

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Ruth Kaplan
Deborah Ziska
(202) 842-6353

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ANNOUNCES PARTIAL GIFT

BY PAMELA HARRIMAN OF VAN GOGH'S "ROSES"

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 20, 1989 - J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today at the National Press Club that, in honor of the Gallery's fiftieth anniversary, Pamela Harriman has decided to give the Gallery Vincent van Gogh's Roses, one of the artist's finest still-life paintings. In a letter to the Gallery, Mrs. Harriman has pledged the outright gift of a partial interest in the painting, with complete title passing at or before her death.

"We are deeply grateful to Mrs. Harriman for this magnificent act of generosity. Our hope is that it will set an example for other patriotic donors," said Brown.

Roses will be shown at the Gallery in an exhibition devoted to gifts in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Gallery's West Building on March 17, 1991. The exhibition will run from March 17 to June 16, 1991. Roses is a lead gift in the Gallery's campaign to attract gifts of works of art in honor of its first half century.

The painting, 28 x 35 1/2 inches, depicts a profusion of white roses against a boldly articulated green background painted with particularly expressive brushwork. It is one of four still lifes, including two paintings of roses and two of irises, executed by van Gogh shortly before he left Saint-Rémy, France, in May 1890.

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"Roses is unquestionably one of van Gogh's most important and most beautiful paintings. It will be an outstanding addition to the Gallery's collection," said Charles S. Moffett, senior curator of paintings and a recognized authority on the work of van Gogh.

The painting will be the first still life by van Gogh to come into the Gallery's collection. The Gallery so far owns no major painting by van Gogh of this important period. The artist has heretofore been under-represented in the Gallery's otherwise major gathering of the work of impressionist and post-impressionist artists, a collection of these schools that is otherwise one of the most comprehensive assemblages in the world.

Roses was given to Mrs. Harriman by her husband, the late W. Averell Harriman, who purchased the painting in 1930. He was elected governor of New York in 1954 and served as U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. and to Great Britain in the last years of World War II. He negotiated the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union and was co-chairman of the American delegation to the Vietnamese talks in 1968 and the Paris peace talks, with responsibilities in negotiating the end of the Vietnam War.

In 1972 the W. Averell Harriman Foundation donated twenty-two paintings by such important artists as Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, Matisse, Picasso, and Seurat to the National Gallery.

Vincent van Gogh
Dutch, 1853-1890
Roses, 1890
Oil on canvas; 28 x 35 1/2 inches

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