

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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SURVEY OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY COLLECTION INSTALLED IN EAST BUILDING CONCOURSE LEVEL GALLERIES

WASHINGTON, D. C. August 5, 1985. A survey of the National Gallery of Art's permanent collection of twentieth-century painting and sculpture, including recent acquisitions and works on loan, has been recently installed in the National Gallery's East Building, Concourse Level galleries.

The new installation affords an opportunity to see for the first time the Gallery's School of Paris and American modernist and abstract expressionist painting and sculpture in contiguous galleries on one level. On view are works by such artists as Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Giacometti, Brancusi, Mondrian, Kupka, Tanguy, Pollock, Gorky, de Kooning, Kline, Motherwell, and Noguchi. David Smith sculpture is interspersed throughout the installation.

In addition, there are separate rooms devoted solely to the works of Georgia O'Keeffe, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Mark Rothko, Sam Francis, and Robert Rauschenberg.

Robert Motherwell's mural-sized black and white canvas, Reconciliation Elegy (1978) dominates the entrance to the galleries. Also on view here are two predominantly black and white canvases by Franz Kline: C & O (1958) and Caboose (1961). The David Smith works, Zig V and Gondola II (1964), are on loan from the Collections of Candida and Rebecca Smith.

Henri Matisse's colorful Large Composition with Masks, a painted paper cut-out mounted on canvas executed in 1953, draws the visitor into the next gallery where four Picasso paintings are also grouped: Family of Saltimbanques

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(1904-05), and three from the artist's "Blue" period: Le Gourmet (1901), The Tragedy, (1903), and Lady with a Fan (1905). Picasso's cubist Nude Woman (1910) is also on view. The Fauvists are represented by André Derain's vivid Mountains at Collioure (1905) which complements several adjacent works by Matisse---a portrait of Lorette (1917), Still Life: Apples on Pink Tablecloth (c. 1922), and a blue and white cut-out, Woman with Amphora and Pomegranates (1953). In this gallery there are three monumental sculptures by Constantin Brancusi.

Two recently acquired paintings are among the works in the next large gallery: Frantisek Kupka's Organization of Graphic Motifs (1912-13, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund and Gift of Jan and Meda Mladek, October 11, 1984) a brilliantly colorful, kinetic abstract composition which swirls around an open, white center; and Yves Tanguy's The Look of Amber (1929, Chester Dale Fund 1984), a surreal, undersea interpretation. Joan Miró's The Farm (1921-22), on loan from the collection of Mrs. Ernest Hemingway, can be seen with Miró's Head of a Catalan Peasant (1924). A painting by Mondrian, Diamond Painting Red, Yellow and Blue (1921-25), is a diamond-shaped grid characteristic of the artist.

An overview of the major work of Georgia O'Keeffe, the esteemed American painter, is represented by a group of ten works, most especially a series of five paintings, Jack-in-the-Pulpit (1930). Two works seemingly executed from an aerial point of view, are the early Lake George painting, From Lake No. III, (1924), and the New Mexico subject, Black Place III (1944). Additional southwestern images include the Dark Tree Trunks (1946) and the radically abstracted In the Patio IX (1950) (Blackbird).

Among the other abstract expressionists are Jackson Pollock's Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist) and Number 7 (1951); Lee Krasner's Cobalt Night (1962, Gift of Lila Acheson Wallace, 1984) a composition made up of actively brushed areas of black, violet and mauve, which is on view for the first time; and two

paintings by Adolph Gottlieb, Coalescence (1961) and Flotsam (1968), the latter on loan from the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, Inc. The reflective stainless steel surfaces of David Smith's geometric Sentinel and Sentinel V add another dimension. Also in this gallery is Beta Kappa (1961) by Morris Louis, a large white canvas with stripes filling both lower corners, and the Louis "veil," Verdigris.

Adjacent is an intimate space containing monochromatic mural sketches by Robert Motherwell, and his study for the Reconciliation Elegy, (1977). There also are two early Ellsworth Kelly wood and canvas sculptures: Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris 1949, and his two-dimensional oil on wood White Relief (1950) created from his photographic analysis of shapes during his early visits to Paris.

Richard Diebenkorn's three large canvases, Ocean Park No. 61, 87 and 50 (1973-75) is a series of distillations of southern California light, color, and architecture. Through a process of scrubbing and overpainting, Diebenkorn has created a suggestion of ocean, sand, and rooftops. To define the paintings, the canvases are edged in vivid colors which have been painted over in other areas. Helen Frankenthaler's Mountains and Sea (1952) is one of the earliest stain paintings. Kenneth Noland's Another Time (1973) takes a diamond shape and stretches the color bands to form an optical mesh. Morris Louis poured paint onto canvas, stained it, and formed highly chromatic, tightly structured zones of color in 133 (1962).

There are five paintings in a gallery devoted to the work of Ellsworth Kelly, the American who achieved complex effects by apparently uncomplicated means. On view are his Green Curve III (1972); Chatham V: Red Blue (1971); Blue Yellow Red III (1971); White Curve VII (1976) and Painting for a White Wall, five panels, (1952). This work has been selected to display consistent geometry, and the range of a strong palette over a twenty year span. They are

entirely architectural as Kelly incorporates the wall as an element which is in active relationship to the shape of the canvas and the role of its color.

Works by Pop artist, Roy Lichtenstein, are on view in an adjacent gallery. Lichtenstein has chosen subject matter which is familiar to the viewer. For example, Look Mickey (1961) is one of his earliest paintings derived from the comic strip. The large and aggressive colored Cosmology (1977) is a "surrealistic" mixture of references to his earlier paintings. Also included are Girl With Hair Ribbon (1965); GRRR (1965)---a huge growling dog which fills the canvas; and the Matisse-inspired Still Life with Goldfish Bowl (1972). Lichtenstein's colors are bold and well defined; the red dots which form much of the background of his painting are identifiable with Lichtenstein's graphic printing style.

In contrast are five of Mark Rothko's rectangular canvases painted with his characteristic use of horizontal bars or "clouds" of muted color. In the fall of 1985, Rothko's untitled murals commissioned by the Seagram Company in the late 1950s will be installed as the first of the major gifts to the National Gallery from the Mark Rothko Foundation.

Six large canvases by Sam Francis take abstract expressionism to a dimension characterized by space and light. A series of work from 1966 to 1973 was chosen, the so-called "white" and "edge" paintings where the center zones are an expansive white held in check by strong color staining on the corners. They reflect the artist's strong interest in oriental art mixed with abstract expressionist tendencies.

The Robert Rauschenberg gallery incorporates works on paper, paintings, constructions, and sculpture from 1949 to the present. The centerpiece is a highly colored stage set called Minutia (1954) constructed of silk, printed papers, mirror, and wood. Blue Eagle (1961) is a transitional, abstract expressionist/Pop painting combining found materials and black and white oil pigment. His early White Painting (1951) is a severe, multi-panel piece

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conceived as an homage to the artist Marcel Duchamp, as well as being Rauschenberg's approximation of a mirror. A Venetian Series construction (1973), the large monotype Bodyprint No. 3 (1949), Red Rock (1961), and a small "combine" painting from 1954 complete the room.

The Gallery's twentieth-century collection has been relocated to the Concourse Level galleries while the Upper and Mezzanine Levels of the East Building are being prepared for the Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting which opens November 3, 1985.

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