

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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UNPRECEDENTED INTERNATIONAL LOAN SHOW TO OPEN  
NEW SPECIAL EXHIBITION GALLERIES

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 13, 1978. The 500-year development of Dresden as a brilliant international cultural center will be the subject of an unprecedented international loan exhibition which will begin its tour of three U. S. cities at the National Gallery of Art on June 1, concurrently with the opening of the Gallery's new East Building, J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, announced today.

Dramatizing the history of art collecting, this exhibition represents the first time this subject has been treated so comprehensively in a temporary exhibition.

Entitled The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting, an exhibition from the German Democratic Republic of more than 700 objects from the collections of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (State Museums of Dresden), will be shown in the National Gallery's new special exhibition galleries, which will be used for the first time.

This exhibition has been organized jointly by the National Gallery of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and will travel to New York and San Francisco following its presentation at the National Gallery in Washington.

The exhibition is being made possible through a grant from the International Business Machines Corporation, with additional funding from the Robert Wood

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Johnson Jr. Charitable Trust, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Federal indemnification granted by the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities up to the maximum allowable limit will cover the major part of the insurance costs.

Among the richly diverse and rare works will be examples of old master paintings and drawings, renaissance and baroque bronzes, highly decorated and jewelled arms and armor, splendid pieces of silver, gold and precious stones, vessels and objects of rock crystal, pearl, ivory, coral and rhinoceros horn set in richly chased and embossed gold mounts, rare oriental porcelain and extraordinary examples from the famed Meissen factories (such as the exotic white animal figures passionately beloved by Augustus the Strong), antique sculpture, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings and posters by German romantic and expressionist painters.

A fully illustrated catalogue, produced by the Metropolitan under the curatorial direction of Olga Raggio, chairman of its European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Department, contains a background essay on the history of collecting in Dresden by Joachim Menzhausen, the director of the Grünes Gewölbe, essays and entries by other Dresden scholars, and an introduction by Philippe de Montebello, acting director of the Metropolitan, Ian White, director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and Mr. Brown. A free guide prepared by the National Gallery will also accompany the exhibition.

The exhibition's concept is summarized in the introduction to the catalogue as follows: "The evolution in the northern Renaissance of the collection as a microcosm of the world and a field of scientific enquiry gradually developed into the concept of baroque splendor, and the collection as an extension of the

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political grandeur and magnificence of an autocratic state. With the birth of the modern era, and its twin interests in archaeologically correct, neo-classical rediscovery coupled with a romantic enthusiasm for the achievements of varying cultures, the idea of the public museum was born. Public access rather than private delectation became the theme, along with a new emphasis on national schools of art.

"The exhibition is presented, therefore, not as a conventional show of 'treasures'. Great works from the Dresden collection are presented not as isolated masterpieces, but rather in function of the history and character of the collections of which they formed a part."

The twelve-section installation design by Gaillard F. Ravenel and the design National Gallery/staff, will evoke an early Kunstkammer (collector's cabinet), a Rustkammer (armory), a Schatzkammer (treasury), a print cabinet, a picture gallery, and the court's festive pageantry. Two jousting knights in armor on horseback and famous views of Dresden by the eighteenth-century Venetian Bernardo Bellotto will introduce the exhibition. Other highlights will be the extraordinary figure of a Moor carrying a tray of uncut emeralds from the New World made by the court sculptor Permoser and jeweller Dinglinger, and a forty-two-piece garniture of rose-cut diamonds from the Saxon Crown jewels, parts of which were worn on formal occasions by the Saxon princes.

The paintings will include works by Dürer, Cranach, Breugel, Holbein, van Dyck, Rembrandt, Rubens, Titian, Vermeer, Velazquez, Poussin and Watteau, among others. The sculpture will range from an antique statue to renaissance bronzes and a retrospective bust of George Washington by a nineteenth-century Dresden artist. The drawings will be by German and Netherlandish draftsmen. The arms and armor will reflect the tremendous wealth of the Dresden armory



and will include a boy's suit, ceremonial and parade armor chased in gold, hunting firearms and jewel-encrusted oriental swords and maces, in addition to the pieces mentioned above. Among the porcelain will be rare oriental examples and all aspects of the Meissen factories, founded in 1708 by the discovery of the porcelain formula formerly known only to the Chinese, a discovery made by the court alchemist Boettger.

The nineteenth- and twentieth-century works will include three paintings by the German romantic, Caspar David Friedrich, currently enjoying a revival particularly among European youth, and examples by the German expressionist artists of the Die Brücke movement which took place in Dresden.

The exhibition will be on view at the National Gallery through September 4. Then it will be seen at the Metropolitan Museum from October 21 through January 13, 1979, and the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, from February 18 through May 26, 1979.

Among other exhibitions at the opening of the East Building will be:

American Art at Mid-Century: The Subjects of the Artist

Piranesi: The Early Architectural Fantasies

Aspects of Twentieth-Century Art: I. Picasso and Cubism; II. European Painting and Sculpture; III. Matisse--Cutouts and "Jazz"

Small French Paintings from the Bequest of Ailsa Mellon Bruce

Master Drawings and Watercolors

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