

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART****11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TEN TONS OF ART ARRIVE AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

Ten tons was the combined weight of the great Italian paintings and sculptures, plus packing materials and crating, which arrived Tuesday, January 16, in New York City. These magnificent works compose the Exhibition of ITALIAN MASTERS to be shown at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from January 26 to March 24. This will be the only opportunity for Eastern United States to see the masterpieces.

There are 21 paintings by Masters of the Renaissance and Baroque periods such as Raphael, Botticelli, Titian, Tintoretto and others of almost equal fame. Michelangelo's name is the most celebrated of the seven sculptors represented in the Exhibition; it will be the first time that any of his sculpture will be shown in New York.

So great is the value of these masterpieces, lent by the Royal Italian Government, that several armed guards constantly stand watch over them night and day, and even travel in the baggage car with them. As they are no ordinary freight, however, the paintings and sculptures travelled to New York from Chicago in a special baggage car attached to the Commodore-Vanderbilt express passenger train which usually carries no baggage.

In addition to the guards, two Italian packers travel with the paintings and sculptures, as no one else is allowed to handle the priceless objects. As further precaution either Commendatore Eugenio Ventura, Responsible Trustee of the Italian Government, or Professor Cesare Brandi, accompany the works of art whenever they are moved from one locality to another. Commendatore Eugenio Ventura and Professor Cesare Brandi are in charge of the Exhibition, which was brought to this country a year ago and shown first at the World's Fair in San Francisco. The Exhibition has just been on view at the Art Institute in Chicago.

One of the important safeguards that must be observed at all times is to keep the paintings at a constant temperature so they will not dry out. The baggage car in which they travel is air-conditioned and those in charge check every hour or two to see that neither the temperature nor the humidity varies more than a degree or two. In

addition to the armed guards, there is also a fire guard who is equipped with fire fighting apparatus.

When being transported from one locality to another, the frames of the paintings are packed in one box. The glass, specially made to protect each painting from dust, moisture and even from bullets -- for it is bullet-proof -- is packed in another. The panel or canvas of each painting is first wrapped in wax paper to keep out the dust. Then it is packed in its own wooden box with a label on the outside. Flat tissue paper was used to hold the painting in the box, with tissue paper heavily wadded around the edge to keep the face of the painting entirely free. Several of these individual boxes are placed inside a larger packing box, zinc-lined to keep out the moisture. This big outer box is stoutly bound with iron braces.

The largest box, which contains Botticelli's Birth of Venus, Michelangelo's sculpture and Raphael's Madonna of the Chair, weighs 6,700 pounds and measures approximately 6' x 7' x 12'. Second in weight and size is a 5,000 pound box measuring approximately 5' x 7' x 10'. There were ten of these large boxes and five smaller cases. They were all brought under armed guard and escorted by mounted police, to the Museum of Modern Art, where they will be opened before the Customs Inspector, when he has cut the Government seal. After the Exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art, the Masterpieces will be returned to Italy, where a law has recently been passed to prevent their ever leaving that country again.

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Those present at the\* West Side Railway Express Terminal when the car containing the masterpieces arrived included the Italian Consul General, Commendatore Gaetano Vecchiotti; Commendatore Eugenio Ventura, Responsible Trustee of the Royal Italian Government; Prof. Cesare Brandi, from the Italian Ministry of Education; Stanley Howe, representing Mayor LaGuardia; Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director, and John E. Abbott, Executive Vice-President of the Museum of Modern Art; E. A. Chittenden, Superintendent of the Railway Express Company; William M. Smith, Supervisor of Mail and Express of the New York Central Railroad, who supervised the shipment from Chicago; and others.

\*The car could not be unloaded at Grand Central because one case was too large for the elevators in that station. This case was also too large to be taken into the Museum. It was therefore opened on the truck level of the Museum's loading platform.