

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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MONDAY, March 2, 1964

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 2, 1964. John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that Mr. Paul Mellon has presented four paintings to the National Gallery and expressed his hope that they hang in the American Embassy in London. Two of the paintings are landscape fantasies, or Capriccios, with reminiscences of the English countryside, by the Italian, Antonio Canale, called Canaletto (1697-1768). The other two are portraits in English country settings by Arthur Devis (1711-1787).

This is the second donation for this purpose. The first was a gift of four paintings and a tapestry by the Coe Foundation in 1961.

"For years," Mr. Walker said, "embassies of foreign nations in Washington have had works of art from their own national collections. It is my hope that Mr. Mellon's patriotic gift will inspire other American donors to contribute in this way toward the decoration of our Embassies abroad."

Mr. Mellon is President of the National Gallery of Art. His unique collection of English painting was exhibited for the first time from April 20 to August 18, 1963, when the entire exhibition facilities of the Virginia Museum in Richmond were devoted to it. His father, the late Andrew W. Mellon, occupied the American Embassy in London in 1932-33, during his tenure as United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

Canaletto's Landscape Capriccio with Palace and Landscape Capriccio with Column, each 52" high, were painted during the Venetian master's stay in England from 1746-1755. Unlike so many of his works, which give the impression of being literal, almost photographic views of Venice, these paintings combine freely imaginary classical motifs with pieces of the English countryside. The pair is part of a group of six paintings,

(more)

one dated 1754, which show an unusual freedom of execution and lightness of tone. They were probably commissioned by the Earl of Lovelace as a decorative scheme. The hill in Landscape Capriccio with Palace has been identified as Box Hill, near the Lovelace estate, Oakham Park, in Surrey.

Paintings by Arthur Devis were shown to Americans in the Mellon exhibition in Richmond as one of the most charming masters in 18th-century art. His unorthodox composition and meticulous execution show an appealing naïveté that is far removed from the better-known Grand Manner portraiture of fashionable London, and that approximates more closely the kind of painting being done in America at the time.

Both paintings depict their subjects as fairly small figures in country settings. Lord Brand is shown full length holding a net, with his gun, dog, and dead game at his feet. The major portion of the canvas, however, is devoted to the landscape. The painting (27-1/2" x 35-1/2") is signed and dated 1756. The Conversation Piece is over six feet wide (54-1/2" x 77"). Two ladies and two children, grouped in the right foreground in a way to break all academic rules of composition, are shown listening as one of them plays the lute. Ashdon House, and the grounds of the estate, are depicted prominently in the background.

1 - Mr. ~~Cott~~
2 - Miss Ryan

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

TITLE: Lord Brand (27-1/2 in. x 35-1/2 in.)

ARTIST: Arthur Devis (1708-1787)

PLEASE CREDIT: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Given to the National Gallery of Art by Mr. Paul Mellon
for use in the American Embassy in London

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

TITLE: Conversation Piece (54-1/2 in. x 77 in.)

ARTIST: Arthur Devis (1708-1787)

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

TITLE: Landscape Capriccio with Palace (52 in. x 42 in.)

ARTIST: Canaletto (1697-1768)

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

TITLE: Landscape Capriccio with Column (52 in. x 41 in.)

ARTIST: Canaletto (1697-1768)

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