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Archives of American Art

Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, General Correspondence: Donlon, Thomas, 1925-1938

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 03:12:41

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RS/MH

Paris, September 16th 1935

My dear Donlon,

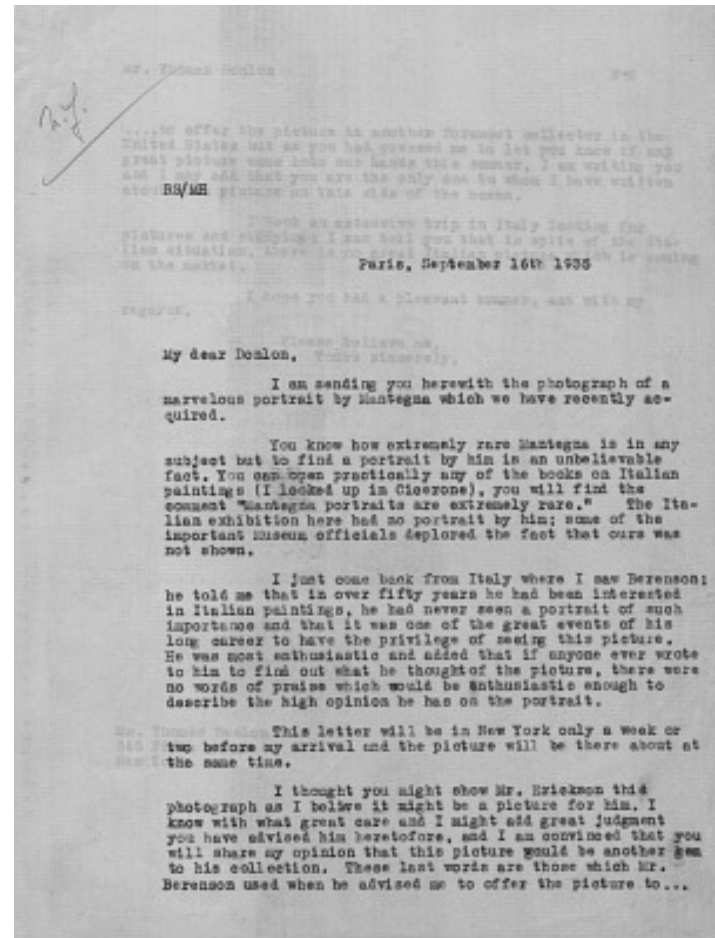
I am sending you herewith the photograph of a marvelous portrait by Mantegna which we have recently acquired.

You know how extremely rare Mantegna is in any subject but to find a portrait by him is an unbelievable fact. You can open practically any of the books on Italian paintings (I looked up in Cicerone), you will find the comment "Mantegna portraits are extremely rare." The Italian exhibition here had no portrait by him: some of the important Museum officials deplored the fact that ours was not shown.

I just come back from Italy where I saw Berenson; he told me that in over fifty years he had been interested in Italian paintings, he had never seen a portrait of such importance and that it was one of the great events of his long career to have the privilege of seeing this picture. He was most enthusiastic and added that if anyone ever wrote to him to find out what he thought of the picture, there were no words of praise which could be enthusiastic enough to describe the high opinion he has on the portrait.

This letter will be in New York only a week or two before my arrival and the picture will be there about at the same time.

I thought you might show Mr. Erickson this photograph as I believe it might be a picture for him. I know with what great care and I might add great judgement you have advised him heretofore, and I am convinced that you will share my opinion that this picture would be another gem to his collection. These last words are those which Mr. Berenson used when he advised me to offer the picture to...



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