

Release Date: November 30, 2004

## THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART CELEBRATES MAJOR NEW BOOK ON ITS WORLD-RENOWNED PAINTING COLLECTION

### Curators Present Panel with Book Signing on December 4

Washington, DC--The National Gallery of Art announces an important new publication, ***National Gallery of Art: Master Paintings from the Collection***, by John Oliver Hand, with an introduction by Gallery director Earl A. Powell III. The lavishly illustrated volume reflects the Gallery's painting collection as it exists today. Of the nearly 400 masterworks beautifully reproduced in full color in the new volume, 90 have been acquired since 1984, either received as gifts or purchased with private funds donated for acquisitions.

Covering more than seven centuries of art, from Byzantine to contemporary, the Gallery's painting collection numbers more than 3,000 works. ***National Gallery of Art: Master Paintings from the Collection*** features insightful commentary on selected highlights from the collection, including *Ginevra de' Benci* (1474), the only painting by Leonardo da Vinci in the Western hemisphere, and Jackson Pollock's seminal *Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)*.

The model and inspiration for this new book is John Walker's classic ***National Gallery of Art, Washington***, originally issued in 1975 and revised and enlarged in 1984.

"In the two decades since Walker's book was published, the National Gallery of Art has seen its painting collection expand in new directions. We are proud of the growth and vitality of one of the foremost collections of European and American painting in the world," said Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art.

## Special Lecture and Book Signing on December 4

To mark the publication of ***National Gallery of Art: Master Paintings from the Collection***, a special lecture program and book signing will be held on Saturday, December 4, at 2:00 p.m. in the East Building Auditorium. John Hand and other National Gallery of Art curators will highlight a dozen of the Gallery's masterpieces. Alan Shestack, deputy director; Philip Conisbee, senior curator, European paintings; and Kimberly Jones, associate curator, European paintings, will share the podium.

### The Growth of an Extraordinary Collection

Since its founding in 1937, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., has had as its objective the presentation of Western art from the Middle Ages to the present. Andrew W. Mellon and the founding benefactors of the Gallery set as their goal the creation of a collection of masterworks by the most renowned European and American artists. What began with Andrew W. Mellon's collection of 121 old master paintings has become an extraordinary collection of collections numbering some 108,000 objects.

Since the early 1940s the Gallery has featured its finest works of art in a succession of books for the public, none of which were more popular than the now-classic ***National Gallery of Art, Washington*** by the museum's second director, John Walker. Walker's book was among the first of its genre--the lavishly illustrated museum publication addressed to a general audience--and it became the impetus for an entire generation of books highlighting the collections of various museums around the world.

***National Gallery of Art: Master Paintings from the Collection*** showcases the painting collection as it exists at the beginning of the 21st century. Over the past two decades, the Gallery has continued to build on its strengths in Renaissance, French, and American painting, as well as expand in such areas as Italian baroque, Spanish art, and Dutch and Flemish painting. Among new additions are such important works as Jusepe de Ribera's *The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew* (1634); Bernardo Cavallino's *The Triumph of Galatea* (c. 1650); Osias Beert the Elder, *Banquet Piece with Oysters, Fruit, and Wine* (c. 1610/1620); Rembrandt Peale's *Rubens Peale with a Geranium* (1801); and Sanford Gifford's *Siout, Egypt* (1874).

In particular, the modern and contemporary art collection has seen marked growth during the past two decades. Gifts from Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, including Barnett Newman's *The Stations of the Cross* (1958), have added substantially to the museum's holdings. Artists Roy Lichtenstein and Ellsworth Kelly, among others, have made generous gifts of their own work.

The Collectors Committee, a national group of collectors and art patrons who acquire outstanding modern and contemporary works for the nation's collection with their annual gifts, has made possible the acquisition of landmark works of modern art by René Magritte and Richard Diebenkorn.

### **Author and Book Availability**

John Oliver Hand, curator of northern Renaissance painting, National Gallery of Art, is the author of ***National Gallery of Art: Master Paintings from the Collection***; the foreword is by Earl A. Powell III, Gallery director. Published by The National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with Harry N. Abrams Inc., the book is available in the Gallery Shops, from the Gallery's Web site at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov) (<http://www.nga.gov/home.htm>), or by phone at (202) 842-6002 or (800) 697-9350 for \$60 hardcover (480 pages, 425 color, 20 black-and-white illustrations).

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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) (<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](http://www.nga.gov). Follow the Gallery on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) and on Twitter at [twitter.com/ngadc](http://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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