

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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THE TREASURE HOUSES OF BRITAIN
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF TRADITION
COMING TO NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D. C. June 21, 1984. A joint announcement was made today in Washington and London of a major exhibition, The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting, which goes on view at the National Gallery of Art from November 1985 through March 1986. Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales are the Patrons of this exhibition.

Speaking in Washington were Paul Mellon, Chairman of the Board of the National Gallery, His Excellency Sir Oliver Wright, Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Philip Caldwell, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Ford Motor Company, and J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art.

In London, the announcement was made by Lord Howard of Henderskelfe, Chairman of the exhibition's Committee of Honour, Lord Gibson, Chairman of the National Trust, and Commander Michael Saunders-Watson, President of the Historic Houses Association, and Sam Toy, Chairman of Ford Motor Company of Britain. Among those also present were Gervase Jackson-Stops, Architectural Advisor to the National Trust and curator of the exhibition, and Julian Andrews, Director, Fine Arts Department, British Council.

The exhibition will be made possible by a generous grant from the Ford Motor Company. Mr. Caldwell announced the sponsorship and issued the following statement: "The Treasure Houses of Britain brings a new dimension to the scope and magnitude of our participation in a major cultural event and to the whole

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concept of exhibitions. Encouragement and support of the arts should not depend primarily on either the patronage of a few modern Medicis or government grants. Instead, business enterprises and individuals at every level should, within their capabilities, assist with the funding, facilities, personnel and active support for the arts, not only in their own self-interest but also for the support of the larger human community to which we all belong."

The concept of the exhibition originated with the National Gallery of Art and the British Council with the support of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (UK), the Historic Houses Association (UK) and the National Trust for Scotland. Gervase Jackson-Stops of the National Trust is the exhibition curator and editor of the fully-illustrated catalogue.

The Committee of Honour chaired by Lord Howard includes: The American Ambassador to Great Britain, The British Ambassador to the United States, The Honorable Walter Annenberg KBE, Mrs. David K.E. Bruce, The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT, Sir John Burgh KCMG CB, The Marquess of Bute, Sir Hugh Casson PRA KCVO, Sir Robert Cooke, The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Gibson, The Duke of Grafton KG, The Earl of March and Kinrara, Paul Mellon KBE, The Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, The Duke of Norfolk KG CB MC, The Duke of Northumberland KG GCVO, Commander Saunders-Watson, Sir Roy Strong, The Marquess of Tavistock, and Mrs. John Hay Whitney.

The Steering Committee is chaired by Mr. Brown, and includes Lord Howard as Deputy Chairman; Mr. Andrews; David Fuller, exhibition office, Fine Arts Department, The British Council; Mr. Jackson-Stops; Gaillard Ravenel, Chief of Design, and D. Dodge Thompson, Chief of Exhibition Programs, of the National Gallery of Art.

The Conservation Panel is made up of Norman Brommelle, Chairman, Herbert Lank, and David Winfield.

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The exhibition's objective is to present the great riches of British collections and to show how they have been formed from the beginning of the Tudor dynasty to the present day. The largest and most ambitious exhibition ever undertaken by the National Gallery, the installation will fill the top two levels of the East Building and will be mounted chronologically according to the development of the houses. The installation will feature a Jacobean "long gallery" with full-length portraits of the early seventeenth century, a Palladian "state room", a sculpture rotunda, and a magnificent top-lit gallery of the Waterloo period.

Approximately 650 works of art selected from some 130 British country houses will be on view including paintings by such masters as Holbein, van Dyck, Poussin, Claude, Titian, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Constable, El Greco, Velazquez, Murillo, Hogarth, Turner and Rembrandt. In addition, there will be furniture; tapestries and other textiles; arms and armor; jewelry and metalwork, with an important representation of English silver; Oriental and domestic porcelain; antique and baroque sculpture by such artists as Praxiteles, Bernini, Canova; and other paintings including landscapes, Georgian portraits, Dutch cabinet paintings, animal and sporting pictures, Victorian painting, and the pre-Raphaelites. While many of the masterpieces will be relatively familiar, some will be on view publicly for the first time.

Among the houses expected to be represented will be Alnwick Castle, Attingham Park, Blenheim Palace, Boughton House, Burleigh, Castle Howard, Chatsworth, Drumlanrig Castle, Fyvie Castle, Goodwood, Hardwick Hall, Harewood House, Holkham Hall, Houghton Hall, Knole, Longleat, Penshurst, Petworth House, Powis Castle, Sledmere, Syon Park, Uppark and Woburn Abbey. Provisions are being made to insure the works of art with a British and United States indemnity.

The country house as a collective work of art will be shown in the exhibition catalogue to be one of Britain's most important contributions to world civilization. This fully-illustrated catalogue will contain an introduction by Mr. Brown ("The Country House as a Work of Art") and essays by Mr. Jackson-Stops ("Patrons and Practitioners", reflecting the personalities behind the country house, the relationships between the builder, his architect and craftsmen and connoisseurship and collecting); Mark Girouard ("The Power House", describing the economic background of the country house, its political importance and the machinery that supported it "Behind the green baize door"); John Cornforth ("The Backward Look", heritage and tradition as continuing themes in the country house); Sir Oliver Millar ("Portraiture in the Country House"); Brinsley Ford ("The Country House and the Grand Tour"); and Professor Frances Haskell ("The British as Collectors").

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), Carolyn Amiot or Marla Price, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565 (202) 842-6353.