

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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## ACQUISITIONS OF PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

### DOUBLE NATIONAL GALLERY'S PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

WASHINGTON, D.C. July 21, 1971. Two recent acquisitions of photographic materials by the National Gallery of Art have brought to an estimated 400,000 items the holdings of its Photographic Archive, which was greatly expanded in September 1970 through a grant from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation of New York.

The generosity of the Kress Foundation has made possible the important acquisition of some 120,000 photographic negatives of works of art sold at Parke-Bernet from the 1930's to 1965. This negative file, purchased from Taylor and Dull, prominent New York photographers, has already attracted wide scholarly attention. It is the largest single acquisition of photographic materials since the Richter Archive was presented to the National Gallery in 1943 by Solomon R. Guggenheim.

The Taylor and Dull acquisition includes some 2,300 Parke-Bernet and Anderson Gallery auction catalogs, in themselves of great interest to scholars. These are the key to the negatives, about ten per cent of which represent paintings, while the bulk of the file focuses on the decorative arts, including silver, tapestries, rugs, china, books and manuscripts as well as furniture.

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Among important auctions covered are paintings from the Oscar B. Cintas collection, which included works by Bellini, El Greco, Hals, and Rembrandt, in 1963; the Larry Aldrich collection, with works by Chagall, Gauguin, Monet, and Picasso, among others, in 1963; and the Alfred W. Erickson collection in 1961, from which the National Gallery of Art acquired Fragonard's A Young Girl Reading and the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired Rembrandt's Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer.

The other major photographic acquisition is the Clarence Ward Medieval Archive, a collection of over 1,200 rare negatives of European architecture, which is a recent gift of Dr. Clarence Ward, Professor Emeritus of Art History at Oberlin College.

Dr. Ward, who taught at Oberlin from 1916 to 1949, compiled his archive in the 1930's under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. The author of Medieval Church Vaulting, Dr. Ward is currently preparing a work on the stylistic evolution of Gothic architecture. The negatives were made under the direction of Dr. Ward by photographer Arthur L. Princehorn.

"The National Gallery is greatly pleased to have the original visual source material of Dr. Ward, who is largely responsible for bringing the Oberlin College library, museum and archives to their present nationally recognized stature," said Charles Parkhurst, Assistant Director of the National Gallery of Art.

These two important acquisitions have almost doubled the

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Photographic Archive's holdings. The total goal is two and one half million items. The Archive, under the direction of Dr. Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, will be the largest research resource of its kind in the world, and will constitute one of the most important aspects of the National Gallery's Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, to be housed in the new East Building of the National Gallery, now under construction.

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