

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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

NATIONAL PHOTO ARCHIVE

FOR ART HISTORIANS, ARCHITECTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS

ANNOUNCED BY NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. October 6, 1970. A photographic archive for art historians, environmentalists, architects and other students of visual arts, established with a grant from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, was announced today by J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art.

Dr. Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, a prominent art historian and Italian Renaissance scholar, has been appointed to supervise the building of the archive. Both announcements were made following action at a Board of Trustees' meeting September 30.

"Research in many fields requires only books," Mr. Brown has said. "In ours you've got to have books, and originals, and as many photographs as you can possibly lay your hands on. What we're building here is a visual data base to be, in time, of national and international usefulness."

The photographic archive, constituting one third of the National Gallery's future Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, and projected at two and a half million pictures, will be a national

(MORE)



service. Continuing the joint enterprise of private and public support of the National Gallery, Congress approved funds this summer to cover the operating costs of this new service to the nation.

Dr. Contini-Bonacossi, for many years a curator with the Kress Foundation, and an art scholar with intimate knowledge of the usefulness of visual resources, has already begun his work. Born to Italian parents in Argentina, he became a naturalized American citizen in 1962. He grew up in Italy and studied at the University of Florence.

The nucleus of the National Gallery's collection of photographs is the Richter Archive, which came to the National Gallery in 1943 as a gift from Solomon R. Guggenheim. Additions since then have brought the collection up to about 200,000 photographs. As the collection expands, emphasis will continue to relate to the collections of painting and sculpture at the National Gallery but will not be limited to them. Additional attention will be given, for instance, to the documentation of architecture, urban development and the visual environment.

The collection will eventually be computerized. The first year will be devoted to further study of procedure, filing and retrieval systems, and seeking permission to microfilm other major photographic archives throughout the world.

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