

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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EXHIBITION OF SWEDISH ROYAL TREASURES TO OPEN AT NATIONAL GALLERY IN APRIL

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 7, 1988 - An exhibition of more than 100 royal objects from an extraordinary chapter in European history goes on view at the National Gallery of Art's East Building on April 13, 1988. Sweden: A Royal Treasury 1550-1700 consists of decorative arts including diamond-encrusted crowns, orbs, and scepters, armor and inlaid firearms, royal costumes embroidered in gold and silver, drawings, enamels, and sculpture, and other objects from the Swedish royal collections, many of which have never been seen outside Sweden. Lenders to the exhibition include the Swedish Royal Armory, Royal Collections, Royal Treasury, Nationalmuseum, and Skokloster Castle. Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden will open the exhibition at the National Gallery. Jointly organized by the National Gallery of Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the exhibition is made possible through contributions from The Boeing Company, the Federation of Swedish Industries, and the Swedish Government. It is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. A scholarly catalogue will accompany the show.

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"We are delighted to have this rare opportunity to show so many of these sumptuous and beautiful works of art from Sweden," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery. "The baroque period in Sweden is largely unfamiliar to the American public, and we expect this exhibition to open up a fascinating era of European history to this country."

A joint congressional resolution passed last May proclaimed 1988 "The Year of New Sweden" in honor of the 350th anniversary of the first permanent Swedish colony in North America. Sweden: A Royal Treasury 1550-1700 coincides with the year-long celebration entitled "New Sweden '88" marking this historic anniversary.

Sweden first acquired its national identity through consolidation of the state under King Gustav Vasa in the mid-16th century. From that time until the defeat of the Swedish warrior-king Charles XII in 1709 by the Russian tsar Peter the Great, Sweden was the undisputed power of the Baltic and northern Europe, and thus one of the strongest monarchies in Europe. The royal regalia and other objects in Sweden: A Royal Treasury 1550-1700 underscore the theme of the exhibition: the use of works of art of great aesthetic merit as symbols of state and royal authority in 16th- and 17th-century Sweden. Sweden in this era began to reflect the grandeur of Versailles. Included in the show are selections from Sweden's royal costume collection, which includes the most outstanding concentration of 17th-century costumes known to survive. Gustavus Adolphus' gold-embroidered wedding suit from 1620 will be on display along with sumptuously embroidered gold and silver costumes commissioned from Paris in 1654 for the coronation of Charles X.

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The full-color catalogue, coordinated by Agneta Lundström, Director of the Royal Armory, contains contributions by the curator, Michael Conforti, Chief Curator of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Stig Fogelmarck, Director Emeritus of the Royal Treasury of Sweden; Guy Walton, Associate Professor of Fine Arts at New York University; and a number of noted Swedish scholars in fields represented in the exhibition (9 x 11 ", 195 pp.).

After its showing at the National Gallery April 13 to September 5, 1988, Sweden: A Royal Treasury 1550-1700 will travel to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts for viewing October 9, 1988, to January 1, 1989.

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