

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • REpublic 7-4215 extension 248

HOLD FOR RELEASE 10 p.m.
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1964

GALLERY GIVEN CHRISTMAS GIFT

WASHINGTON, D.C. December 21, 1964. John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced tonight that the Gallery has been given a Christmas present in the form of a rare 15th-century French primitive painting, A Knight of the Golden Fleece. The donor is Mr. Arthur Sachs, an American living in Paris. Mr. Walker made the announcement in an interview on WTOP-TV, as part of a Christmas concert program by the National Gallery Orchestra, televised at the Gallery.

"So you see Santa Claus has managed to find for his reindeer an empty parking place on Constitution Avenue, no mean feat in itself," Mr. Walker said. The painting will be on special exhibition in Lobby D beginning Tuesday, December 22.

The panel represents a man in profile wearing a red and black tunic, and round his neck the insignia of the Golden Fleece on a chain. The background is a golden brown.

Probably a companion to a Portrait of a Woman in the Vienna museum, the painting has hung in the Louvre in Paris, as well as being exhibited at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; the

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Detroit Institute of Arts; the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; and the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.

The Order of the Golden Fleece was considered the highest honor any noble could have. It was founded in Bruges in 1429 by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, on his marriage to Isabella of Portugal. With the sovereign as grand master, the membership of knights was selected only from royalty and the highest nobility.

The name of the painter, like that of the sitter, remains an open question. In the exhibition of French Gothic art in Detroit in 1928, the catalogue states: "This extraordinary portrait was formerly attributed to Fouquet, but from the costume (about 1480) it would seem to be one of his latest works, or that of a master of a somewhat later date. It comes nearer to the Maître de Moulins, although among his portraits there is none of such breadth of composition and grandeur of pose."

The late Max J. Friedländer, one of the most respected authorities on 15th-century northern European art, spoke of the painting as being "impressive, conceived in great style, the work of an important French Master working around 1480."

Mr. Sachs has previously given the Gallery the Bullfight that hangs in the room devoted exclusively to Goya. A former partner of Goldman, Sachs, and Co., investment bankers, New York, he is the brother of Mr. Paul J. Sachs, formerly Professor of Fine Arts at Harvard University.

The picture, painted on wood, measures 26-3/4" high by 21 1/8" wide.

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Color transparencies and black-and-white glossy photographs available for publicity from Mrs. Marjorie Czyzak, 737-4215, ext. 247.