

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THREE SPECIAL INSTALLATIONS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY ART
TO BE SHOWN AT GALLERY'S EAST BUILDING OPENING

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 8, 1978. A special installation in the National Gallery of Art's East Building presenting a survey of major artists and innovative styles, including fauvism, cubism, futurism, surrealism, expressionism, constructivism and other movements of the first half of the twentieth century will be on view at the opening of the East Building on June 1.

All the works are either owned by the National Gallery or are being lent by collectors who have shown a special interest in the Gallery, including Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Eichholz, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew S. Keck, Dr. and Mrs. Barnett Malbin, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Mr. and Mrs. Morton Neumann, Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, and Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney.

Entitled Aspects of Twentieth-Century Art, this installation will be arranged in three sections: I. Picasso and Cubism, II. European Painting and Sculpture, and III. Matisse--Cutouts and Jazz.

I. Aspects of Twentieth-Century Art: Picasso and Cubism

Thirty-nine paintings and sculptures by major proponents of cubism--Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, Fernand Léger, Jacques Lipchitz, Lyonel Feininger, Louis Marcoussis, and Albert Gleizes--will be shown in

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the first section, Picasso and Cubism. The innovations of cubism, an international style initiated by Picasso and Braque, have been widely acknowledged as introducing the most significant change in twentieth-century European art. This section begins with some of Picasso's pre-cubist pictures, including his famous circus painting Family of Saltimbanques (National Gallery) and Boy with a Pipe (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Whitney), both painted in a four-year period from 1901 to 1905 before he began to develop the cubist style.

Picasso met Braque in 1907, and cubism evolved as a result of the two artists working together and sharing ideas. The first phase of the new style, called analytical cubism, is characterized by the breaking up of forms, faceting and fragmenting them, ultimately producing complex layers of overlapping planes often seemingly transparent. The rejection of the traditional perspective emphasized the two-dimensional surface, generally painted in neutral tones. The largest of Picasso's analytical cubist works, Nude Woman of 1910, acquired by the National Gallery in 1972, will be on view, as well as Braque's Still Life with Dice and Pipe (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Eichholz). Examples from 1912, when the cubists used collage, will also be on view, including Braque's Aria de Bach (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Mellon) and Picasso's Still Life with a Bottle (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Neumann). Synthetic cubism evolved in 1912 and 1913 when the cubists, continuing their work in the collage medium, moved to a flatter, more ornamental style combining flat shapes into formal harmonies. Juan Gris' Fantômas, acquired by the Gallery in 1976, is a key work of this period. Additional examples will include a pair of oval compositions from 1918 by Jacques Lipchitz: Still Life, a

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painting given to the Gallery by Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine in 1973, and Bas Relief I, a polychrome sculpture purchased in 1977. Such works by Picasso as Madame Picasso (National Gallery), painted in 1923, represent the influence on Picasso of classical art that he saw on a trip to Rome; but the limited depth, outlined edges, and geometric shapes of cubism mark even the classically inspired works.

II. Aspects of Twentieth-Century Art: European Painting and Sculpture

Fifty-three paintings, sculptures, and bas-reliefs representing many of the dominant trends and major figures in modern art before World War II will be on view in the second section, European Painting and Sculpture. This section will begin with fauvism, the first distinct art movement of the twentieth century in France. Included will be paintings by Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, André Derain, Kees van Dongen, Raoul Dufy, Albert Marquet and Maurice de Vlaminck (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Whitney). The fauves' brightly colored canvases and intentional simplification of form and space liberated painting from the idea that color should imitate nature.

Following will be a selection of ten works by futurist artists. Freely adopting the fauves' use of arbitrary color and the cubists' fragmentary forms, the futurists' style, one of the most revolutionary and ideological of the twentieth century, expressed dynamic and simultaneous movement, extolling the "beauty of speed." Among the futurist works on display will be works by Severini, Balla, and Boccioni (Coll. Dr. and Mrs. Malbin).

German expressionism will be represented in the exhibition with works by Max Beckmann and Wilhelm Lehmbruck. Relying on color and distorted forms to intensify their message, the expressionists used these elements to express

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their inner feelings. Beckmann's triptych of The Argonauts (private collection) is an allegorical work based on the Greek literary theme of departure; Lehmbruck's Seated Youth (National Gallery) is a monumental plaster figure embodying the artist's conception of grief brought on by World War I.

Six sculptures by Alberto Giacometti will be shown. Invisible Object, in the Gallery's collection, is a typical example of his surrealist style. During World War II, Giacometti began to develop the attenuated figures for which he became famous; on view will be Walking Man II, The Chariot, The City Square, Kneeling Woman and Standing Woman, all recently given to the Gallery by Mrs. Enid A. Haupt.

Joan Miró is among the best-known surrealist painters, and on view in the Gallery's collection will be The Farm (Coll. Ernest Hemingway). Familiar with the planate quality of the cubists, Miró placed his objects over a forward-tilted ground; however, his color, illuminated by a clear and intense light, suggests a cloud-like and indeterminate depth in which one sees the artist's typically whimsical and curiously charming shapes and lines parallel to the surface. Also included is Miró's Personage; The Brothers Fratellini (Coll. Dr. and Mrs. Malbin).

Also on view will be Fernand Léger's work, which illustrates one of the many transformations of cubism. Léger, trained as an architectural draftsman, was a cubist painter but changed to an entirely new and different style in 1920, as seen in Le Petit Dejeuner (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine).

The sculpture of Constantin Brancusi and Jean Arp represent a search for simple, elemental shapes within natural forms, the result being organic despite the hard materials, such as wood and cast bronze. Brancusi's

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Bird in Space and Portrait of Agnes Meyer (National Gallery) and The Blond Negress (Coll. Dr. and Mrs. Malbin) will be on view as well as Arp's The Forest (National Gallery), Bird Forms, Lunar Armor, and Dream Column; The School Boy (Coll. Dr. and Mrs. Malbin).

Piet Mondrian developed, in the 1920s, his "neo-plastic" style, as in Lozenge in Red, Yellow, and Blue (National Gallery) in which he used the three primary colors and black lines set at right angles to create visual equivalents for perfect order and rationality. Mondrian's Victory Boogie Woogie (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine), painted in expectation of an Allied victory in World War II, represents the new optimistic feeling exemplified by Mondrian's replacing the black lines with rhythmic cadences of little blocks of squares of color. In Robert Delaunay's Disc (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine), one finds a manifestation of another early twentieth-century color movement called "Orphism."

The Russian constructivists will be represented in this exhibition by Antoine Pevsner's Figure, Square Relief and Fresco, Fauna of the Ocean (Coll. Dr. and Mrs. Malbin), and Ivan Puni's Suprematist Construction (National Gallery).

Henry Moore and Ben Nicholson established for England a major place in abstract art. Repeatedly analyzing the interrelationship between solids and voids, Moore composed Stone Memorial (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Mellon), his characteristic organic forms arranged in flowing surfaces. Nicholson's Holkham Sands No. 1 (Coll. Mr. and Mrs. Mellon) demonstrates the artist's fusing of painting and sculpture in shallow, colored reliefs.

III. Aspects of Twentieth-Century Art: Matisse--Cutouts and Jazz

In addition to the Gallery's five major cutouts acquired in 1973,

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two editions of Henri Matisse's famous Jazz portfolios will be on view in the third section (Colls. Mr. and Mrs. Mellon and Mr. and Mrs. Keck). Matisse's first major project in the cutout medium was this suite of twenty-two illustrations he entitled Jazz, from which a limited edition of silk screen portfolios were made. Some copies of the portfolio also include text in large black-and-white handwritten letters that Matisse composed exploring his views of life and art. Jazz was executed in 1943-44 and is considered Matisse's most influential single cutout work. The Gallery's large cutouts are: Venus (1952) and Woman with Amphora and Pomegranates (1953) from the blue nude series; The Negress (1952-53), a large composition inspired by Josephine Baker, the famous black American entertainer who captivated Parisian audiences; Large Composition with Masks (1953), a 32-foot-long work inspired by the mosaic tile walls Matisse had seen in the Alhambra, the fourteenth-century palace of the Moorish kings in Granada, Spain; and Beasts of the Sea... (1950), in which the artist incorporated a variety of forms based on sea plants and animals.

Among other exhibitions at the opening of the East Building will be:

American Art at Mid-Century: The Subjects of the Artist

Piranesi: The Early Architectural Fantasies

Small French Paintings from the Bequest of Ailsa Mellon Bruce

Master Drawings and Watercolors from the National Gallery Collection and Promised Gifts

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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.