



Smithsonian Institution

Archives of American Art

Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, General Correspondence: John J. Cunningham, 1954

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[[preprinted]]
HOTEL BEAU-RIVAGE
GENEVE
TÉLÉPHONE : (022) 2 04 50
TÉLÉGRAMMES : BEAURIVAGE
[[image - hotel logo, a boat with two large sails and masts]]
[[/preprinted]]

Saturday October 23, 1954

Dear Germain:

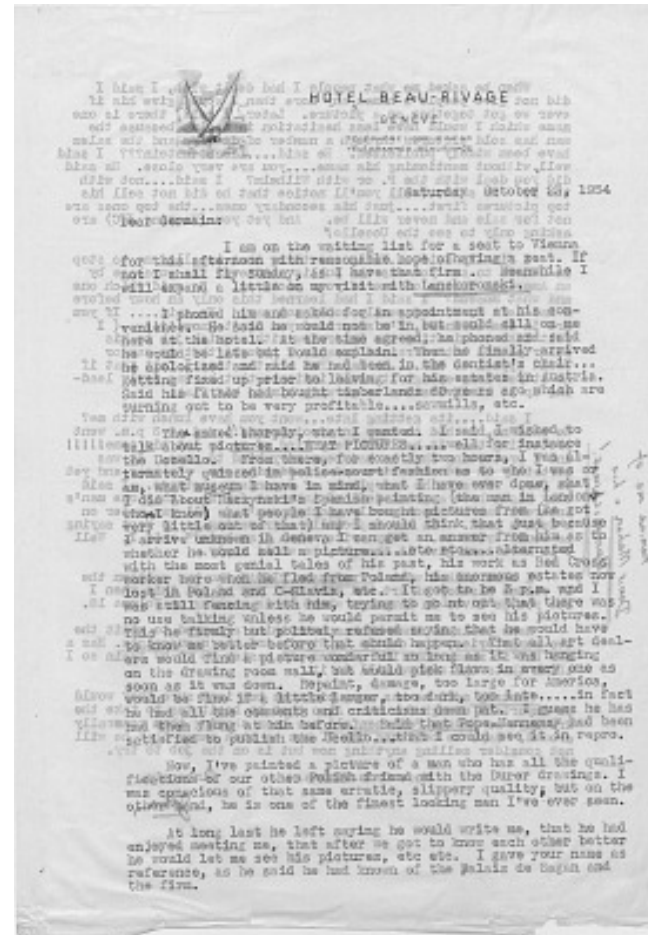
I am on the waiting list for a seat to Vienna for this afternoon with reasonable hope of having a seat. If not I shall fly Sunday, as I have that firm. Meanwhile I will expand a little on my visit with Lanckoronski.

I phoned him and asked for an appointment at his convenience. He said he would not be in but would call on me here at the hotel. At the time agreed, he phoned and said he would be late but would explain. When he finally arrived he apologized and said he had been in the dentist's chair...getting fixed up prior to leaving for his estates in Austria. Said his father had bought timberlands 60 years ago which are turning out to be very profitable....sawmills, etc.

Then asked sharply, what I wanted. I said I wished to talk about pictures....WHAT PICTURES.....well for instance the Uccello. From there, for exactly two hours, I was alternately quizzed in police-court fashion as to who I was or am, what museum I have in mind, what I have ever done, what I did about Raczyński's Spanish painting (the man in London whom I know) what people I have bought pictures from (he got very little out of that) why I should think that just because I arrive unknown in Geneva I can get an answer from him as to whether he would sell a picture.....etc etc....alternated with the most genial tales of his past, his work as Red Cross worker here when he fled from Poland, his enormous estates now lost in Poland and C-Slavia, etc. It got to be 3 p.m. and I was still fencing with him, trying to point out that there was no use talking unless he would permit me to see his pictures. This he firmly but politely refused saying that he would have to know me better before that could happen. That all art dealers would find a picture wonderful so long as it was hanging on the drawing room wall, but would pick flaws in every one as soon as it was down. Repaint, damage, too large for America, would be fine if a little larger, too dark, too late....in fact he had all the comments and criticisms down pat. I guess he has had them flung at him before. Said that Pope-Hennessy had been satisfied to publish the Uccello...that I could see it in repro.

Now, I've painted a picture of a man who has all the qualifications of our other Polish friend with the Durer drawings. I was conscious of that same erratic, slippery quality, but on the other hand, he is one of the finest looking men I've ever seen.

At long last he left saying he would write me, that he had enjoyed meeting me, that after we got to know each other better he would let me see his pictures, etc etc. I gave your name as reference, as he said he had known of the Palais de Sagan and the firm.



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