

The Homeland Foundation is very pleased to sponsor *Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych* at the National Gallery of Art. Homeland supports a wide range of cultural, charitable, and religious programs and organizations, so it is quite fitting that it is joining the National Gallery to present the first exhibition devoted to the subject of Netherlandish diptychs from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, lent by collectors around the world.

The Homeland Foundation was founded in 1938 by financier and philanthropist Chauncey D. Stillman. Since Mr. Stillman's death in 1989, the Foundation has continued to honor his memory through its generosity in funding religious, intellectual, and cultural enterprises and in its aid to the poorer citizens of the world. The Homeland Foundation has sponsored numerous projects in the art world, particularly those involving religious art. Its interest in *Prayers and Portraits* stems from the way many Netherlandish diptychs were related to contemporary religious practices in northern Europe, including a movement known as "Devotio Moderna," which encouraged private devotion before images of holy personages or events. The diptych format in the Low Countries often included a painting of the Virgin and Child on one panel attached to a portrait of the donor on the facing panel. Other diptychs featured saints, and an important example in this exhibition depicts *Saint John the Baptist* and *Saint Veronica* by Hans Memling, which was in Italy by the early sixteenth century and influenced artists such as Raphael.

Recently Homeland restored the Casina of Pius IV, the Papal Academy of Science near Saint Peter's Basilica, and participated in the renovation of the "Fra Angelico" chapel, known as the Cappella Niccolina, at the Vatican. In addition, Homeland made possible the restoration of Raphael's tapestry of *The Healing of the Lame Man* at the Pinacoteca Vaticana and helped restore a fresco by Perugino and one by Cosimo Rosselli on the walls of the Sistine Chapel. In 2005 Homeland sponsored the *Fra Angelico* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Homeland is eager to lend its assistance in presenting *Prayers and Portraits*, which reunites numerous individual diptych panels long separated from one another in distant collections. It is our hope that this exhibition will allow visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the power these works have exerted on viewers over the centuries.

The Homeland Foundation would like to thank the trustees of the National Gallery of Art as well as the director and staff for organizing this exhibition on the theme of Netherlandish diptychs, which bring together religious and secular images in moving ways.

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