

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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FOR RELEASE:

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NATIONAL GALLERY ANNOUNCES GIFT OF GAUGUIN PAINTING

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 4, 1977. The Invocation, one of the last paintings executed by the French post-impressionist Paul Gauguin, has been acquired by the National Gallery as a gift from the collection of John and Louise Booth, in memory of their daughter Winkie. Mr. Booth's parents, Ralph and Mary Booth, were among the Gallery's early donors of Renaissance paintings and sculpture. The painting is on view in gallery 84.

Paul Gauguin, a Paris stockbroker, began his career as an amateur painter in the Impressionist style and retired from business in 1883 to devote his life to painting. During the next eight years, Gauguin traveled to the South Seas, to the south of France with Vincent van Gogh, and later settled briefly in Brittany. In 1891 he embarked for Tahiti, a primeval island of rich tropical color, where he developed his mature style characterized by simplified, patterned forms and broad areas of intense, exotic color. His canvases depict the people of the tropics and often evoke a mood of melancholic tranquility.

In 1901 Gauguin left Tahiti for the more primitive island of Hiva Oa in the Marquesas and here his palette became more iridescent and intense. The Invocation, a characteristic tropical scene, dates from

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1903, the year of Gauguin's death. The white cross on the hill in the distance marks the cemetery near Atuona where Gauguin was to be buried a year after completing this painting. It is the first example from this very last period of Gauguin's life to enter the Gallery's collection.

Other paintings by Gauguin in the Gallery's collection include The Bathers (1898), Madame Alexandre Kohler (1887-88), Brittany Landscape (1888), Fatata te Miti (1892), Self-Portrait (1889), Haystacks in Brittany (1890), Words of the Devil (1892), and Te Pape Nave Nave (1898).

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