

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

FOURTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215/842-6353

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 29, 1992

CONTACT: Tina Coplan
Liz Kimball
(202) 842-6353

CONTEMPORARY DRAWINGS AND PRINTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

REVEAL ENTIRE GROUPS OF RELATED WORKS

Washington, D.C. -- Series and Sequences: Contemporary Drawings and Prints from the Permanent Collection, opening at the National Gallery on October 25, 1992, presents a provocative array of works on paper by twelve distinguished American and European artists. The exhibition offers the rare opportunity to view these series of related prints and drawings as complete sets. A celebration of recent gifts, the show continues through March 14, 1993.

The 123 works on view date from 1970 through 1989, revealing the great diversity of subject and style characteristic of the times. These range from dynamic expressionism, as in twenty-one of Sam Francis' virtually unknown self portraits (1972-1973), to the cerebral abstraction of Josef Albers' Grey Instrumentations II (1975), twelve subtle studies in color differentiation.

"The full impact of these exceptional, contemporary works of art, exploring ideas in series of images, can now be comprehended in their entirety as the artists intended," said Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery. "We are grateful to the individual donors and the Collectors Committee of the National Gallery who made possible these wonderful gifts."

-more-

series and sequences . . . page two

In addition to Francis and Albers, artists represented in the show are Americans Nancy Graves, Jasper Johns, Alex Katz, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, and Edda Renouf; British artists Tony Cragg and David Hockney; Jürgen Partenheimer of Germany; and Mimmo Paladino of Italy.

Among the highlights are Nancy Graves' first major group of paintings on paper, Lunar Orbiter Series (1972), based on diagrams and photographs of the moon's surface, and David Hockney's The Blue Guitar (1976-1977), a series of twenty playful etchings that pay homage to a poem by Wallace Stevens, in turn inspired by Picasso's painting The Old Guitarist.

Alex Katz' portrait series Polka Dot Blouse I-IV (1979) presents four views in lithograph and screenprint of his wife's head. Tony Cragg's two Suburbs etching series appear at first glance as traditional still life compositions depicting rubber stamps, but slowly are revealed as allusions to the homogeneity of much of the twentieth-century environment.

Robert Mangold suggests the spontaneity of his own sketchbooks in Pages (1989), a series of twelve etchings. Mimmo Paladino's color charged, boldly expressionistic woodcuts, Lacrimose (1986), incorporate Christian and pagan allusions, suggestions of mythic ritual and epic events, juxtaposed with the artist's own arcane, poetic writings. Lyrical and narrative in spirit, Jürgen Partenheimer's etched Book of Wanderings (1983) was inspired by the meditative Christian book of hours.

series and sequences . . . page three

Groups of geometric abstraction include Sol LeWitt's Five Silk Screen Prints (1970) and minimalist, tactile drawings by Edda Renouf in pastel, charcoal and watercolor with incised lines. Complex visual systems also characterize the works of Jasper Johns, who explores his crosshatch motif in 6 Lithographs (after 'Untitled 1975'), (1976).

Several prints in the exhibition were published by the artists, while others were published by a number of major workshops, including Crown Point Press, Tyler Graphics Ltd., and Gemini G.E.L., whose archive collection is at the National Gallery.

Ruth Fine, curator of modern prints and drawings at the National Gallery, organized the exhibition with the help of assistant curator Charles Ritchie.

The exhibition is located in the West Building Central Gallery of the National Gallery of Art.

#####