

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 7, 1995

Contact: Ruth Kaplan
Ann Greer
(202) 842-6353
Ford Motor Company:
Charles W. Day, Jr.
(202) 962-5366

MASTERWORKS FROM THE ACCLAIMED

CHATSWORTH COLLECTION OF DRAWINGS ON VIEW

AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OCTOBER 8 - DECEMBER 31

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Some of the finest surviving drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Anthony van Dyck, Peter Paul Rubens, Rembrandt, and other masters will be on display at the National Gallery of Art's East Building from October 8 through December 31, 1995. A Great Heritage: Renaissance and Baroque Drawings from Chatsworth has been selected from the collection of the Dukes of Devonshire in Derbyshire, England. Many of the 105 drawings have rarely been shown, and several have never been exhibited in this country.

The exhibition and catalogue are made possible by generous support from Ford Motor Company.

"We commend the Devonshire family's extraordinary tradition of collecting and their equally extraordinary tradition of making remarkable works of art available to the public," said Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art. "The Gallery is indebted to the 11th Duke and the Chatsworth

-more-

Settlement Trustees for lending these spectacular drawings, and to the Ford Motor Company for supporting the exhibition."

Alex Trotman, Ford chairman and chief executive officer, said of the company's support, "Ford enthusiastically sponsors this exhibition of unqualified excellence. We continue our commitment to supporting cultural activities, in order to expose more people to the fine arts. We expect that this exhibition will inspire the contemporary viewer to new heights of appreciation of the great masters."

Chatsworth, the residence of the Dukes of Devonshire, is one of Great Britain's grandest country houses with a vast collection of art housed under more than an acre of roof. William Cavendish, who became the 2nd Duke in 1707, made Chatsworth famous for its old master drawings, considered the finest private collection in the world after that of the British Royal family. Succeeding dukes have continued that legacy.

The 2nd Duke's purchase in 1724 of hundreds of drawings from the estate of Nicolaes Flinck of Rotterdam catapulted the Chatsworth collection to eminence. Flinck, the son of Rembrandt's pupil Govaert Flinck, owned a matchless group of Rembrandt's views of the Amstel River as well as portraits drawn from life by Anthony van Dyck and masterful Italian drawings by Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Rosso Fiorentino, and the Carracci. The Duke added to the collection until his death in 1729.

"The Chatsworth collection contains many of the finest and most beloved drawings by Renaissance and baroque masters," said Andrew Robison, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator at the National Gallery. "It is a great privilege and pleasure to see them together here."

A number of the Chatsworth drawings are independent works of art rather than studies for works in another medium. For example, Guercino's delicate and graceful Allegory of Winemaking and his highly finished landscape drawing A River in Flood probably were made for sale to collectors. Most of the drawings, however, are preparatory in nature and include designs for paintings, etchings, tapestries, and frescoes. Many Chatsworth drawings preserve stages in the evolution of designs for altarpieces, including several of the Raphaels, for which the collection is famous. Two strongly modeled, luminous chalk studies of apostles reflect a commission from Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (later Pope Clement VII) for an altarpiece, now in the Vatican, of the Transfiguration of Christ that Raphael had nearly completed by his death in 1520.

The dukes' enthusiasm for great draftsmanship reflects a new regard for drawing that had begun to emerge in the Renaissance, when the importance attached to the individual gave new status to drawings as expressions of an artist's genius and distinctive style. Renaissance theorists also viewed drawing as the

prerequisite for excellence in painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Visitors to the National Gallery and The Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, where the exhibition will be seen from January 18 through April 21, 1996, will be able to view a comprehensive selection of drawings from Chatsworth for the first time in twenty-five years, selected by leading scholars Andrew Robison and Peter Dreyer, former curator in Berlin and New York. Transcontinental tours in 1962-1963 and 1969-1970 introduced the Chatsworth collection in North America, including exhibitions at the National Gallery and the Morgan Library. These early shows were the inspiration of Mrs. John Pope, founder of the International Exhibitions Foundation, and the current exhibition celebrates her organization of a brilliant series of such exhibitions.

Curators for A Great Heritage: Renaissance and Baroque Drawings from Chatsworth are Andrew Robison and Professor Michael Jaffé, former director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University, England. A fully illustrated catalogue containing new research on the drawings has been written by Professor Jaffé, published by the National Gallery of Art, and distributed by Harry N. Abrams.

In addition to Ford Motor Company, support for the exhibition is provided by The Marpat Foundation, the Dimick

Foundation, Evelyn Stefansson Nef, the Dorothy Jordan Chadwick Fund, and Miss Alice Tully. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

The National Gallery of Art, located at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For general information call (202) 737-4215, or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at (202) 842-6176. For information on visitor services call (202) 842-6690 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#