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2-20-1962

Smithsonian Art Exhibit and Rhode Island State House and Providence City Hall (1962): Correspondence 02

Claiborne Pell

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This letter sent to Governor + Mayor
copies sent to McWeeney and Cussons

February 20, 1962

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Dear _____:

There is a very good service provided by the Smithsonian Institution offering traveling exhibitions of paintings to various interested places throughout the United States.

The thought goes through my mind that it would be quite a wonderful idea if these traveling exhibitions could not only come to our State, but could be shown in the State House and City Hall. By doing this, many of our citizens who might not normally see exhibitions in the School of Design, or the Arts Club, could get the benefit of them. For instance, exhibitions are available of the technique of fresco paintings in northern Italy, drawings by Toulouse-Lautrec or Irish architecture of the Georgian period. While there is a rental charge of around two hundred dollars, plus the cost of transportation and hanging, it is the kind of exhibition which might have a considerable success in our State. If there is any problem finding the requisite funds for the exhibition, I would be glad to contribute the fee for it myself. There are some minimal conditions for rental which I feel sure could be met in these buildings, including adequate protection against fire and theft.

What do you think of this idea? To me, it seems excellent

and would emphasize that our elected administration and government is a people's government bringing art to our people in their places of government, rather than having it in more obscure places.

These exhibits would also emphasize that the best paintings in the world were produced by artists of the same background as many of our own citizens.

Warm regards.

Ever sincerely,

Claiborne Pell

CP:RH