

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

FOR RELEASE
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SPECIAL SUMMER EXHIBITION MARKS GALLERY'S ACCELERATED ACQUISITION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, D.C. The past several years at the National Gallery of Art have been marked by an accelerated acquisition activity in the areas of prints, drawings and sculpture, with continuing concern for improving the National Gallery's holdings in each category.

To record the scope and depth of this acquisition program, the Gallery is publishing a catalog of its more than 1600 acquisitions made since January 1971. Simultaneously, the Gallery is exhibiting a selection of more than 150 of the works of art, ranging in date from the fourteenth century to the present.

The exhibition, entitled Recent Acquisitions and Promised Gifts: Sculpture, Drawings, Prints, opens June 2 and runs through September 1.

The most recent acquisition in the exhibition is a major work by the fifteenth century Master E.S., acquired just this month as a tribute to Lessing J. Rosenwald, print connoisseur, former Trustee and major donor to the National Gallery. This is the first major purchase by the Gallery since the appointment of Andrew Robison as Curator of Graphic Arts.

Among more than 140 prints and drawings and 24 pieces of sculpture in the exhibition will be a drawing by Dürer entitled Oriental Ruler Seated on His Throne, two drawings, Saint Michael and the Devil and A River God by Giulio Romano, two landscape drawings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Landscape with the Penitence of St. Jerome and Peasants and Cattle Near a Farmhouse, as well as a very fine impression of Pieter Bruegel's only etching, The Rabbit Hunters.

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Nine drawings will be in the exhibition from the important collection promised to the Gallery by Armand Hammer, including a rare Raphael entitled Study for a Fresco with Hosea and Jonah, Studies of Heads by Leonardo da Vinci, and Ingres' Mrs. Badham.

Two promised gifts in each of the three media represented will be on loan from Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon. They include a van Gogh landscape drawing, a rare Villon Print, two animal sculptures and a drawing and a print by Degas. Also promised are three important seventeenth century landscapes and a Titian drawing offered by two anonymous donors. From the modern period three prints by Edvard Munch, selected from the outstanding Munch graphics collection promised to the Gallery by Mr. and Mrs. Lionel C. Epstein, will also be on view.

More than fifty patrons have contributed to this acquisition program, including the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund and the Richard King Mellon Charitable Trusts, and individual donors Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Colin, Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, Dr. and Mrs. George B. Green, Mr. and Mrs. N. Richard Miller, Mr. C.V.S. Roosevelt, and Mr. and Mrs. Burton G. Tremaine through their International Art Foundation.

The sixty-two prints in the exhibition give evidence of the Gallery's efforts to round out its outstanding print holdings. The acquisition of these works and others not on view, concentrating on the late Renaissance and Baroque periods of the Italian and Netherlandish schools, was carried out primarily by Christopher White, former Curator of Prints at the Gallery and now Director of Studies at The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London. Among these works are Dürer's The Little Courier, Zoan Andrea's Tragic Stage Set, engraved after a design by Bramante, Rembrandt's The Beheading of St. John the Baptist, a rare Rubens, St. Catherine, and Cubist Still Life No. 2 by Georges Braque.

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The sixty-two recently-acquired drawings in the exhibition include works by Fra Bartolommeo, Bernini, Poussin, Proud'hon, Brancusi and Grosz. With an emphasis on the earlier masters, particularly of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, more than 150 drawings have been acquired since 1971 by the Trustees. Konrad Oberhuber, Senior Research Curator at the Gallery and former Curator of Drawings, has been the staff member principally involved with these acquisitions.

Over twenty pieces of sculpture were added in the three-year period to the Gallery's collection of sculpture, with the advice of Douglas Lewis, Curator of Sculpture. On view are works by the early masters Antonio Lombardo and Giovanni Battista Foggini, as well as the twentieth century sculptors Archipenko, Epstein, and Arp. The acquisitions reflect the continuing concern to round out the Gallery's sculpture collection, whose strength lies primarily in the Renaissance and late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The acquisitions also indicate the increasing effort to acquire representative masters of the twentieth century to be installed in the East Building and the National Sculpture Garden when these are completed.

The illustrated catalog has been written by Mssrs. White, Oberhuber and Lewis together with other members of the museum staff, with contributions on the Munch prints by Juliana Montfort, curator of the Epstein collection.

The installation, designed by Gaillard F. Ravenel of the Gallery's curatorial staff, will be chronological to show the changing styles from period to period. However, several subject groupings, composed of works from all periods, will be included as study collections.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Pamela Jenkinson, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.