

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

FOURTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 511

FOR RELEASE:

FRIDAY A. M.  
April 17, 1981

## MIRO HEAD OF A CATALAN PEASANT

ACQUIRED BY NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D. C. April 15, 1981. Head of a Catalan Peasant (1924), a major work in a series of Catalan-inspired subjects by the modern master Joan Miró (b. 1893), has been acquired by the National Gallery of Art, it was announced today by J. Carter Brown, Director of the Gallery. In the years 1924-25, themes from the Catalan area of Spain where Miró was born and has lived most of his life became the dominant inspiration in his work.

The Gallery's painting is the most recent gift of the Collector's Committee, established in 1975 to support the Gallery's acquisitions of 20th-century works of art.

The painting will go on view on the upper level of the East Building April 17.

Painted in oil on canvas and measuring 57 1/2 x 44 7/8 in., the Gallery's painting is one of the largest of Miró's Catalan pictures depicting a single figure's head. It is the first in a series of four versions inspired by Miró's seeing a particular peasant. Head of a Catalan Peasant is Miró's most experimental picture of this period, according to E. A. Carmean, Jr., the Gallery's curator of twentieth-century

(more)

art. It represents a break in his style from cubism and introduces his field painting and sign vocabulary.

In the work, Miró's characteristic, tightly rendered images are placed flatly against a fluid yellow background. This field of yellow, created with an uneven wash, is reminiscent of the brilliant sun of the Catalan landscape. Only the bare essentials necessary to depict a Catalan peasant are included--a small red barettina or peasant's cap, the peasant's eyes, radiating lines of vision, and his beard. Further simplification is evident in Miró's use of two fine black lines, one vertical and one horizontal, to indicate the axes of the head. A blue shooting star in the upper right is considered a graphic symbol Miró borrowed from Paul Klee, as it was evident in those of Klee's works which Miró was probably introduced to in 1924. Three curving lines of red, yellow, and blue nearby depict a rainbow. Small blue dots in the upper left and small holes Miró made in the canvas in the lower right are the kind of abstract markings he began to employ after he started associating with the surrealists and adopted their belief in "automatism."

END