

# National Gallery of Art

## NEWS RELEASE

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### NATIONAL GALLERY RECEIVES MAJOR GIFTS FROM

### PAUL MELLON, THE MEYERHOFFS, LICHTENSTEINS, PERLS, AND OTHERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The National Gallery of Art received major gifts in late 1996, including important Picassos from Paul Mellon, modern masterpieces from Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, a landmark collection of prints by Roy Lichtenstein from Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein, a major collection of works by Alexander Calder from Mr. and Mrs. Klaus G. Perls, key works including a Joan Mitchell painting from U.S. Congressman Sidney R. Yates and his wife, Adeline, and stunning American watercolors from the Goldstone family.

"These gifts to the nation are made by donors who care deeply about making fine art accessible to the public and we are enormously grateful to them for their contributions to our permanent collection," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "The great collections of art in museums throughout the United States would not exist without the generosity of such private citizens."

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**Paul Mellon**

Paul Mellon--in the great tradition begun by the Gallery's founder and his father, Andrew W. Mellon--donated important works by Pablo Picasso, the twentieth century's most influential and prolific artist. The primary work is The Death of Harlequin (1905), a large gouache and graphite on cardboard, painted at the close of the same year as the artist's masterpiece Family of Saltimbanques, already in the Gallery's collection. The Death of Harlequin is one of the finest gouaches from the artist's Rose period and a crucial transition to his next, more classically inspired art. It will be on view in the upcoming Gallery exhibition Picasso: The Early Years, 1892-1906, March 30 - July 27, 1997. It has an image painted in oil on the reverse side, Woman Sitting in a Garden (1901). The gift also included Picasso's Study for the Death of Harlequin (1905), a preparatory sketch in watercolor for the gouache.

**Robert and Jane Meyerhoff**

Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, renowned collectors and long-time major donors of twentieth-century art to the National Gallery, gave six paintings and two drawings that were seen in the Gallery exhibition of their collection last spring. The modern masterpieces include Autumn Gold (1957) by Hans Hofmann, an outstanding example of his mature abstract style and the first painting acquired by the Meyerhoffs; Painting with Statue of Liberty (1983) by Roy Lichtenstein, one of his largest and most

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impressive works from a group of canvases in which the artist explored two very different painting styles; Essex and Hester (Red) (1958), the first painting by Grace Hartigan to enter the Gallery's collection and a major contribution to its core holdings of abstract expressionist works; the complex and brilliantly colored La ronde des images (1977) by Jean Dubuffet, among the largest works from a cycle of grand assemblages called "Théâtres de mémoire"; and Desert Landscape (1951) by William Baziotes, which marks the midpoint in the artist's mature work and evokes a prehistoric world. In addition the Meyerhoffs gave Maneuver for Position (1947) by Bradley Walker Tomlin, painted just before the artist's turn to complete abstraction and the first work by this artist to enter the Gallery's collection, and two works on paper by Mel Bochner: First Fulcrum (1975) and Vector (1977). The paintings by Hartigan, Hofmann, and Lichtenstein are currently on view in the East Building.

#### Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein

Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein's gift of 154 prints and two books can be described as a landmark of the Gallery's collection of late twentieth-century prints. The gift includes almost every print by Roy Lichtenstein, a pioneer of Pop art, that was not previously in the Gallery's collection, from 1948 at the start of his career through 1993, the last year documented in the catalogue raisonné of his prints published in 1995 in conjunction with the Gallery retrospective of them. The gift encompasses a

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virtually complete group of his prints of the 1940s and 1950s that reveal the roots of his pop art style with two main themes: knights in armor and American Indians; a nearly complete set of his pop prints and printed objects; original posters for his early exhibitions at Leo Castelli's gallery, including several of the comic-strip blondes that still populate his iconography; important prints from major printmaking workshops; and works printed on a variety of materials, including foils and plastics, demonstrating the experimental nature of his printmaking. From 1969, most of the works are in series, such as the Entablature and American Indian Theme series. Other familiar titles of works include, Ten Dollar Bill, The Oval Office, and Crying Girl.

#### Congressman and Mrs. Yates

The Honorable Sidney R. Yates (IL) and his wife Adeline gave Joan Mitchell's painting Piano mécanique (1958), a commanding example of her early work which richly complements the Gallery's important holdings in American postwar painting; Merzmappe: Untitled, a 1923 lithograph with unique added collage elements by Kurt Schwitters; and a turning point in Joan Miró's printmaking, Fillerre, Sautant á la corde, femmes, oiseaux, a 1947 etching.

#### Mr. and Mrs. Klaus G. Perls

The partial and promised gift by Mr. and Mrs. Klaus G. Perls of thirty-five superb works by the inventor of the mobile and one of the most beloved and renowned artists of our time, Alexander Calder, includes fifteen pieces of sculpture, sixteen drawings

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and gouaches, three pieces of jewelry, and one carpet. They cover five decades of the artist's career and, when added to the late works acquired previously--including the monumental mobile commissioned in 1976 for the East Building--the Gallery's collection will cover the full historic scope of the great artist's achievement. These works will be shown in the upcoming Gallery exhibition, Alexander Calder: The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Klaus G. Perls, March 9 - May 26, 1997.

#### **Major American Works on Paper**

From the renowned New York collection of Herbert A. Goldstone, the Gallery was given three emblematic watercolors by major American artists: Edward Hopper's Haskell's House (1924), one of the best watercolors of the artist's crucial years when he achieved his mature style of strongly composed architecture in planes of sharp light; Charles Demuth's Zinnias and a Blue Dish with Lemons (1924), one of the most brilliant examples of the artist's watercolor still lifes developing complex forms of positive and negative space; and Interior (1940), Charles Sheeler's modernist transformation of his own Shaker table into an interlocking composition of precisely rendered but subtly contradictory objects and shadows.

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