

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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## THE EAST BUILDING: A TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Washington, D.C., June 7, 1988 - The National Gallery of Art announced today that it will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the East Building with a greatly expanded reinstallation of its twentieth-century collections, combined with special loans of related works of art. The show will include many recent acquisitions never before exhibited at the Gallery. Currently in progress, the reinstallation will be completed in early December and will remain on view for approximately two years.

"There is no more fitting way to mark the tenth anniversary of the East Building than with this much expanded reinstallation of the twentieth-century collection," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery. "The new exhibition will demonstrate our progress in expanding the Gallery's collection of modern art. In the last decade we have accomplished a great deal in this area through the generosity of many donors and the National Gallery of Art Collectors Committee."

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The East Building, which opened June 1, 1978, was designed by I.M. Pei & Partners for three basic functions: to house the Gallery's collections of twentieth-century art, to provide space for temporary exhibitions, and to house a Center for the Advanced Study of the Visual Arts together with the library and offices of the staff. Based on a trapezoidal plan divided into two triangular sections, the building was skillfully adapted to a plot of land between the neoclassical West Building (completed in 1941) and the U.S. Capitol Building. Its dramatic lines and vast spaces underscore the Gallery's commitment to the art of this century. In 1985 the American Institute of Architects cited the East Building as one of the ten greatest buildings in America.

Since the East Building opened, the National Gallery's collection of modern art has grown significantly, reflecting a desire to achieve in-depth concentrations of the work of a range of twentieth-century masters. Paintings by Picasso, Miró, Magritte, Pollock, Kelly, Lichtenstein, and Diebenkorn have been acquired, as well as important groups of works by other artists. Among the latter are over nine hundred drawings and one hundred paintings by Mark Rothko, given by the Mark Rothko Foundation in 1986, including the well-known Seagram Murals, and Barnett Newman's fifteen-painting series, The Stations of the Cross, purchased in 1986 with a donation from Robert and Jane Meyerhoff.

The reinstallation, which has been coordinated by National Gallery curators of twentieth-century art, Jack Cowart and Nan Rosenthal, and worked out in conjunction with Gaillard Ravenel and the Gallery's department of installation and design, will occupy over 30,000 square feet on three of the five levels of the East Building: the tower, upper level, and concourse. The plan takes advantage of the flexible exhibition spaces the building provides, making it possible for each gallery to be designed and constructed to accommodate the needs of specific works of art.

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The upper level will feature art from the beginning of the century to World War II, with groupings of works by individual artists. Visitors will first enter a room of paintings by Picasso from his blue and rose period, which will include the famous Family of Saltimbanques (1905). Galleries of paintings and sculpture by Matisse and the fauves, Modigliani, cubists, color abstractionists, Brancusi, dadaists, and surrealists will complete the upper level. Among the many important works on display will be René Magritte's The Human Condition (1933), a gift from the National Gallery Collectors Committee in 1987, being shown at the Gallery for the first time.

Fourteen postwar sculptures by David Smith will be displayed in the intimate, yet dramatic space of the tower, illuminated by natural light. Most of the figural sculpture, from the 1950s and early 1960s, including works from the Sentinel and Tanktotem series, will be loaned by Candida and Rebecca Smith.

Postwar European and American art will be shown on the concourse level. A special gallery, open four hours a day for conservation reasons, will be devoted to Matisse's enormous and brilliantly colored paper cutouts of the early 1950s of which the Gallery has the most important collection in the world. Individual galleries will feature the work of Kelly, Johns, Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, and Warhol. Highlights of the concourse installation will include Pollock's Lavender Mist (1950), a room devoted to paintings of the 1940s by Jean Dubuffet and sculpture of the 1940s and 1950 by Alberto Giacometti, Helen Frankenthaler's Mountains and the Sea (1952), and a sixteen-sided room containing Newman's Stations of the Cross (1958-1966) and the companion to the series, Be II.

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After its opening on December 4, 1988, the twentieth-century reinstallation will remain on view with occasional minor modifications through December 31, 1990. A two-volume full-color publication will be produced by the National Gallery in conjunction with the exhibition. One book, made possible by The Charles E. Smith Companies and The Artery Organization, Inc., will profile the architecture of the East Building and its ten-year history of major exhibitions. The second book, by National Gallery assistant curator of twentieth-century art, Jeremy Strick, will document major acquisitions and gifts of twentieth-century art to the National Gallery since 1978.

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