

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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## STUNNING SURVEY OF LICHTENSTEIN PRINTS PREMIERES

AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, OCTOBER 30, 1994 - JANUARY 8, 1995

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Landmark prints by Roy Lichtenstein, ranging from his first pop image in any medium, Ten Dollar Bill (1956), through works of the 1990s such as The Oval Office (1992), are included in the first comprehensive survey of the artist's prints in more than two decades. Organized by the National Gallery of Art, The Prints of Roy Lichtenstein will go on view in the East Building, October 30, 1994, to January 8, 1995, and will travel to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, February 16 to April 30, 1995, and the Dallas Museum of Art, May 28 to August 6, 1995.

"Roy Lichtenstein has held a preeminent place among vanguard American artists for almost four decades, and he is widely acknowledged as one of the most important printmakers of our time," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We thank the lenders who permitted us to include in the exhibition important works from their collections. We are especially grateful for the enthusiastic support and generosity of Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein since the inception of this endeavor five years ago."

The ninety works on view will include lithographs, etchings, screenprints,

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woodcuts, works that combine several processes, and related edition sculpture made concurrently with the prints. Together they encompass the wide range of Lichtenstein's "high" and "low" art interests based on such sources as fine art and comic strip images.

The show opens with fourteen little-known and rare prints from the 1950s, including (The King) (c. 1950), a print that combines lithography and intaglio, unusual for the period, and dramatic color woodcuts such as A Cherokee Brave (1952). Among works from the 1960s and 1970s are quintessential pop images such as Crying Girl (1963) and Reverie (1965), the latter from the seminal 11 Pop Artists portfolios. Also included are four images from Ten Landscapes (1967), Lichtenstein's first print series; prints from the Cathedral series (1969), based on Monet's paintings of Rouen Cathedral; the bronze relief Peace through Chemistry Bronze (1970); and Bull I-IV (1973), a reference to a series by Picasso. The exhibition moves through the 1980s with works such as the 1984 Two Paintings: Dagwood, a combination woodcut and lithograph that includes an image of the comic strip character; and the sculpture Brushstroke Chair and Ottoman (Wood) (1986), done concurrently with Brushstroke Figures, a series of mixed-media prints. It ends with such works such as Water Lilies with a Japanese Bridge (1992), a screenprint on swirled stainless steel, and selections from a series in progress of nudes in interiors.

Prints have played a central role in Lichtenstein's career. He made his first two prints in 1948--a lithograph and a woodcut--and by 1950 he had added etching and screenprint to his repertoire. His early technical experiments, at times

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combining print processes, put him a full decade ahead of other painters whose interest in printmaking was first invigorated in the 1960s. His prints of the 1950s--with their whimsical subject matter, ironic wit, and a formal vocabulary including the dots and stripes that were to become part of his signature style--foreshadow the work of the 1960s that propelled him to the forefront of the pop art movement.

Since Ten Dollar Bill, executed in 1956, Lichtenstein has examined various idiosyncrasies of the age of consumerism and mass communication, moving from comic book and advertising images in the 1960s to art-about-art subjects in the 1970s and 1980s. His expansive pieces of the 1990s place his own art in the continuum of visual history by reexamining all of these themes in new and more complex ways. Lichtenstein's work in printmaking has presented technical challenges to all the printers and fabricators with whom he has collaborated at various workshops, including Gemini G.E.L. and Graphicstudio, whose archive collections are housed at the National Gallery of Art, as well as Saff Tech Arts and Tyler Graphics Ltd. Years have been spent developing processes for some of Lichtenstein's prints to achieve the special effects the artist desired.

The exhibition is organized by Ruth E. Fine, National Gallery curator of modern prints and drawings. The show will be accompanied by The Prints of Roy Lichtenstein: A Catalogue Raisonné 1948-1993 by Mary Lee Corlett, research associate at the National Gallery, with an introduction by Fine. Copublished by the National Gallery and Hudson Hills Press, the volume will contain 300 pages with 325 color and 50 black and white illustrations.

In conjunction with the exhibition three short films are being produced which

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will show Lichtenstein at work and will document his printmaking process. These films are made possible by The Circle of the National Gallery of Art.

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