

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GALLERY OPENS SECOND IN SERIES ON AMERICAN FOLK-ART TRADITION

Washington, D.C. November 16, 1978. Grandma Moses: Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1860-1961), the second in a series of exhibitions devoted to the American folk-art tradition, will open in the National Gallery of Art's East Building on February 11, 1979. The first Washington showing of Grandma Moses' works since 1949, the exhibition will offer forty-three paintings from public and private collections in the United States and Europe by this century's most popular exponent of American naive art. The works will remain on view through April 1.

Surveying her work chronologically and thematically, the exhibition will range from one of her earliest paintings, The First Automobile (c. 1939), to Rainbow (1961), completed during the last year of her life. Through such examples as Catching the Thanksgiving Turkey, The McDonnell Farm, and Hoosick Valley (from the Window), the exhibition will illustrate the variety of subjects depicted in her art, including her renderings of farm chores, remembrances of holiday celebrations and such community events as quilting bees and county fairs, as well as the changing seasons in landscapes of her native New York State and Virginia, where she spent much of her married life.

Grandma Moses was in her late seventies when she began her career as an artist. Because she had no formal artistic training or preconceived

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ideas about how to make a picture, she was able to develop a style based on instinct and reflection. "Memory is a painter," she once wrote, and through it she was able to go beyond the world of reality to depict one enhanced by imagination.

She first showed her paintings along with her preserves at a county fair near Hoosick Falls, New York. Her art was discovered by New York collector Louis Caldor in 1938, when he saw her paintings on display in a Hoosick Falls drugstore. The first New York exhibition devoted to her paintings, at the Galerie St. Etienne in 1940, made her internationally known. The attention she received took her by surprise. "If I didn't start painting," she wrote in 1948, "I would have raised chickens. . . . as for all that publicity, and as for the fame which came to Grandma so late, that I am too old to care for now."

The fully illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition will contain, in addition to a foreword by J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery, fifteen color plates, an essay by Grandma Moses entitled "How Do I Paint?," and an evaluation of her art by M. Jean Cassou, former director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris. John Wilmerding, the Gallery's curator of American art, and his assistant, Linda Ayres, are in charge of the exhibition for the National Gallery. The exhibition has been greatly assisted by Dr. Otto Kallir, biographer and longtime friend of Grandma Moses.

Grandma Moses is part of an ongoing program of exhibitions devoted to various aspects of American art. American Naive Art: Selections from the Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch Gift and Loans opened August 26

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and will remain on view in the East Building through February 4. American Art at Mid-Century: The Subjects of the Artist opened June 1 and will be on view in the East Building through January 14.

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