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National Gallery of Art Announces Major Acquisition of Jacob Ochtervelt Painting



Jacob Ochtervelt
A Nurse and a Child in the Foyer of an Elegant Townhouse, 1663
oil on canvas
32 x 26 1/4 in. (81.5 x 66.8 cm)
National Gallery of Art, Washington
The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund

Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art has acquired a masterpiece by the Dutch genre painter Jacob Ochtervelt (1634–1682). Arguably Ochtervelt's finest painting, *A Nurse and a Child in the Foyer of an Elegant Townhouse*, signed and dated 1663, is currently on view in Gallery 50 of the West Building, Main Floor. The acquisition of *A Nurse and a Child in the Foyer of an Elegant Townhouse* is made possible by the generous support of The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund.

"This wonderful painting complements one of the great strengths of the Gallery's collection: the Dutch painters of high-life genre scenes in the 1650s and 1660s, among them Johannes Vermeer, Pieter de Hooch, Gerard ter Borch, and Gabriel Metsu. Each of these artists capture quiet moments of daily life that entrance and engage viewers, not only because of the sensitivity of their depictions of the human figure but also because of the way they capture the effects of light and color, and the sheen of fabrics," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

ABOUT THE PAINTING

A Nurse and a Child in the Foyer of an Elegant Townhouse depicts a well-dressed young boy—not yet breeched—wearing a freshly ironed white dress decorated with blue and yellow ribbons and a gold medal on a chain drops a silver coin into the hat of a young beggar. Ochtervelt situated his scene at the threshold of a sumptuous home, whose foyer is distinguished by high ceilings, marble floors, and Italianate paintings hanging on the wall. The wealthy young boy, probably about five years old, holds the hand of his nurse, while the parents, visible through an open doorway, proudly observe the boy's charity—a virtue taught in the home and of great importance to the Dutch—from their parlor. Ochtervelt distinguishes the different classes through a sensitive rendering of clothing, complexion, and body language. A bristling spaniel stands at alert as this unknown young beggar tentatively enters into the family's space, adding a dramatic flair to the interior scene.

WHO WAS JACOB OCHTERVELT?

A native of Rotterdam, Jacob Ochtervelt studied painting in Haarlem from 1645 to 1650 with the landscape painter Nicolaes Berchem and returned to Rotterdam around 1655. After a successful career in that great port city, in 1667, he moved to Amsterdam, where he spent the rest of his life. Ochtervelt focused on the pleasures of patrician life and leisure—men and women reading and writing letters, eating and drinking, making music, and playing games. However, his most innovative scenes are those that depict the interactions between the upper and lower classes, often placed at the threshold of an elegant townhouse. Characterized by clarity of light and of color, his paintings display a sympathetic rendering of people from all social classes.

General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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