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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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NATIONAL GALLERY ANNOUNCES RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF AMERICAN PAINTINGS

WASHINGTON, D.C. J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today the recent acquisition of three important 20th-century American pictures: "Rush Hour, New York," a key picture in the international development of Cubism, by pioneer American abstractionist Max Weber; "The City from Greenwich Village," one of the last great cityscapes by John Sloan, preeminent figure in the "Ash Can" group of the early 20th century; and "Lobsterman's Ledge," an early drawing by the leading romantic realist of recent times, Andrew Wyeth. The three pictures will go on view in Lobby D on February 19th.

Mr. Brown also announced that the first comprehensive Sloan exhibition in over 20 years will open at the National Gallery in the Fall of 1971. The Sloan acquisition has been in all major Sloan exhibitions, including the 1952 memorial retrospective at the Whitney Museum.

Reflecting three different but equally important movements in American art history, the acquisitions represent the National Gallery's new accent on building a representative 20th-century collection of

paintings from both America and abroad.

Andrew Wyeth is the first American painter to be singled out for tribute by the President of the United States with a one-man exhibition, which opens this week in the White House.

The Weber painting is the gift of the Avalon Foundation. An expression in dynamic geometric forms of New York City's rush hour, this picture (painted in 1915) is a prime example of his personal combination of Futurism and Cubism. Among the most successful early abstractions produced in this country, it has been chosen for the forthcoming landmark exhibition of Cubism, "The Cubist Epoch," to be shown in Los Angeles and New York next year.

The Futurist element in Weber's painting is seen not only in the subjective, almost romantic expression of the energy of the city's rush hour, but in the reiterated rhythms and patterns of the composition.

Weber, who was born in Russia in 1880, grew up in Brooklyn. He spent five years of study in Europe where he became attracted to the new Cubism of Braque and Picasso. On his return to New York, he was a pioneer in interpreting the spirit of the big city through cubist forms. In the years after World War I Weber turned to a more figurative style, often depicting scenes of life on New York's Lower East Side. He died in 1961.

The Sloan painting, "The City from Greenwich Village," is the gift of the widow of the artist, Helen Farr Sloan. In addition to

being a spectacular view of the city, the picture also shows one of the most famous of all Sloan's subjects, the old elevated bending around a curve. In the distance the Metropolitan Life building and the tower of the original Madison Square Garden shine like brilliants above the wet, washed city where lighted street lamps and shop windows gleam in the night.

The artist himself best described the picture in his book, The Gist of Art, in 1939:

Looking south over lower Sixth Avenue from the roof of my Washington Place studio, on a winter evening. The distant lights of the great office buildings downtown are seen in the gathering darkness. The triangular loft building on the right had contained my studio for three years before.... The spot on which the spectator stands is now an imaginary point since all the buildings as far as the turn of the elevated have been removed, and Sixth Avenue has been extended straight down to the business district. The picture makes a record of the beauty of the older city which is giving way to the chopped-out towers of the modern New York....

The picture was painted in 1922 and first exhibited that year at the Society of Independent Artists annual exhibition.

Sloan was born in Pennsylvania in 1871 and died in 1951. For many years he made his living in magazine and book illustration. In 1904, when he was 32, he moved to New York and started painting seriously, concentrating on scenes of city life. When he was 42 he sold his first painting to Dr. Albert C. Barnes, an old classmate and the celebrated collector of European moderns. By choice he never went abroad.

An early example of Andrew Wyeth's realistic style, the National

Gallery's drawing of 1939 was purchased from an anonymous collector. The picture crystallizes with highly disciplined skill familiar associations of the Maine coast.

Wyeth, who was born in 1917 in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, had his first one-man show in New York in 1937 at the Macbeth Gallery. His many subjects then as now are mostly based on scenes along two miles of the Brandywine valley of Pennsylvania and from a stretch up and down the Georges River in Maine.