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## National Gallery of Art Acquires Important Works by Jensen, Morris, Ruscha, Scully, Mendieta, and Taylor-Wood



Alfred Jensen  
American, 1903-1981  
*Twelve Events in a Dual Universe*, 1978  
oil on canvas  
108 x 288 inches  
Gift of the Collectors Committee, 2007

Washington, D.C. – At its annual meeting in March, the Collectors Committee of the National Gallery of Art made possible the acquisition of two key works that expand the Gallery's postwar art collection: *Twelve Events in a Dual Universe* (1978), the most ambitious painting by Alfred Jensen (1903–1981) and *Untitled* (1976), a sculpture by Robert Morris (b. 1931) from his seminal Felts series.

The Collectors Committee also funded the acquisition of *The End #68* (2006), a cinematic-like drawing in acrylic and ink by Ed Ruscha (b. 1937) (with additional support from Irwin and Ginny Edlavitch); *Etchings for Federico García Lorca* (2003), a portfolio of ten color etchings by Sean Scully (b. 1945); a 2001 etching of biomorphic forms by Martin Puryear (b. 1941); an early 1990 lithograph by Kiki Smith (b. 1954); and *Die Zeitung (Newspaper)* (1963), an etching printed on newspaper by Gerhard

Hoehme (1920–1989).

The photograph *Five Revolutionary Seconds, XIII* (1998), from a series by Sam Taylor-Wood (b. 1967) was acquired with additional support from Heather and Tony Podesta. Three works by Ana Mendieta (1948–1985) from her iconic *Siluetas* series also entered the Gallery's growing photography collection.

"The Collectors Committee enables the National Gallery of Art to continually enhance its holdings of contemporary art," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

"The painting by Jensen and the felt sculpture by Morris—both important historic works of the postwar era—as well as the photographs by Taylor-Wood and Mendieta are the first of their kind to enter the Gallery's collection."

### **"TWELVE EVENTS IN A DUAL UNIVERSE" BY ALFRED JENSEN**

During the 1960s and 1970s the fate and future of painting was an important issue among New York artists. However, as minimal sculptures and assemblages predominated the New York art scene, paintings by Alfred Jensen were acclaimed by two young artists—Donald Judd and Allan Kaprow—who were otherwise leading the assault on painting in favor of new art forms. Judd, writing in 1963, put it simply: "Jensen is great. He is one of the best painters in the United States."

The formal qualities that make Jensen so significant as a postwar painter are on display in *Twelve Events in a Dual Universe* (1978), where Jensen's long-standing exploration of color theory merges with his other interests—number systems, grid patterns, and chance structures. Together, they qualify this work as his most ambitious painting. Chromatically vibrant and sensuously thick, the two-tier, twelve-panel painting, measuring nine by twenty-four feet, bridges the concerns of pre- and postwar art with its striking use of paint as both form and material.

### **"UNTITLED" BY ROBERT MORRIS**

As a pioneer of minimal sculpture during the early 1960s, Robert Morris was one of the first artists to take into account the spatial and physical relationship between a viewer's body and a work of art. In columns, cubes, boxes, and L-beams, Morris' early works

explored the body's interaction with specific objects and forms.

By the late 1960s, Morris began making works in soft media such as felt, thread waste, and even steam, in order to explore the unusual properties of these nontraditional sculptural materials. In 1967, he began a series of works using industrial felt—seeing how it behaved when stacked, draped, folded, hung, cut into pieces, or dropped into a tangled heap. *Untitled* (1976), from the Felts series, is hung on a wall like a painting, although it has the potential to take a different shape each time it is installed, based on the arbitrary behavior of the malleable felt.

## **WORKS ON PAPER AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

Ed Ruscha's drawing *The End #68* (2006) reproduces the closing credits of an old film reel, spelled out in Gothic letters and rendered in a hazy aura, as if the phrase were literally projected onto a screen. The drawing registers a sense of age and deterioration—an effect Ruscha further heightens by meticulously depicting all the various scratches and blemishes on the film.

Sean Scully's *Etchings for Federico García Lorca* (2003) pairs the artist's richly nuanced images with the poetry of García Lorca. Martin Puryear's print, *Untitled* (2001), reflects the artist's exploration of biomorphic forms, featuring a tensile, open-ribbed structure rising from the ground. Kiki Smith's *Untitled* (1990) reveals a tangled mass of the artist's hair with indistinct profiles of Smith's face in three corners of the print, underscoring her interest in the human body. Gerhard Hoehme's *Die Zeitung (Newspaper)* (1963) presents the viewer with a veritable outbreak of information, visually compelling and at the same time psychologically daunting—what might be called "information overload."

The series *Five Revolutionary Seconds* by 1998 Turner Prize finalist, British photographer, video, and film artist Sam Taylor-Wood captures a full 360-degree image of her subjects, printed in large-format (twenty-five feet) color photographs. Using a panoramic camera mounted on a tripod, Taylor-Wood records views of interiors, peopled by subjects involved in a variety of isolated activities.

The Cuban-born American Ana Mendieta was one of the most important conceptual artists to emerge in the 1970s. She worked both with body art and earth or land art. Her most famous and important works are her Silueta (or silhouette) series, made between 1974 and 1980, in which she carved her figure into the earth or made traces of it using natural materials. The three works acquired from this series are chromogenic prints or gelatin silver prints of these carvings.

## **HISTORY OF THE COLLECTORS COMMITTEE**

The Collectors Committee has made possible the acquisition of more than three hundred works of art. Approximately half of these acquisitions have been works by living artists. Inspired by Paul Mellon, the committee was formed in 1975. Mellon asked Ruth Carter Stevenson, chairman of the Gallery's board of trustees from 1993 to 1997, to be the first chair of the Collectors Committee. Roselyne C. Swig and John Pappajohn, both major collectors of 20th-century art, currently chair the Collectors Committee. Pappajohn, who resides in Des Moines, is president of Equity Dynamics, Inc., a financial consulting firm. Swig, a San Francisco resident, is active in cultural organizations and served as director of the U.S. State Department's Art in Embassies Program.

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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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