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Jan. 19, 2011

Media website: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

National Portrait Gallery Special Installation Commemorates 50th Anniversary of JFK's Inauguration, 1961–2011

The National Portrait Gallery has installed several portraits of John F. Kennedy commemorating the 50th anniversary of his presidential inauguration. They will remain on view in the second-floor rotunda through Jan. 8, 2012.

Kennedy, the 35th American president, was the first born in the 20th century, the youngest elected, the second-youngest to serve in that office and the first Catholic. The installation includes one painting, by Elaine de Kooning, and four photographs, two by George Tames and one each by Paul Vathis and Bill Ray.

The full-length abstract oil portrait by de Kooning was created from life sketches and drawings she made of the president during the last year of his life. The Tames photographs—created by one of the most influential photographers of the mid-20th century—depict the president as he campaigned in the Wisconsin primary and with Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. Vathis—working for the Associated Press—took a historically significant photograph of Kennedy and former president Dwight D. Eisenhower on the grounds of Camp David, right after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Ray's photograph of the Kennedy inauguration captures President Kennedy; Vice President Johnson; Lady Bird Johnson; the president's father, Joseph Kennedy; Jacqueline Kennedy; and former President Harry S. Truman and his wife, Bess.

To observe the date, the museum will post quotes from Kennedy on its Twitter feed and Facebook page and post an essay by Portrait Gallery senior historian Sidney Hart about Kennedy's inauguration on the museum's blog: <http://face2face.si.edu> Jan. 20.

The National Portrait Gallery

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery tells the history of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the

Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story. The National Portrait Gallery, part of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture, is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Website: npg.si.edu.

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