

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 3, 1993

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

WOODNER FAMILY DONATES NINE MORE OLD MASTER DRAWINGS  
TO NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART;  
GALLERY ANNOUNCES EXHIBITION OF WORKS  
FROM WOODNER FAMILY COLLECTION IN 1995

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 2, 1993 -- National Gallery of Art director Earl A. Powell III today announced the gift to the Gallery of nine outstanding drawings by old masters Albrecht Dürer, Raphael, Anthony van Dyck, Rembrandt van Rijn, Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and Francisco de Goya, in addition to a rare Fontainebleau School design, from the Woodner Family Collection. This brings to 33 the number of drawings that Dian and Andrea Woodner have given to the Gallery since the death in November 1990 of their father Ian Woodner, a noted artist and architect as well as a prominent art collector and real estate developer in New York and Washington, D.C.

Nine Old Master Drawings: Recent Gifts from the Woodner Family Collection will be installed for public viewing Sunday,

-more-

woodner . . . page 2

December 5, 1993, through January 30, 1994, in the ground floor galleries of the West Building, near the entrance at Seventh Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.

"This gift by Dian and Andrea Woodner ranks among the most important donations of works of art to the National Gallery in recent years," said Powell. "Both individually and as a group, these works make a dramatic and significant contribution to the National Gallery's collection of old master drawings. We are deeply grateful to the Woodner family for its continuing generosity." Powell also announced that a larger exhibition of works from the Woodner Family Collection will be presented at the National Gallery, May 7 through September 3, 1995.

According to Andrew Robison, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator, National Gallery of Art, "These nine outstanding drawings summarize Ian Woodner's catholic taste for great drawings of many centuries, but also his special love for the rare, intense, and moving works of the Renaissance, the true beginning and first flowering of modern European drawing."

This acquisition brings the total number of drawings in the Gallery's collection by each artist to: eight by Dürer, five by Raphael, four by Van Dyck, twenty-one by Rembrandt, eight by G.D. Tiepolo, two by Goya, and seven by Ingres.

Albrecht Dürer's charming Virgin Annunciate, made around 1492, is the earliest drawing in the group and the earliest drawing by Dürer (1471-1528) in the United States. It

-more-

woodner . . . page 3

is drawn in pen and brown ink and shows the influence of German engraving techniques and the draftsmanship of such fifteenth-century masters as Martin Schongauer. The National Gallery now has one of the richest concentrations of Dürer's art in the country.

Eight Apostles (c. 1514-1516) and A Marble Horse on the Quirinal Hill (1516-1517) were executed in red chalk by the High Renaissance master Raphael (1483-1520). Eight Apostles, once cut in half but rejoined after Ian Woodner bought the two halves in 1986, is related to Raphael's work on a series of tapestry designs with episodes from the lives of Saints Peter and Paul. This is one of only two remaining fragments from the compositional drawing for the tapestry showing Christ's Charge to Saint Peter. A Marble Horse on the Quirinal Hill, Raphael's copy of the horse from one of the two colossal marble groups that have stood since ancient times on the Quirinal Hill, Rome, bears witness to the artist's profound interest in classical art and the antiquities of Rome. The addition of these two drawings makes a dramatic difference in the Gallery's representation of the draftsmanship of this key Renaissance artist.

Typical of the inventive designs of the first School of Fontainebleau is the anonymous Design for the Morion Helmet of a Suit of Parade Armor (c. 1545), with its strange yet delightful intermingling of strapwork, grotesques, allegorical figures, and mythological scenes. Since outstanding French drawings of the

woodner . . . page 4

sixteenth century are rare, this drawing in pen and black ink with gray wash gives an important boost to the Gallery's holdings in this area.

The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine (c. 1616-1618), one of several studies made by Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) in preparation for his painting of the same subject, was completed when he was still in his teens. A work in progress, this complex drawing points up Van Dyck's early fascination with Titian and the indelible influence of his mentor Rubens. The acquisition of this drawing is a prime addition to the Gallery's collection of works by and after Van Dyck.

The double-sided View of Houtewaal near the Sint Anthonispoort (early 1650s) becomes "one of the most beautiful landscape studies in the Gallery's already rich collection of Rembrandt drawings," according to Margaret Morgan Grasselli, curator and head of old master drawings at the National Gallery. On one side, with spare touches of a broad-nibbed reed pen and delicate sweeps of gray-brown wash, Rembrandt evokes the silvery light of an overcast day in his native Holland. The other side, a pen and ink sketch with figures entering the same town of Houtewaal, strikes a different mood and bears witness to Rembrandt's (1606-1669) great versatility as a draftsman.

The Parting of Saints Peter and Paul (c. 1791) is part of Venetian artist Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo's (1727-1804) Large Biblical Series, made toward the end of his life. The

woodner . . . page 5

composition represents the poignant moment when Saint Peter and Saint Paul embrace for the last time before they are led off to their separate martyrdoms. Characteristic of Tiepolo's hand are the broad, blunt outlines that define the figures; the rich golden-brown washes that cover almost the entire sheet; the patchy white highlights (actually reserved areas of untouched paper) that spotlight key elements of the composition; the exotic figure types; and the striped patterning of some of their clothing.

In 1991 the Woodners gave the Gallery its first drawing by Spanish artist Francisco de Goya (1746-1828), an early sheet from the 1790s. Two years later they have presented the Gallery with a second outstanding example of Goya's draftsmanship, Beggars Who Get About on Their Own in Bordeaux (1824-1827). This lively, almost strangely comical black chalk study of a legless beggar moving himself along on a three-wheeled contraption was made between 1824 and 1827, when Goya was living in Bordeaux, France.

French artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' (1780-1867) Two Studies of Virgil (c. 1830) becomes the seventh drawing--but the first history subject in any medium--by the artist to enter the National Gallery's collection. Made of graphite on five joined sheets of paper, the drawing relates to Ingres' later reworking of his 1812 painting Virgil Reading the Aeneid to Augustus (1812), a subject to which Ingres returned

-more-

woodner . . . page 6

during every decade of his career.

Ian Woodner began to purchase drawings in the mid-1950s and continued to acquire them until his death in 1990. The Woodner Family Collection, including works owned by his children, eventually became the foremost private collection of old master drawings in the United States, and was widely exhibited both here and abroad. Woodner was a member of the Gallery's Trustees' Council and had been in discussions with the Gallery about the future of his collection for several years when he died suddenly. Upon his death the stewardship of the collection passed to his daughters, Dian and Andrea Woodner, both of New York, who decided to preserve the core of the Woodner Family Collection at the National Gallery of Art.

Beyond an important drawing, Bust of a Youth Looking Upward (c. 1500) by Luca Signorelli, given in honor of the Gallery's fiftieth anniversary, of the 143 old master drawings placed on deposit at the Gallery from the Woodner Family Collection in 1991, a total of 32 have been donated to the Gallery; two of the most famous pieces--a magnificent page from Giorgio Vasari's Libro de' disegni and Benvenuto Cellini's rare drawing of a satyr, were purchased by the Gallery through its Patrons' Permanent Fund; and 109 remain on deposit. Six further drawings were given to the Gallery by Ian Woodner himself prior to his daughters' 1991 gifts. A generous selection of these drawings will be presented in the commemorative exhibition that will be held in 1995.

# # #