

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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

February 16, 1976

## NOTE TO EDITORS

From Katherine Warwick  
Information Officer, National Gallery

Re: The Eye of Thomas Jefferson, the National Gallery's major Bicentennial exhibition, to be on view June 5 - September 6, 1976.

Attached is an advance fact sheet for The Eye of Thomas Jefferson, the most complex exhibition ever mounted by the National Gallery.

- ° Major works never before loaned from the collections of which they are a part will come to the Gallery for this exhibition. Two such loans are the Venus de' Medici, the renowned 3rd century B.C. sculpture from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy, and Trumbull's series of Revolutionary War paintings from the Yale University Art Gallery.
- ° Full-scale reconstructions and large-scale models of several Jeffersonian architectural designs, as well as examples of his designs in the decorative arts and a Jeffersonian garden, will be featured.
- ° Installation will require all of the Gallery's ground-floor exhibition space plus the West Garden Court, a total of approximately 25,000 square feet.
- ° Two years in preparation, The Eye of Thomas Jefferson has been developed with the advice of an International Steering Committee composed of experts on the period and the man upon whom the exhibition focuses.

The fact sheet offers more details.

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## ADVANCE FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION: The Eye of Thomas Jefferson

DATES: June 5 - September 6, 1976

CONCEPT: Of the Founding Fathers, Jefferson alone sustained a life-long commitment to the visual arts, for his own edification and delight and for the cultural enrichment of this nation. From his earliest plans for Monticello drawn during his early twenties, through his aesthetically rewarding years in Europe, to his encouragement of city planning, innovative architecture, interior design, and the decorative arts during his Presidency and after, Jefferson demonstrated his ever-increasing interest and skill in the visual arts. The aesthetic and intellectual environment in which his eye and his imagination developed, and the works initiated and produced by that development, form the subject of this exhibition.

CONTENT: Using his particular interest in the arts as its focus, the exhibition will evoke Jefferson's visual and intellectual environment through paintings, sculpture, drawings and prints, books, decorative arts, architecture, and landscape design. Examples will range from antique sculpture to silver and furniture, and Jefferson's own drawings and designs will be extensively represented. Approximately 550 pieces will be included from more than 100 collections in Europe and North America.

Among the highlights:

To reflect the artistic and intellectual life in the Virginia colony: portraits of the children of Virginia colonists, recalling Jefferson's youth in the Tidewater area; Reynolds' portrait of Lord Dunmore, Hoare's portrait of Lord Botetourt, and Wilson's portrait of Governor Fauquier, all Royal Governors of Virginia; ecclesiastical silver, marking the presence of the Established Church in colonial life; a selection of musical instruments, reflecting one part of the cultural life of the colony.

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To evoke the Enlightenment--the world of exploration and experiment, "Nature and Reason": books, such as Jefferson's own Notes on the State of Virginia, an early effort to describe a new land; material from the Lewis and Clark expedition, Jefferson's later presidential achievement; scientific instruments; antiquities, including the Venus de' Medici, dating from the 3rd century B.C., The Townley Vase, celebrated in Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn, and a bronze askos from Nîmes, dating from approximately the 1st century A.D.--all reflecting the eighteenth century's rediscovery of the classical past; and paintings by Stubbs of a Green Monkey and a Rhinoceros and by C. W. Peale of The Exhuming of the First American Mastodon (1806).

To present works inspired by the Revolution: paintings by Trumbull loaned by the Yale University Art Gallery for the first time, including his famous Declaration of Independence, and portrait busts by Houdon of Lafayette, Washington, Franklin, and John Paul Jones. In addition, there will be a miniature of Jefferson which Maria Cosway prevailed on Trumbull to copy for her from The Declaration of Independence and which still hangs in the convent school Mrs. Cosway founded and retired to in Lodi, Italy.

To suggest Jefferson's avid pursuit of art and architecture in Europe between 1784 and 1789: a partial re-creation of the French Salons of 1785, 1787, and 1789; drawings by visionary architects Ledoux and Boullée, among others; paintings by Hubert Robert reflecting the new interest in the past; a small gallery of paintings and sculpture which Jefferson specifically commented on and admired, including examples by David, Drouais, and Canova; eighteenth-century French furniture collected by Americans such as Jefferson himself, Gouverneur Morris, Washington, and the Boston merchant Swan.

To represent British arts and to mark Jefferson's visit to England in 1786: paintings, drawings, and watercolors, as well as a selection of Chippendale and Adam furniture.

To show Jefferson's involvement in architecture: large-scale models of buildings significant in Jefferson's life or related to his development as an architect, including 1) Rosewell, built in 1726, an exemplary Virginia manor house of the period, 2) the river façade of the Hôtel de Salm in Paris, because of its influence on the rebuilding of Monticello, 3) Poplar Forest, considered by many to be

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Jefferson's finest design, and 4) Monticello; a full-scale reconstruction of the Central Hall of Barboursville, a house designed by Jefferson in 1817 and destroyed in 1884; the largest exhibition of Jefferson's own drawings ever organized, including designs for such public buildings as the Capitols of Richmond and Washington and his design for the White House competition of 1792, as well as the other designs submitted for the competition; and photographs of surviving buildings. In addition, a small temple will be reconstructed from one of Jefferson's surviving designs, now in the Massachusetts Historical Society, to house the Venus de' Medici.

To present Jefferson's contributions to decorative arts and city planning: Jefferson's designs and commissions in the decorative arts, including a tea urn, silver goblets, furniture, and window treatments for Monticello; the design and production of commemorative medals; a large selection of drawings by Latrobe, the man Jefferson appointed to be the first Surveyor of Public Buildings for the federal government.

To display Jefferson's interest in gardens and landscape design: a Jeffersonian botanical garden in the Gallery's West Garden Court, including specimens of Jefferson's favorite plants and special American varieties that he collected, some European varieties received from friends abroad, drawings and plates of botanical and natural history subjects, portraits of von Humboldt and Linneaus and a portrait of Rubens Peale with the first geranium plant in America, sketches of plants from the Lewis and Clark expedition, and a selection of Jefferson's garden designs and plans for various garden structures.

ORGANIZATION: The Eye of Thomas Jefferson is being organized by the National Gallery of Art with the advice of an International Steering Committee chaired by Sir Francis J. B. Watson, former Director of the Wallace Collection, London. The curator is W. Howard Adams, of the Gallery's staff.

SUPPORT: The exhibition is being supported by a grant from Exxon Corporation.

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**LENDERS:** Approximately one fifth of the loans are coming from French collections, both public and private, among them: Versailles, the Louvre, the Musée Carnavalet, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. A substantial number of works are being lent by British collections, including The National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, the Tate Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Royal Collection, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Academy of Arts, the Royal College of Physicians, and the Royal College of Surgeons. Other important loans are being made by the Uffizi Gallery in Florence and institutions in Sweden, The Netherlands, and Portugal, among others.

Principal public lenders in North America are the Historical Societies of Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Boston Atheneum and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, the University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Virginia; The Yale University Art Gallery; the Library of Congress; the National Gallery of Canada; the Royal Ontario Museum; and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

**PUBLICATIONS:** An illustrated catalogue edited by W. Howard Adams, in collaboration with scholars here and abroad, will contain an introduction by Mr. Adams and illustrations and entries on works in the exhibition. In addition, six special essays on Jefferson and the arts have been commissioned. Each will be published separately for the exhibition, including a catalogue of Jefferson's life portraits.

**FILM:** A film based on the general theme of the exhibition is being produced with funds from Exxon Corporation and will be distributed free of charge to schools and colleges across the nation by the Extension Service of the National Gallery.

**THE COMMITTEE:** The International Steering Committee is made up of eighteen authorities from five countries.

Members of the Committee are as follows:

Sir Francis J. B. Watson, Chairman

W. Howard Adams, National Gallery of Art

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James A. Bear, Jr., Curator, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, Charlottesville, Va.

J. Carter Brown, Director, National Gallery of Art

Frederick J. Cummings, Director, The Detroit Institute of Arts

Italo Faldi, Director, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome

Basil Greenhill, Director, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England

Hugh Honour, authority on eighteenth-century art

Graham Hood, Director of Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Frederick D. Nichols, University of Virginia

Merrill D. Peterson, University of Virginia

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, architectural historian

Jules David Prown, Yale University

Pierre Rosenberg, Louvre

Robert Rosenblum, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Jean Seznec, All Souls College, Oxford, England

Adolf Max Vogt, Director, Institut fur Geschichte und Theorie der Architecktur, Zurich

Gabriel White, former Director of Exhibitions, Arts Council of Great Britain, London

INSTALLATION

DESIGNER: John Bedenkapp, New York

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February 16, 1976

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Mary Dyer, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.