

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 5, 1996

FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION OF GEORGES DE LA TOUR PAINTINGS
IN QUARTER CENTURY OPENS AT NATIONAL GALLERY ON OCTOBER 6, 1996
INCLUDES WORKS BY LEADING CONTEMPORARIES

Washington, D.C. -- The first major exhibition in twenty-five years featuring the works of Georges de La Tour (1593-1652), one of the greatest painters of the seventeenth century, will be on view at the National Gallery of Art from October 6, 1996 through January 5, 1997. Georges de la Tour and His World contains thirty-two major paintings by or attributed to La Tour and ten important works by leading contemporaries such as Caravaggio. The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art and the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth. It will be on view at the Kimbell Art Museum from February 2, 1997 through May 10, 1997.

The exhibition is made possible by Republic National Bank of New York, Safra Republic Holdings, S.A., and Banco Safra, S.A., Brazil.

The only previous La Tour exhibition was held in Paris in 1972. Since then, knowledge of the artist and his world has been

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amplified by further archival research and the discovery of previously unknown works. All of the major La Tour paintings discovered since 1972 are included in the exhibition, along with many of his greatest masterpieces never before exhibited in the United States.

"It is an extraordinary opportunity to see so many important paintings by one of France's most celebrated artists, along with works by some of his leading contemporaries," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "The remarkable variety of La Tour's work demonstrates his brilliant handling of subjects both sacred and profane. We are grateful to Republic National Bank for its generous support."

La Tour is best remembered for his realistic portrayal of scenes from everyday life, such as beggars, musicians, or cardsharps, and for the dramatic chiaroscuro of his religious works, such as images of the saints. He was a man of his time and place, but an artist of universal appeal. The duchy of Lorraine in which he lived and worked was ravaged by war and the plague, and torn by political strife. Yet La Tour's art was meditative, beautiful, and profoundly humane in its vision.

The works in Georges de la Tour and His World have been loaned from museums and private collections in France, Britain, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Russia, the Ukraine, Japan, Canada, and the United States. Included are such celebrated works by La Tour as The Newborn Child, The Hurdy-Gurdy Player, Saint Jerome, The Cheat with the Ace of Diamonds, and several of the Repentant

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Magdalenes--as well as Caravaggio's The Cardsharps, Jacques Bellange's The Lamentation of Christ, Hendrick ter Brugghen's Gamblers, Jean Le Clerc's Nocturnal Concert, and Simon Vouet's The Fortune-Teller.

The curator for Georges de La Tour and His World is Philip Conisbee, curator of French paintings at the National Gallery of Art. The fully illustrated 320-page catalogue, with approximately 170 black-and-white and 90 color illustrations, contains essays by Conisbee and nine other scholars and conservators, and presents the latest research on the artist and his works. It will be published by the National Gallery of Art and distributed by Yale University Press.

The National Gallery of Art, located on Constitution Avenue between Third and Seventh Streets, N.W., is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free of charge. 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.

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