

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART RECEIVES MORE THAN 2000 GIFTS
IN ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

LATEST DONATIONS INCLUDE SIX MAJOR PRIVATE COLLECTIONS
AND IMPORTANT WORKS BY RODIN, HOUDON,
CASTIGLIONE, CARO, FRANCIS

Washington, D.C. - As the National Gallery's fiftieth anniversary year came to a close, National Gallery director J. Carter Brown announced today its most recent gifts, including several collections as well as important individual donations, bringing the year's total to more than 2444 works of art.

"These donations represent gifts from 224 donors from twenty-two states, plus the District of Columbia, and five foreign countries," said J. Carter Brown, director of the Gallery. "The outpouring of generosity in our fiftieth anniversary year has been overwhelming."

The latest additions include a number of important private collections: among others, from Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, more than two hundred works of minimal, conceptual, and post-1960s art; from William B. O'Neal, old master drawings primarily by Italian, French and English artists; from Mrs. Robert A. Hauslohner, a wide-ranging collection of twentieth-century prints and portfolios by American and European artists; from the Marcy Family, 150 of the finest prints by the German artist Lovis Corinth; from the Avery Family, the key set of Milton Avery's prints in all media, as well as his original copperplates and woodblocks; from Crown Point Press, rare prints and proofs by Richard Diebenkorn and Pat Stier, among others. The Southwestern Bell Corporation donated the remaining fifty-five Paul Strand photographs. As previously announced the core of the Woodner collection of old master drawings was acquired by the Gallery in October 1991.

A number of important gifts of individual works of art were also announced in various media. Newly donated sculpture includes Auguste Rodin's plaster The Age of Bronze, from Iris and B. Gerald Cantor; and Jean-Antoine Houdon's plaster bust, George Washington, from Robert McNeil Jr.; as well as works by Nicolò Roccatagliata, Ignaz Günther, Naum Gabo, Joseph Cornell, Anthony Caro, and Martin Puryear. Paintings donated include important early American works by John Singleton Copley and Jasper Francis Cropsey, and among the new prints and drawings are major works by Rembrandt Van Rijn,

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, Thomas Gainsborough, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Henri Matisse, Wayne Thiebaud, Sam Francis, and Eric Fischl.

Private Collections

I. One of the most important private collections of contemporary minimal, conceptual, and post-1960s art, outstanding in its range, complexity and artistic quality, is being transferred to the Gallery by Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, of New York City. Beginning in the mid-1960s, the Vogels acquired works by American and European vanguard artists. They were early collectors of the artist Sol Lewitt, and soon expanded their interests to acquire works by Robert Mangold, Donald Judd, Christo, Lynda Benglis, Richard Tuttle, John Cage, Sylvia Mangold, Richard Artschwager, Joel Shapiro, Carl André, and dozens of others. Their acclaimed collection, which includes in its entirety more than two thousand paintings, drawings, and sculpture by more than two hundred artists, is remarkable in that it surveys developments across the spectrum of contemporary art and at the same time focuses on the work of individual artists collected by the Vogels in great depth over the last three decades.

Many of the 212 works initially transferred by the Vogels are the first drawings, paintings, and sculpture by the artists to enter the Gallery's collection, making a significant contribution

to the Gallery's representation of late twentieth-century art.

II. William B. O'Neal of Charlottesville, made a magnificent gift of eighty-eight continental drawings as well as a pledge to give his remaining collection of more than 200 British and American drawings. Among those given now are a rare early landscape by Leandro Bassano; a lively compositional study by the Spanish master Francisco de Ribalta; and impressive red chalk figure studies by Giovanni Alberti, Matteo Rosselli, and Jacopo Chimenti, as well as an important group of eighteenth and nineteenth-century architectural drawings and stage designs by a variety of Italian, French, and German masters.

III. From Mrs. Robert A. Hauslohner comes one of the largest and most diverse gifts of twentieth-century prints and illustrated books to have entered the Gallery's collection in recent years. It comprises 156 individual works as well as portfolios and illustrated books by sixty-six American and European artists, including Kirchner, Avery, Kokoschka, Picasso, Marin, Rauschenberg, and Hockney.

IV. The Family of Sigbert Marcy has donated Mr. Marcy's remarkable collection of 150 Corinth prints. Lovis Corinth, the German painter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, is known also for his large and important output of graphic art. A personal friend of Corinth, Marcy had unusual opportunities to obtain works

of the finest quality from the artist. The Marcy's Corinth collection will transform the Gallery's holdings, making it a leading center for the study of Corinth's prints.

V. In a memorial address delivered after Milton Avery's death in 1965, Mark Rothko spoke of Avery's "poetry of sheer loveliness, of sheer beauty." Avery kept in his own collection a number of highly personal prints, drypoints, woodcuts, and lithographs on some of his favorite subjects - the landscape, his family and friends, the nude. Now the Avery family has donated this key set of eighty-four variant impressions of prints in all media to the National Gallery, adding significantly to the Gallery's collection of twentieth-century prints. Also donated are forty-two of the artist's original etching plates and woodblocks.

VI. From Crown Point Press in San Francisco comes a large number of etchings and woodcuts by Richard Diebenkorn, Al Held, Pat Steir and William T. Wiley including several special working proofs and examples of Crown Point's distinctive international woodcut projects in which the artists have worked with master craftsmen in Japan and China. Additional Crown Point Press prints by Diebenkorn and others were donated by Joshua P. Smith.

VII. From June Wayne, founder in 1960 of Tamarind Lithography Workshop, which helped spur the late twentieth-century printmaking renaissance in America, comes a collection of more than fifty

contemporary works including the Gallery's first prints by Elaine de Kooning, Yvonne Jacquette, George McNeil and Michelle Stuart, and selections of important pieces by Wayne herself. Further works by Wayne were donated by Lloyd Rigler.

VIII. In 1990 the Southwestern Bell Corporation donated six photographs from its Paul Strand collection to the National Gallery. In honor of the Gallery's fiftieth anniversary the Southwestern Bell Corporation is now donating the remaining fifty-five Strand photographs in its magnificent collection. The works include rare vintage prints of The Blind Woman and Abstraction - Bowls, and span Paul Strand's entire career from his 1920s photographs of machines to his late landscapes of New England, France, and the Hebrides. These, added to the other Gallery holdings of Strand's photography, will make the Gallery's collection one of the most important in the country.

Individual Gifts - Sculpture

Auguste Rodin's The Age of Bronze, modeled 1875/1876, is one of the earliest plaster versions of the first surviving life-size sculpture by Rodin. Of the plasters of The Age of Bronze produced during Rodin's lifetime, it is one of only two known to survive in virtually pristine condition. The exquisite modeling, early date, fine casting, and excellent state make it arguably the most

distinguished Rodin plaster in America. Cast in 1898 for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and thus the first Rodin acquired by any American institution, it was purchased with funds from Iris and B. Gerald Cantor.

Jean-Antoine Houdon's bust of George Washington, 1786/1793, is one of the most important images of the first president by one of the two greatest artists who portrayed him. It is coming to the Gallery as a gift from Robert McNeil, Jr. In October of 1785 George Washington sat for a portrait by the celebrated French sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon, who had been recommended by Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Houdon made a special trip from Paris to study his subject from life and took a life-cast mold of the general's face. Back in his studio in Paris, Houdon created the marble statue that now stands in the State Capitol, Richmond, and a great number of busts in plaster, terracotta, and marble, varying in costume and expression. Until now, the National Gallery owned no Houdon plaster, nor any Houdon bust of an American sitter. This handsome early example is both a significant work of art and an icon of American history - the Gallery's first sculpted portrait of any president or leader of the early Republic.

Among other important sculpture donated recently are:
a pair of bronze andirons topped by lively cherubs by the late Renaissance Genoese-Venetian master Nicolò Roccatagliata (active 1593-1636), donated by Asbjorn R. Lunde; a sinuously elegant

wooden angel carved by the great German eighteenth-century sculptor Ignaz Günther (1725-1775); a promised gift of Roy and Cecily Langdale Davis in honor of Paul Mellon; and Naum Gabo's Linear Construction in Space No. 2, 1954, the first work by the artist to enter the National Gallery of Art's collection, donated by the noted sculptor George Rickey. Joseph Cornell's mysterious and poetic boxes, filled with carefully juxtaposed objects that suggest a complex and deeply personal iconography, have long fascinated the public. Robert and Jane Meyerhoff have now donated two examples of his best work - Sand Fountain, 1948, and Les Constellations Voisines du Pole, 1961.

Among contemporary sculpture, Scheherazade, 1974, is an especially fine example of British artist Anthony Caro's constructed metal works, balancing unpainted pieces of rusted steel against and across one another to make a kind of frame or portal. The second Anthony Caro sculpture to enter the Gallery's collection, Scheherazade has been given by Guido Goldman, who has made it available on long-term loan to the National Gallery since 1976. One of Martin Puryear's distinctive works of sculpture using natural materials and creating simple hand-worked shapes is Noatuck, given by Carolyn Alper. It joins the Gallery's other Puryear sculpture, Lever No. 3, and will complement the many minimal and post-minimal works acquired from the Vogel collection.

Individual gifts - Paintings

In addition to the magnificent array of old master, nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings donated to the Gallery earlier last year, most recent gifts are highlighted by two important early American paintings. The first, a gift of Richard York, is John Singleton Copley's Sketch for the Copley Family, 1776, a study for one of the artist's best-known works, which is one of the masterpieces of early American art already in the Gallery's collection. The second, from Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hirschl, is Jasper Francis Cropsey's Warwick Castle, England, 1857, an important addition to the Gallery's collection of European views by great American painters. Other major paintings recently given include works by Milton Avery, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Yves-Andre Istel; Kenneth Noland, a gift of Mr. Irving Blum; and two important paintings by Alice Neel, a gift of Arthur Bullowa.

Individual gifts - Prints and Drawings

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, the Italian seventeenth-century master, was famous for his renderings of pastoral scenes and of animals. His Noah Leading the Animals into the Ark, 1655, gave him an opportunity to display his gifts to their fullest, and he seized on it to depict a variety of exotic, as well as ordinary, beasts. This spectacular drawing in wash and oils on paper is the gift of Gilbert Butler.

Among other notable prints and drawings recently donated are:

the earliest illustrated book by Rembrandt, Praise of Seafaring, 1634, written by Elias Herckmans, and containing Rembrandt's first etching intended specifically for book illustration, given anonymously; Thomas Gainsborough's Wooded Landscape with Rabbit Catchers and Greyhounds, from the late 1750s, given by Mrs. Iola S. Haverstick in memory of her father, Eugene W. Stetson; eight Kirchner woodcuts and lithographs, representing some of the artist's best work in both techniques, from Ruth and Jacob Kainen, who have already contributed nineteen superb Kirchners to the Gallery's collection; and Henri Matisse's Reclining Nude, 1935, given anonymously, one of the artist's immediate and direct pencil drawings posing his sensuous model against the geometric patterns of tiled walls and plaid fabrics.

The Gallery also continued to receive important gifts of works by living artists. Wayne Thiebaud's drawing, Study of Cakes, 1965, a gift from the Thiebaud family, is on a related subject and from the same period as the artist's painting Cakes, which drew much favorable comment when it came as an anniversary gift to the Gallery earlier in 1991. Sam Francis has donated a comprehensive set of his intimate self-portrait prints (forty-six lithographs and eight etchings, all printed in extremely small editions), as well as one of his brilliantly colored monotypes, the first of his important monotypes to enter the Gallery's collection. Adding to his earlier fiftieth anniversary gifts, Jim Dine has now donated four of his most important illustrated books between 1977 and 1989,

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including sensitive artistic responses to nature as well as to major works of earlier art. Untitled, 1991, by Eric Fischl, a large (six-foot long) and powerful new work by the artist, comes from the artist and his New York dealer Mary Boone. It is the first work by Fischl to enter the collection.

Seven important drawings by Robert Smithson for earthwork sculptures were the gifts of two donors: Werner H. and Sarah-Ann Kramarsky and the estate of Robert Smithson.

Many of the gifts of painting and sculpture that have been made in the course of the Gallery's fiftieth anniversary year will be on view as part of the continuing reinstallation of the Gallery's permanent collection. For works of art on paper, which cannot be permanently displayed, a special exhibition scheduled to open in May 1992 will show a selection of the finest recent gifts made specifically in honor of the Gallery's fiftieth anniversary.

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