

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OLD MASTER AND RUSSIAN PAINTINGS FROM LENINGRAD
EXHIBITED IN U.S. AT NATIONAL GALLERY FOR FIRST TIME

WASHINGTON, D. C. July 22, 1975. An unprecedented loan exhibition from the Soviet Union, Master Paintings from The Hermitage and The State Russian Museum, Leningrad, will be seen for the first time in the United States beginning July 30 at the National Gallery of Art.

The exhibition was announced in April from Moscow. The loan was negotiated by Dr. Armand Hammer, in consultation with J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, and the other four participating institutions.

The exhibition, which will remain on view at the Gallery through September 9 before making a nationwide tour, is an officially-designated American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) event involving a foreign government.

Thirty European paintings, ranging from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, are being lent from The Hermitage, the vast complex of buildings in Leningrad housing the renowned art collection acquired primarily by Catherine the Great in the eighteenth century. Thirteen paintings by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian artists are being lent from The State Russian Museum, the largest repository of Russian art. This is the first exhibition of Russian paintings of this period in the United States.

The selection includes two paintings by Rembrandt; one each by Rubens and van Dyck; Poussin, Le Nain, Claude, Chardin, Fragonard and Boucher; Zurbarán, Velázquez and Murillo; Veronese, Caravaggio, Fetti, Tiepolo and Guardi; Cranach, Hals, Heda, TerBorch, Ruisdael and Gainsborough; Cézanne and Gauguin; and two

(more)

each by Picasso and Matisse.

Among the great works is The Lute Player by Caravaggio, an artist whose mastery of light and shade influenced every major seventeenth-century painter, yet whose work is so rare as to be largely unrepresented in the United States; Rembrandt's Saskia as Flora, a portrait of his wife as the Roman goddess; and Fragonard's The Stolen Kiss, a subject often portrayed in eighteenth-century French painting, yet never with the compositional inventiveness and psychological insight represented in this canvas.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue containing color illustrations and entries on each painting, as well as an introductory essay on the city of Leningrad and its cultural highlights by Denys Sutton. In addition, a free guide to the exhibition with a foreword by J. Carter Brown will be available, courtesy of the Armand Hammer Foundation.

After its premier showing at the National Gallery, the exhibition will be seen at the M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York (September 16 through October 29); The Detroit Institute of Art (November 4 through December 9); the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (December 16 through January 27, 1976); and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (February 3 through March 16).

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