

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART RECEIVES NEW GIFT FROM COLLECTIONS OF MR. AND MRS. PAUL MELLON

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Following a regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting today, Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art, announced that the Gallery has received a major gift of 85 works of art from the collections of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon. The gift includes fourteen French impressionist and post-impressionist paintings with works by Cézanne, Gauguin, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Manet, Bonnard, Vuillard and Braque. Fifty outstanding French drawings and watercolors include the same artists plus major groups of earlier works by David, Géricault and Ingres, as well as twentieth-century masterpieces by Matisse, Magritte and Giacometti. In addition, this magnificent gift contains fourteen prints with rare or unique examples by Degas, Manet and Villon, as well as six pieces of sculpture by Maillol, Picasso and others.

"This superb gift, which includes some of the most beautiful works from the impressionist period, will wonderfully enhance

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our existing impressionist collection, much of it built by generous donations from Paul Mellon over the years," said Powell.

The paintings include Gauguin's Still Life with Peonies (1884), the first still life by the artist to enter the collection; Degas' The Dance Lesson (1879), a fine complement to the artist's Four Dancers (c. 1899) already in the Gallery's collection, and Bonnard's Paris, Rue de Parme on Bastille Day (1890) that epitomizes Paris in the 1890s.

Many of the works are intimate in scale and will be displayed in rotation with the small French paintings collected by Mellon's sister, Ailsa Mellon Bruce. Particularly fine additions are self-portraits by Degas, Fantin-Latour, and Vuillard.

The present gift also includes works of art previously promised to the National Gallery which have now been transferred to the permanent collection. Most notable among these is Cézanne's Boy in a Red Waistcoat (1888/1890), one of the artist's masterpieces of the late 1880s, pledged by Mr. and Mrs. Mellon for the Gallery's 50th anniversary in 1991. Among the other promised gifts which are now entering the collection are Manet's exceedingly rare and important lithograph The Balloon (1862) and one of Degas' finest early drawings, The Artist's Brother, René de Gas (1855).

Paul Mellon, son of the National Gallery's founder Andrew W.

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Mellon, served as the first president, and later, chairman of the board of trustees of the National Gallery. The Gallery's East Building was constructed with funds donated by Mr. Mellon, his sister Ailsa Mellon Bruce and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Since their first gift of paintings in 1964, the Mellons have donated more than 1,000 works of art to the National Gallery of Art.

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