



Smithsonian Institution

Archives of American Art

Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, General Correspondence: Sachs, Arthur, 1949

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but xxx unless a man has definite personal opinions on such matters, and bases his judgment objectively on the merit of the painting, these documents are confusing, hence my desire of trying to "enroll" Mr. Walker to my, or should I say to our, point of view, which is that your painting is the original one, and the Prado another version of lesser quality the Ambrosiana has a very different composition altogether).

Had I obtained from Mr. Walker such a confirmation I would have felt so much stronger with the staff of the Kress Foundation. Do bear in mind that museums officials (the Kress Foundation can be assimilated) by and large, unless they have a very definite opinion on such matters, do not wish to be exposed to unnecessary criticism and hesitate taking responsibilities unless they feel backed by higher authorities, and I gathered in the first talk I had had in my new approach with the Kress Foundation, that unless I could have the moral backing of a man like Mr. Walker, I was definitely swimming against the tide, hence my asking for the appointment in Washington, but let me repeat that at no time did I intend proposing the paintings to the National Gallery.

I do hope that your brother will be good enough to give the invaluable help of his advice which it goes without saying I would be only too pleased to follow.

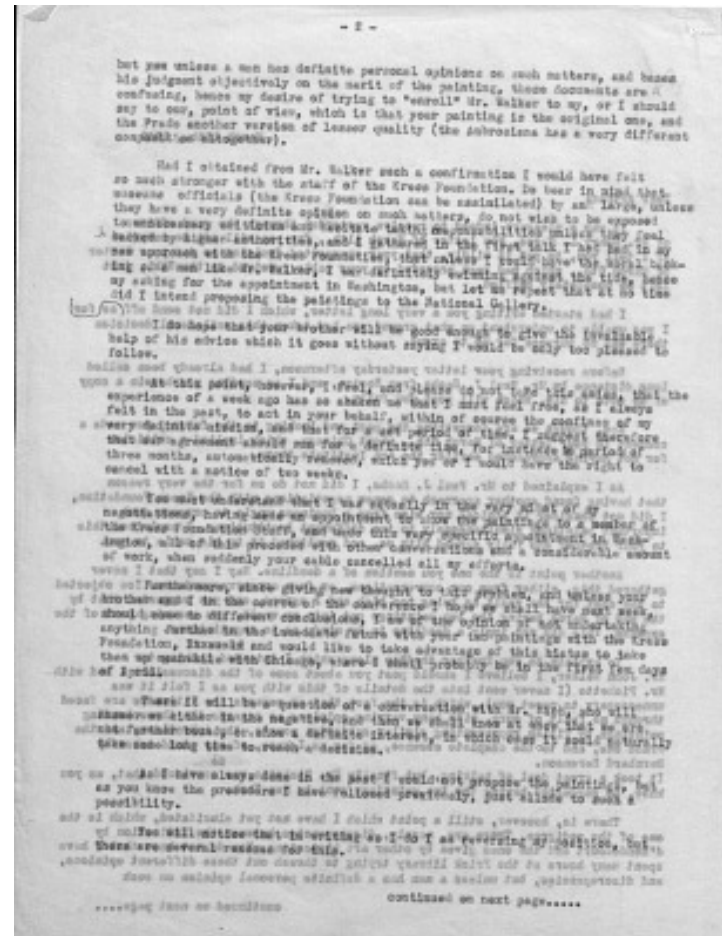
At this point, however, I feel, and please do not take this amiss, that the experience of a week ago has so shaken me that I must feel free, as I always felt in the past, to act in your behalf, within of course, the confines of my very definite mission, and that for a set period of time. I suggest therefore that our agreement should run for a definite time, for instance in periods of three months, automatically renewed, which you or I would have the right to cancel with a notice of two weeks.

You must understand that I was actually in the very midst of my negotiations, having made an appointment to show the paintings to a member of the Kress Foundation Staff, and made this very specific appointment in Washington, all of this preceded with other conversations and a considerable amount of work, when suddenly your cable cancelled all my efforts.

Furthermore, since giving new thought to this problem, and unless your brother and I in the course of the conference I hope we shall have next week, should come to different conclusions, I am of the opinion of not undertaking anything further in the immediate future with your two paintings with the Kress Foundation, xxxxxxxx and would like to take advantage of this hiatus to take them up meanwhile with Chicago, where I shall probably be in the first few days of April.

There it will be a question of a conversation with Mr. Rich, who will answer me either in the negative, and then we shall know a once that we are not further bound, or show a definite interest, in which case it would naturally take some long time to reach a decision.

As I have always done in the past I would not propose the paintings, but as you know the procedure I have followed previously, just allude to such a possibility.



You will notice that in writing as I do I am reversing my position, but there are several reasons for this.

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