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# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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WORKS BY AMERICAN ARTIST JOHN MARIN  
DONATED TO NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON - A collection of 113 watercolors, 13 drawings, 20 etchings, 12 paintings and 16 sketchbooks containing more than 419 watercolors and drawings by the American artist John Marin (1870-1953) has been donated to the National Gallery of Art by the artist's son, John C. Marin, Jr. Included in the gift is a selection of archival materials, with 17 notebooks and more than 300 pieces of personal correspondence between Marin and such public figures as Duncan and Marjorie Phillips and the artist's close friend Alfred Stieglitz.

Commenting on the gift, J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art, said: "The sketchbooks, notebooks and correspondence offer extraordinary insight into the methods and inspirations of one of America's most important 20th century artists. The watercolors, in particular, reveal fresh aspects of Marin and hold some wonderful surprises, even for those familiar with his art. Our deep appreciation is extended to John C. Marin, Jr. for donating this wonderful collection to the National Gallery."

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John Marin is known for having transformed the medium of watercolor into a major vehicle of artistic expression. He first attracted wide attention in the early 1900s through his association with the Stieglitz circle of artists, photographers and intellectuals at the 291 Gallery in New York. During the 1920s he provided the dominant force in the movement away from naturalistic representation toward expressive abstraction.

The 113 watercolors in the gift range in date from the late 1880s through 1940 and include many fine examples of the artist's work. Most of Marin's favorite subjects are represented: Paris scenes, New York City and its environs, and New England, especially Maine. In several instances, for example Deer Isle, Maine (1922), multiple views of a site are presented.

Commenting on the watercolors, Ruth Fine, curator in the National Gallery's department of prints and drawings, said: "In viewing so large a group of works one is able truly to see how Marin worked, not only his exploration of watercolor per se, but also his use of graphite, charcoal or black chalk as underdrawing. The range in time of the works allows us to follow Marin as he moved from a naturalistic representation of landscape toward his more personal abstract style."

Fine singles out Marin's sketchbooks for particular praise. "The sketchbooks are marvelous. They not only contain many very beautiful examples of Marin's draftsmanship, but are obviously of great interest in studying his stylistic development as a whole." The sketchbooks range in date from the early 1890s through the early 1950s and include studies in graphite, pen and ink, watercolor, and colored pencils and chalks. They move from clearly incisive images (as in many of the landscapes) to more impressionistic renderings (as in the circus pictures).

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The 20 etchings in the gift include several very rare works, among them St. Paul's at Broadway, No. 3, Portrait of John Marin, Jr. and one of The Lobster Fisherman. The group also includes Marin's last print, Ye Old Dutch Church, Upper Saddle River, No. 2, in three of the 12 recorded impressions.

The news clippings, articles, books, catalogues, letters and other documents form a body of reference material that will prove invaluable in future research on John Marin and augment the scholarly resources available at the Gallery's Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts.

The Marin gift was made possible through the auspices of Lawrence Fleischman, president of the Kennedy Galleries, New York. The Marin archive joins other concentrated collections that have come to the National Gallery, including the master set of Stieglitz photographs, the Gemini G.E.L. Archive, an extensive representation of works by Mark Rothko, and a complete set of wood engravings and numerous watercolors by Winslow Homer.

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