

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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

Washington, D. C. August 29, 1969. A memorial exhibition honoring Ailsa Mellon Bruce, who died Monday, will open Saturday (August 30) at the National Gallery of Art, it was announced by J. Carter Brown, Director.

Situated in three rooms off the East Garden Court will be a collection of 50 of the major paintings, sculptures, and drawings that have been purchased since 1950 by the Gallery with funds provided by Mrs. Bruce.

"Over the years the fruits of Mrs. Bruce's quiet generosity have taken up their positions around our building according to their period and medium. To see them all together this way for the first time comes as a surprise even to those of us who work here," Mr. Brown said.

The group will include the Gallery's most recent acquisition, a drawing by Rubens which has not been seen by the public, as well as Ginevra de'Benci, the only generally accepted painting by Leonardo da Vinci to come permanently to this country; The Lute Player by Gentileschi; Saint George and the Dragon by Rogier van der Weyden; A Young Girl Reading by Fragonard; and Right and Left by Winslow Homer.

"It is a princely show," Mr. Brown added, "providing juxtapositions and insights that could have come no other way, as well as testimony to the selflessness of one of the most unassumingly generous benefactors in the history of museums."

The memorial involves a major logistics effort, with the staff having moved and re-installed within three days some of the largest and most precious works in the collection. A 25-foot scaffold was built to move two huge Guardi paintings from the walls of the west staircase. The Gallery's four life-size bronzes by Maillol and Lehmbruck were lifted out of niches in the Rotunda and transported to the east rooms.

Rubens' painting of Daniel in the Lions' Den, which is almost eleven feet across, will be shown alongside the newly acquired Rubens drawing. This drawing, of A Lion, is one of the preliminary studies for the painting.

Mrs. Bruce was the daughter of Andrew Mellon, who gave his collection and the present building. In addition to her many gifts for the purchase of art, Mrs. Bruce gave, with her brother Paul Mellon, funds that will be used to construct the Gallery's new east building, which will house a Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, additional exhibition facilities, and the Gallery's expanding Extension Service for communities throughout the nation.

The memorial exhibition will continue through Sunday, October 5.

Black-and-white photographs and color transparencies on loan for purposes of publication 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.

IN MEMORIAM

AILSAM MELLON BRUCE

June 28, 1901 - August 25, 1969

AN EXHIBITION

August 30 - October 5

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



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