

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW TRAVELLING EXHIBIT PROGRAM LAUNCHED BY NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. January 31, 1970. The city of Charleston, West Virginia, has been chosen by the National Gallery of Art for the launching of a new program of free travelling photographic exhibits designed to appear simultaneously with major exhibitions at the National Gallery.

The program will be introduced by the West Virginia State Department of Education and the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council on February 3 at George Washington High School in Charleston. The first exhibit, which will be on view at the high school through the month of February, is based on the current exhibition of African sculpture at the National Gallery.

Senators Jennings Randolph and Robert C. Byrd, Governor Arch A. Moore, Jr., and Secretary of State John D. Rockefeller IV are expected to attend the ceremonies, which will follow a luncheon given by Governor Moore at the Executive Mansion.

Arrangements for the inaugural occasion are being made by Norman Fagan, Executive Director of the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council, and Miss Ruby Ball, State Supervisor for Art Education.

"While thousands visit the Gallery every week," explained J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, "many more thousands across the country do not have that opportunity. Through these travelling exhibits we hope to share more of the resources of the Gallery.

"The art of Africa has a long history reflecting a diversity within the framework of its tribal origins more complex than the development of the national arts of Europe. Our first exhibit - through the sculpture of Africa - has been designed to give a hint of this rich diversity in time and space. From the photographic reproductions of selected objects on view now at the National Gallery, we hope viewers will acquire a new visual vocabulary of African art and a greater understanding of the contributions Africa's creative past has made to the history of mankind."

The Gallery's Extension Service will circulate 20 copies of the African sculpture exhibit for the next two years. The exhibits are designed especially to go into non-security, non-museum settings.

The African travelling exhibit, entitled "The Creative Past: Art of Africa", is composed of 50 photographic reproductions of sculptures in the National Gallery exhibition. They include the famous bronze seated figure of a man, from Tada on the banks of the Niger River, an extraordinarily beautiful head of a queen mother, and a very important ivory salt cellar.

The emphasis is on objects of earlier African history, since this kind of material is not available generally for viewing in the United States. Examples were selected also for diversity and high visual impact.

Consultant for the travelling exhibit was Olujimi Oluwole Daniel, from Lagos, Nigeria, and now Lecturer on African art and culture at Federal City College, Washington, D.C.

The exhibit is made up of 18 free-standing panels which can be assembled in clusters for display in classrooms, hallways, lounges, or any appropriate viewing area. The photographic reproductions have been silk-screened directly onto lightweight laminated panels. Requiring about 8 x 15 feet of floor space, the assembled panels

stand over six feet high but can be adjusted to just over five feet for younger audiences.

Borrowers may have the exhibit for a period of three weeks. They are required to pay only the shipping costs to and from the Gallery or to the next exhibitor.

The National Gallery through its Extension Service has developed a comprehensive audio-visual program in order to make the Gallery's collection more accessible to classrooms across the country. Slide lectures covering the history of art from the Byzantine period to the 20th century, travelling exhibits of framed reproductions, and four 16 mm motion pictures suitable for use in classes dealing with art, humanities, history, social studies, and literature are available for loan to individual schools at no cost except the return postage and insurance.

Last year the Extension Service materials were used in over 3,000 communities across the United States and reached 2,700,000 Americans.