

# National Gallery of Art

## NEWS RELEASE

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### NATIONAL GALLERY ACQUIRES IMPORTANT WORKS BY JEAN DUBUFFET FROM THE STEPHEN HAHN FAMILY COLLECTION

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The National Gallery of Art has just received a partial and promised gift from the Stephen Hahn Family Collection of twenty oil paintings, eleven works on paper, and one sculpture by the preeminent French artist Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), as announced today by Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. Dating from 1943 to 1962, the works are among Dubuffet's most original and celebrated pieces. Many of them will be installed in the East Building upper level galleries beginning September 17, 1995.

"Stephen Hahn has been successful at collecting some of Dubuffet's best work and we are grateful to the Hahn family for their generosity," said Powell. "This addition to our collection of twentieth-century art will make the Gallery an important destination for the study and appreciation of Dubuffet's work."

Dubuffet's contribution to art during the second half of this century has been profound. In 1944 he developed the principles of *l'art brut*, emphasizing coarse materials and

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primitive forms. His style was inspired by the art of the mentally disturbed, children's drawings, and primitive art. The nature and implications of his work had an international influence on both painting and the philosophy of art.

According to Mark Rosenthal, curator of twentieth-century art, National Gallery of Art, "The Hahn collection represents examples of Dubuffet's most important innovations during his crucial early period, when he began to challenge the tradition of esthetic beauty."

The gift includes the painting Grande traite solitaire (1943), a major example of Dubuffet's style just prior to the development of *l'art brut*. Another work, Façades d'immeubles, is the largest of the three façade pictures that Dubuffet painted in 1946. Several works from 1946 and 1947 belong to Dubuffet's celebrated portrait series devoted to members of the artist's intellectual circle, including the writers Georges Limbour and René Bertelé. The painting Corps de dame jaspé (1950) is a superb example from Dubuffet's group of renowned images of the female nude. Another major work painted in the same year is Le temps pressé that he adapted directly from the walls of the Paris street.

The acquisition also includes a prominent example of Dubuffet's "Pierres Philosophiques," or "Philosopher's Stones," two significant images from a series of cows, in which the animal is transformed into what Dubuffet called a "grotesque puppet."

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Other key works are Jardin de Bibi Trompette (1955), a small work composed of butterfly wings, marking the beginning of the artist's interest in collage, and L'amphigourique (1954), a sculpture made of slag.

The works on paper include Paris street scenes dating from 1961-1962, freshly illuminated by a gaudy palette, filled with small shorthand figures, and inscribed with advertising logos and urban slang. These pictures mark a new phase and punctuate the progress of the artist's preceding fifteen years.

Other works by Dubuffet in the National Gallery's permanent collection are a painting, La Dame au pompon (1946); a sculpture, Site a l'homme àssis (1969-1984), and 85 prints by Dubuffet, as well as a portfolio and bound volume.

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