

Release Date: March 1, 2002

Recent Acquisitions at the National Gallery Include Pablo Picasso's Head of Fernande and Late 15th-Century German Polychromed Wood Altarpiece

Washington, DC -- Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art, has announced acquisitions recently approved by the Gallery's board of trustees, including *Head of Fernande* (1909) by Pablo Picasso and *The Holy Kinship* (c. 1480-1490), a south German polychromed and gilded wood altarpiece now on view in Gallery 35A on the main floor of the West Building, as well as works by Thomas Girtin, Giulio Cesare Procaccini, Georgia O'Keeffe, Hyacinthe Rigaud, and Myron Stout. In 2001 nearly 1,800 objects came to the National Gallery, whose collection now comprises 106,228 works.



Pablo Picasso
*Head of
Fernande*, 1909



The Holy Kinship, c. 1480-
1490
German, Polychromed
and Gilded Wood
Altarpiece

"The first acquisitions of 2002 continue to enhance the Gallery's holdings in many areas," said Powell. "We are very pleased to acquire our first sculpture by Pablo

Picasso and our first painting by Giulio Cesare Procaccini."

Picasso's *Head of Fernande*, one of the great icons of the history of modernist sculpture, is the first important sculpture by the artist to enter the Gallery's collection. It is the only sculpture from a period of enormous significance in the history of cubism and the first example of in the artist's sculpted oeuvre that reflects serious formal experimentation: the piece shows Picasso attempting to develop the piercing and unfolding of solid form that he had already begun to develop in painting and drawing. This work, one of approximately fifteen examples from the early edition, will be on view soon in the upper level galleries of the East Building and then will go on view in the exhibition *Picasso: The Cubist Portraits of Fernande Oliver*, scheduled for September 1, 2003, through January 4, 2004 at the National Gallery of Art. This acquisition was made possible by the Gallery's Patrons' Permanent Fund and gift of Mitchell P. Rales.

The 17 carved figures depicted in *The Holy Kinship* represent the extended family of Mary and Jesus, as enumerated not in the New Testament but in the Apocrypha and later medieval writings. The unknown German sculptor shows his skill in details such as the sinuous beards and tresses and the folds of garments, and his warmth in the sensitive hands that hold books or caress children. This central group from a dismantled altarpiece of high quality, and well-preserved condition, with rich coloring and gilding, fills a considerable gap in the Gallery's collection of late Gothic, northern European sculpture. The acquisition was made possible by the Gallery's Patrons' Permanent Fund.

The Gallery has also acquired *The Ecstasy of the Magdalen* (c. 1620-1625) by Giulio Cesare Procaccini, who was among a group of outstanding Lombard artists working under the influence of Cardinal Federico Borromeo in Milan in the first quarter of the 17th century. The acquisition of this oil on canvas brings to the Gallery one of the artist's most successful compositions: the two groupings of figures relate to one another beautifully through glance and gesture. It was acquired with monies from the Gallery's Patrons' Permanent Fund.

The acquisition of *Saint Bernhardus of Siena* (c. 1450-1475), a spectacular engraving from the beginnings of European printmaking, builds on the Gallery's distinctive

collection of 15th-century prints and was made possible by the Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund. This rare and pristine impression by an anonymous German artist depicts Saint Bernhardus, a Franciscan friar who became a widely popular and intensely charismatic preacher during the first half of the 15th century. The print can be considered as the earliest-known instance of an engraved portrait.

The Gallery also acquired an incredibly rare first edition set of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's *Capricci* from the 1740s in a luxurious period binding, made possible by the Rosenwald Print Purchase Fund, and Hyacinthe Rigaud's chalk on brown paper *Monseigneur Louis-Charles d'Orleans de Saint Albin, Archbishop of Cambrai* (c. 1738), which was given to the Gallery by Diane Allen Nixon.

Thomas Girtin's *Conway Castle, North Wales* (c. 1800), an exceptionally lovely and fresh watercolor made near the end of the artist's tragically short life, provides the Gallery with a superb example of a historically significant aspect of the artist's career. In this work, the stones of the castle, the leaves on the trees, and the faceted edges of the rocks are all made distinct by the use of dotted, calligraphic touches of brown color. The acquisition was made possible by the Paul Mellon Fund.

Additional acquisitions include Georgia O'Keeffe's watercolor *Blue Hill No. 1* (1916), which was a gift from Joan and Lucio Noto and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, and Myron Stout's superb *Untitled* (1950-1951), which was one of very few highly finished charcoal drawings remaining in private hands. This work dates from early in the artist's classic period as an abstract artist and represents the inception of Stout's abandonment of color for an enduring interest in meticulous composition using spare, single forms and a palette of black and white. Funds for the purchase of this work were donated by Nancy Lee and Perry Bass

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on [Twitter](http://twitter.com/ngadc) at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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