

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENDANCE AT GALLERY'S EAST BUILDING REACHES ONE MILLION

WASHINGTON, D. C. July 25, 1978. Attendance at the National Gallery of Art's new East Building reached one million on Friday, July 21, which may be a record high in opening attendance for an art museum. The East Building opened to the public June 1, after a 2 p.m. ceremony during which President Carter accepted the building on behalf of the American people from Paul Mellon, President of the Gallery and son of the Gallery's founder Andrew W. Mellon. Funds for the building were provided by Mr. Mellon, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The building was designed by architect I. M. Pei & Partners, New York.

Attendance for The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting, the major international loan exhibition from the German Democratic Republic, has reached over a third of a million since it opened June 1 in the East Building's special exhibition galleries. The exhibition will be on view through Labor Day, September 4.

The design for the East Building, combined with the pass system for the Dresden exhibition, has successfully avoided lines and overcrowding, despite the tremendous visitor interest and high attendance levels. The number of visitors entering the west, or original, Gallery building since June 1 is in excess of 700,000. Total attendance at the National Gallery in recent years has been: 1977: 2,678,797; 1976: 2,185,136; 1975: 1,899,320. The

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attendance at the Gallery in the comparable period last year, June 1 through July 21, 1977, was 295,880.

Summer evening viewing hours are in effect through Labor Day, September 4: Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday noon to 9 p.m.

Free passes to the Dresden show, which are required for entry, allow the visitor to reserve a half hour during which to enter the show, after which he may stay as long as he wishes. The free passes are distributed from tents on National Gallery Plaza from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon to 8 p.m. Sunday. Passes, as long as they are available, may be picked up for the same day or on the preceding day beginning at 5 p.m. Since the exhibition opened, the best viewing times have been Saturday through Wednesday evenings from 5 to 8 p.m. On Thursday and Friday evenings, the Dresden exhibition is open to groups of twelve or more who have made an advance reservation with the Gallery's Education Department.

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