

FOR RELEASE

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NATIONAL GALLERY ACQUIRES KEY
MONDRIAN PAINTING

WASHINGTON, D.C. October 27, 1972. The National Gallery of Art announces an important acquisition to its developing 20th century collection. Entitled Lozenge in Red, Yellow, and Blue, the work is by Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) and is the first painting by this major modern artist to enter the National Gallery's collection. It is the gift of Herbert and Nannette Rothschild.

The painting is presently hanging in Lobby D, where it will be on view for the month of November.

In making the announcement, J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, said: "The acquisition of this painting should illustrate the National Gallery's tremendous interest in the 'old masters' of the 20th century, whose work will be presented in the Gallery's new East Building now under construction."

One of about twenty paintings by Mondrian termed "diamond-shaped" - that is, square and standing on one corner -, the painting (40" x 40") is dated about 1925.

(more)

The painting is a prime example of the artist's style during his middle years, and was one of the key pictures in the large Mondrian retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York last year.

Piet Mondrian was the leader in bringing painting to pure geometric abstraction. Instead of an abstraction of objects, he tried to express ideas through relationships between pure form and pure color, and conscientiously eliminated all visual references to objects in nature. He began painting in 1888 and his work reflects a systematic progression from realism to abstraction. After 1910, his painting arrived at the form of pure geometric abstraction for which he is best known.

Between 1916 and 1917 with other artists of The Netherlands, Mondrian founded the group known as "de Stijl." The influence of this group had a pronounced effect on modern art, architecture and design through its use of rectangular and square spaces and clear, flat color areas. Later, Mondrian was to break away from this group, preferring to work independently. In 1940, he moved to the United States, and died in New York City in 1944.

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