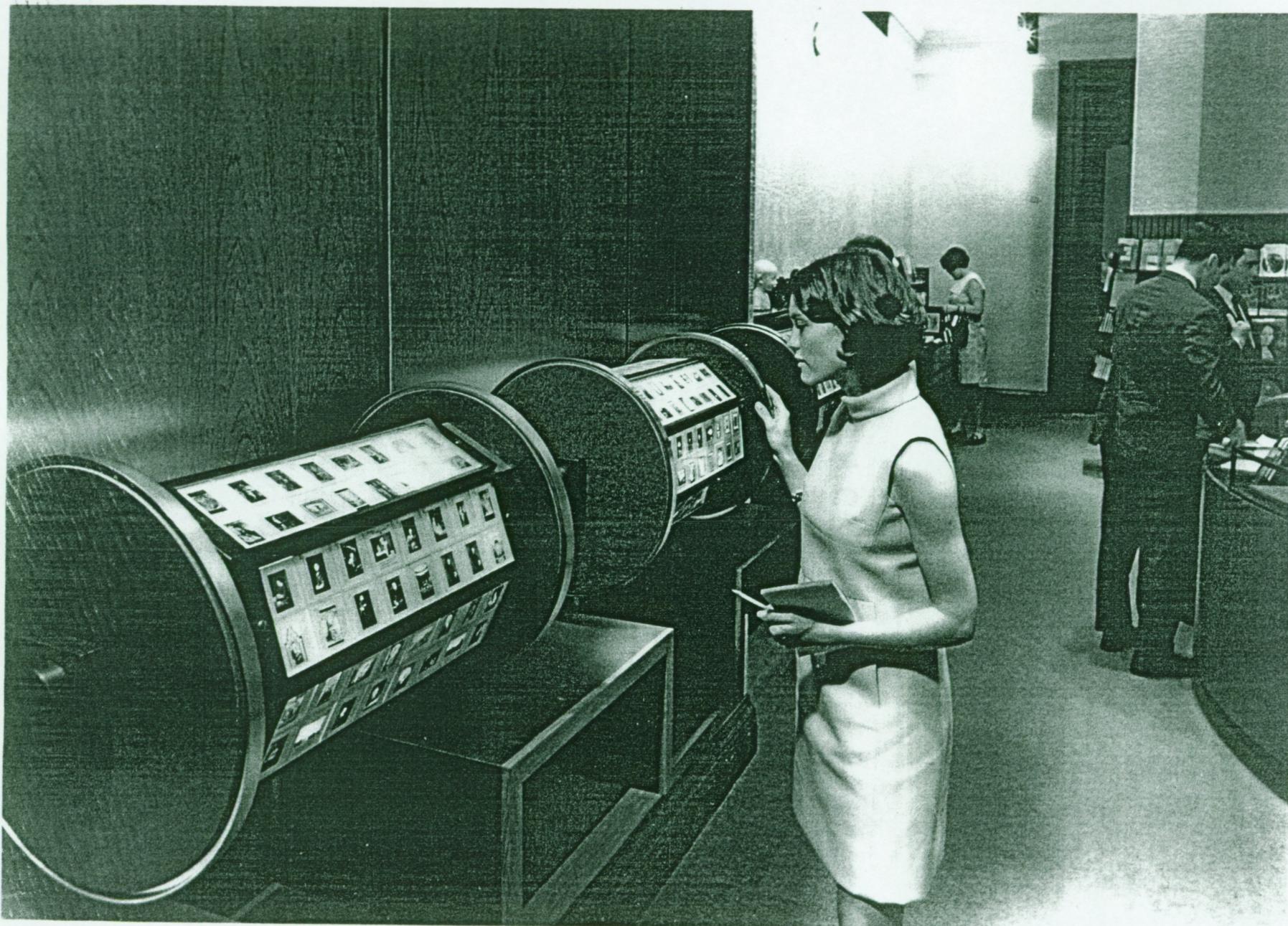
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

PHOTO CUTLINE

Museum Self-Service -- More than a thousand slides of paintings are mounted on drums that can be rotated by the customer in the National Gallery's new self-service sales shop. 1700 books, reproductions, catalogues, and other related items are offered in the three-room facility which opened last week.



Scan of photocopy of photograph. Photocopy of photograph is located in the Press Release files.