National Gallery of Art

Office of Press and Public Information

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Films at the National Gallery of Art in Early 2010 Celebrate Dance, Chekhov, The Film Foundation's 20th Anniversary, and More



Film still from 15 Days of Dance: The Making of Ghost Light (Elliot Caplan, 2009, HDCam, 71 minutes), to be shown at the National Gallery of Art on Sunday, January 31, at 4:30 p.m. Image courtesy of the artist.

The National Gallery of Art's renowned film program kicks off 2010 with the Washington premiere of Elliot Caplan's new documentary, 15 Days of Dance: The Making of Ghost Light, as well as a two-part tribute to choreographer and cultural icon Merce Cunningham, who died last year. Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen, a series of filmic adaptations coinciding with the sesquicentennial of the famed writer's birth, opens with the Washington premiere of Ward No. Six, Russia's nominee for this year's Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. Peleshian: Poet of the Cinema is a retrospective of the work of Armenia's distinguished experimental filmmaker, fervently championed by Jean-Luc Godard. Salute to The Film Foundation at 20 honors this key organization dedicated to restoring motion picture history with three brilliant restorations. Finally, the Gallery continues its New Masters of European Cinema program with distinguished Swedish director Jan Troell, seasonal ciné-concerts, and salutes to the Flaherty Seminar and International Festival of Films on Art.

All films are shown in the East Building Auditorium. Programs are free of charge but

seating is available on a first-come, first-seated basis. Doors open approximately 30 minutes before each show. Programs are subject to change. Films are shown in original format. For current information, visit our Web site, www.nga.gov/programs/film (http://www.nga.gov/programs/film), or call (202) 842-6799.

Film Events

Ciné-Concert: Lady of the Pavements

Donald Sosin and Joanna Seaton in person Saturday, January 9, at 2:00 p.m.

An original score for piano and voice, performed by composer Donald Sosin and vocalist Joanna Seaton, accompanies D. W. Griffith's luminous *Lady of the Pavements*. Loosely based on a Karl Gustav Vollmoeller novella about a Prussian aristocrat in Paris tricked into marrying a prostitute, Griffith's final film of the silent era features William Boyd playing opposite Lupe Velez, then Hollywood's new discovery. (D. W. Griffith, 1929, 35 mm, 85 minutes)

International Festival of Films on Art

Sunday, January 10, at 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 16, at 12:30 p.m.

Award winners from the 2009 edition of the celebrated International Festival of Films on Art, an annual event in Montreal, are screened on successive weekends:

On Sunday, January 10, *Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun* (Sam Pollard, 90 minutes) precedes Nora (Alla Kovgan and David Hinton, 35 minutes), *Karsh in History* (Joseph Hillel, 52 minutes), and *Anthony Caro: La sculpture comme religion* (Alain Fleischer, 90 minutes).

On Saturday, January 16, *Oslo Opera House* (Anne Andersen, 59 minutes) precedes Boris Ryzhy (Aliona van der Horst, 59 minutes) and *Solo—Boguslaw Schaeffer* (Maciej Pisarek, 55 minutes).

15 Days of Dance: The Making of Ghost Light: Day 8, Evening

Elliot Caplan and American Ballet Theater dancers in person

Washington premiere

Sunday, January 31, at 4:30 p.m.

Day 8, Evening from Elliot Caplan's extraordinary 15 Days of Dance documentary is followed by a panel discussion with Caplan and two dancers from American Ballet Theater. Meticulously recording the process of creating a new ballet through the interactions of dancers and choreographer, the film becomes "an extended rumination on the making of art"—Ann Murphy. (Elliot Caplan, 2009, HDCam, 80 minutes)

Henry V

Sunday, February 7, at 4:30 p.m.

One of two cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare's last major history play (Laurence Olivier's 1944 rendering is the other), Kenneth Branagh's robust restaging is brilliant and balanced—even, on occasion, flashing back to *Henry IV* for context. Single-handedly reviving popular interest in reading Shakespeare, "Branagh's production was in many ways a calculated inversion of [Olivier's] earlier film, not just retaining but even emphasizing the ambiguities that Olivier deliberately removed"—British Film Institute. (Kenneth Branagh, 1989, 35 mm, 137 minutes)

Agnès Varda: Short Films

Saturday, February 13, at 3:30 p.m.

Celebrated French director, nouvelle vague forerunner, and current Academy Award nominee Agnès Varda has produced a collection of provocative short films during the course of a long career. Routinely connected to her own life history, Varda's shorts view the world through a wise and meandering mind. The program ranges from *L'Opéra mouffe* and *Du côté de la côte* (both 1958) to *Black Panthers* (1968) to *The So-called Caryatids* (1984), with many forays in between. (Total running time 120 minutes)

Love Letters and Live Wires: England's GPO Film Unit in the 1930s Sunday, February 14, at 4:30 p.m.

"If you want to see what camera and sound can really do," wrote J. B. Priestley, "you have to see some little film sponsored by the Post Office." Public service shorts by

England's legendary GPO Film Unit, all from the British Film Institute's archival collection, includes *N or NW* (Len Lye, 1937), *Love on the Wing* (Norman McLaren, 1938), *The Fairy of the Phone* (Basil Wright and William Coldstream, 1936), *The Horsey Mail* (Patrick Jackson, 1938), *Trade Tattoo* (Len Lye, 1937), *A Midsummer Day's Work* (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1939), *The Tocher* (Lotte Reiniger, 1938), and *Night Mail* (Basil Wright and Harry Watt, 1936). (Total running time 80 minutes)

Les Lutins du Court-Métrage: Festival of New French Shorts Saturday, February 20, at 4:00 p.m.

A selection of new and provocative French shorts is filled with fantasy, surprise, wit, wisdom, and beauty. There are four works, all presented in original 35 mm format: *La Difunta Corréa* (Nicolas Cambois and Sébastien Gardet, 21 minutes), *Tony Zear* (Valentin Potier, 19 minutes), *Nous* (Olivier Hems, 12 minutes), and *La vie Iointaine* (Sébastien Betbeder, 56 minutes). *Presented in collaboration with the Alliance Française of Washington*.

The Black Maria: Selections from the Festival

John Columbus in person Saturday, March 6, at 3:00 p.m.

Named for Thomas Edison's pioneering New Jersey film studio, this renowned festival competition is now in its twenty-ninth year. A selection of the festival's best new cutting-edge documentary and experimental shorts is culled from the December 2009 judging and presented by the Black Maria Festival's founding director, John Columbus. (Total running time 120 minutes)

New Masters of European Cinema: Everlasting Moments preceded by Pause in the Marshland (Uppehåll I Myrlandet)
Jan Troell in person
Sunday, March 7, at 4:30 p.m.

Swedish director Jan Troell's natural elegance of form and narrative is evident in his most recent feature. The story of Maria Larsson, a working-class mother in early twentieth-century Malmö who slowly but surely masters the new art of photography,

Everlasting Moments is shot in Troell's signature technique, sculpting light, shade and hue into a masterful whole. (Jan Troell, 2008, 35mm, Swedish and Finnish with subtitles, 131 minutes)

Araya

Saturday, March 20, at 2:00 and 4:00 p.m.

One of the more interesting restorations of 2009 was this 1959 Cannes Festival award winner, a compellingly beautiful ethnographic treatment of a community of salt harvesters and fishermen from the Araya region on Venezuela's coast. "The filmmaker feels for [their] plight but also recognizes a fascinating and surreal survivalism. That paradox finally implodes when the industrial revolution reaches Araya, and the once peaceful landscape becomes cluttered with the belching of tractors and cranes"—

Joseph Jon Lanthier. (Margot Benacerraf, 1959, 35 mm, Spanish with subtitles, 90 minutes) *Presented in association with the Environmental Film Festival*.

Home

Sunday, March 21, at 4:30 p.m.

Director Ursula Meier cast Isabelle Huppert in her ironic reverse road movie—a darkly droll fable of a lonely house on a freeway and a family that refuses to move out. Conjuring motifs from such famous roadway films as Godard's *Weekend* and Tati's *Traffic*, *Home's* amusing yet increasingly menacing mood finally triggers the family's bizarre breakdown. (Ursula Meier, 2008, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 98 minutes) *Presented in association with the Environmental Film Festival*.

Nomad's Land

Saturday, March 27, at 3:00 p.m.

Following in the footsteps of illustrious travel writer Nicolas Bouvier—whose writings about his 1950s road trips through the landscapes of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and China changed Western perceptions of the East—Swiss director Gaël Métroz makes his own discoveries as he tries to navigate Bouvier's trail. Métroz, camera in hand, diverts from that route for his own safety and joins the region's nomads for his own exploration of the sublime and the perilous. (Gaël Métroz, 2008, 35

mm, French with subtitles, 90 minutes) *Presented in association with the Environmental Film Festival.*

FILM SERIES

"What You See Is What You See"

A series of rare and remarkable documentaries from the 1960s and 1970s, presented in association with *The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works*, is inspired by Frank Stella's famous comment, "What you see is what you see."

Jasper Johns

followed by Barnett Newman

Thursday, January 7, and Friday, January 8, at 12:30 p.m.

Conversations with Jasper Johns at home in North Carolina and in his New York studio, a discussion with gallery owner Leo Castelli, and glimpses of Johns in lithographer Tatiana Grossman's workshop are contained in this rare 1960s portrait. (Lane Slate for NET, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

Barnett Newman is interviewed about his landmark series *Stations of the Cross* in the Manhattan studios of National Educational Television. (Lane Slate, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

New Abstraction: Morris Louis/Kenneth Noland

followed by New Abstraction: Frank Stella/Larry Poons

Thursday, January 14, and Friday, January 15, at 12:30 p.m.

Reflections on Morris Louis with key figures in his life including painter Helen Frankenthaler, wife Marcella Brenner, and critic Clement Greenberg are followed by Kenneth Noland's discussion of Louis and the development of his own painting practice. (Lane Slate, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

Conversations with Stella and Poons, still in their 20s, reveal the young artists' discipline and dedication to "getting down to what you need, rather than what you want" in a painting. (Lane Slate, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

Jasper Johns: Take an Object

followed by Homage to a Square: Joseph Albers

Thursday, January 21, and Friday, January 22, at 12:30 p.m.

Color footage of the artist at work with lithography plates is accompanied by excerpts from Johns' writings, read by composer and colleague John Cage. (Hans Namuth and Judith Weschler, 1990, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

Joseph Albers shares his perspective on repetition, color, and form while former students, including Robert Rauschenberg, speak of his influence as a teacher. (Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg, 1970, 16 mm, 25 minutes)

Homage to Merce Cunningham

A film and video tribute to the late cultural icon and choreography Merce Cunningham (1919–2009)—legendary dancer and "the Balanchine of his generation"—includes onstage discussions with filmmaker Elliot Caplan and media historian John Hanhardt.

Merce by Merce by Paik, Parts I and II

followed by *Walkaround Time* (Charles Atlas) Introduction by John Hanhardt Saturday, January 9, at 4:00 p.m.

Cunningham collaborated with artists throughout his career—composer John Cage and visual artists including Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Nam June Paik. *Merce by Merce* by Paik consists of *Blue Studio: Five Segments*, a short video dance by Cunningham and his filmmaker-in-residence at the time, Charles Atlas, and *Merce and Marcel*, a densely textured collage. (Nam June Paik, Charles Atlas, and Shigeko Kubota, 1978, BetaSP, 29 minutes)

Walkaround Time documents a single act choreographed by Cunningham with a set designed by Jasper Johns after Marcel Duchamp's *The Large Glass*. (Charles Atlas, 1973, 16 mm, 48 minutes)

Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen

Anton Chekhov wrote his four principal plays during cinema's first decade, 1895 to

1905. To mark the 150th anniversary of the eminent Russian writer's birth in January 1860, the National Gallery of Art is pleased to present seven Russian filmic adaptations of Chekhov's short stories and plays. The program is presented in association with Seagull Films, New York, and Mosfilm, Moscow, with special thanks to Peter Rollberg, Karen Shakhnazarov, Alla Verlotsky, and the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

An Unfinished Piece for a Player Piano

Saturday, January 16, at 4:00 p.m.

Invited to the estate of Anna Petrovna for a pastoral retreat, former lovers Sofia and Misha meet again—but for the first time in this fashionable milieu. Borrowing from several early Chekhovian stories, including *Fatherlessness* and *The Bear* and the play *Platonov*, director Nikita Mikhalkov succinctly captures the writer's 19th-century society "engaged in endless conversation that covers up its intrinsic, self-pitying paralysis"—Peter Rollberg. (Nikita Mikhalkov, 1977, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 100 minutes)

Ward No. Six

Washington premiere Karen Shakhnazarov in person Sunday, January 17, at 5:00 p.m.

Provincial asylum director Andrey Ragin becomes an inmate in his own mental ward in this updating of Chekhov's classic story *Ward No. Six*. The doctor's gradual psychological estrangement in this present-day retelling stems from the ills of a newly materialistic, neocapitalist society. For Chekhov, that estrangement was a metaphor for loss of faith in the promise of science. *Ward No. Six* is Russia's nominee for Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. (Karen Shakhnazarov, 2009, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 83 minutes)

Uncle Vanya

Saturday, January 23, at 2:30 p.m.

Chekhov's dramatic tour de force of frustrated longing in a family about to break apart was adapted for cinema by Andrei Konchalovsky with his gifted cast that included Innokenti Smoktunovsky as Vanya and Sergei Bondarchuk as Dr. Astrov. "If the film

begins with brutal realism, it ends with a soaring camera, a calm omniscient visitor to the country dacha, placing Chekhov's idle rich and the starving masses outside the frame"—Albert Johnson. (Andrei Konchalovsky, 1970, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 104 minutes)

A Hunting Accident (My Loving and Tender Beast)

Sunday, January 24, at 4:30 p.m.

Emil Loteanu's haunting adaptation of Chekhov's *The Shooting Party*—with its exotic aura and sensational plot—created uproar in literary and film circles on its release. "To be sure, *The Shooting Party* was a curiosity in Chekhov's oeuvre, his only completed novel and a mystery thriller at that. Although Chekhov's authorship of the story was firmly established, it is revealing that he did not include it in any of his collected works . . . writing it, more than likely, to earn money"—Peter Rollberg. (Emil Loteanu, 1978, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 109 minutes)

The Seagull

Saturday, January 30, at 2:30 p.m.

Friction among four characters—the fading actress Irina Arkadina, her lover Tregorin, her son Konstantin, and the ingenue Nina—provide fodder for one of Chekhov's major dramatic works. A sensation when performed at the Moscow Art Theatre's debut season in 1898, *The Seagull* has been adapted for film several times. Karasik's elaborate production, one of the best, was bolstered by performances from three of the former Soviet Union's finest actors—Alla Demidova, Yuri Yakovlev, and Lyudmila Saveleyva. (Yuli Karasik, 1970, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 99 minutes)

The Lady with the Dog

Introduction by Peter Rollberg
Saturday, February 6, at 2:30 p.m.

A Moscow banker (Alexei Batalov) and a young woman (Iya Sawina) meet and fall in love on holiday in Yalta but are reluctant to give up their lives at home with respective spouses. This gentle, wistful tale—filmed 50 years ago and filled with thoughtful insight—is a beloved Chekhov adaptation and, in the words of one reviewer, "a rich period

portrait and brilliant study of passion deferred." (losif Kheifitz, 1960, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 89 minutes)

Chekhovian Motifs

Saturday, February 13, at 2:30 p.m.

Kira Muratova's avant-garde approach to Chekhov—combining themes from the one-act play *Tatiana Repina* (1889) and short story *Difficult People* (1886)—transfers the action to contemporary post-Soviet times. Exploiting the sinister side of familial and social relationships in a small Russian village, the film "pushes Muratova's style to the extreme, following the entire process of a Russian Orthodox marriage in real time. . . . she seems to be making a statement about the trivialization of spirituality"—Ruslan Janumyan. (Kira Muratova, 2002, digital beta transfer from 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 120 minutes)

Peleshian: Poet of the Cinema

Artavazd Peleshian, Armenia's distinguished cinematic poet, is deeply rooted in the history of his homeland yet completely universal in his reach. During a long career that began in the Soviet period, Peleshian—who developed his own distinctive style for assembling and scoring his material—has crafted a body of iconic cinematic essays that contemplate the spiritual aspects of nature, history, and human life. Similar to his friend Sergei Paradjanov, Peleshian (b. 1938) is a national treasure in Armenia and unlike any other filmmaker working today. *Special thanks to Melik Karapatahan, Kinoproject, Alla Kovgan, and the Harvard Film Archive.*

The Beginning

followed by **We, The Inhabitants**, and **Life** Saturday, February 20, at 2:00 p.m.

A thought-provoking deliberation on the 1917 October Revolution, *The Beginning* (1967) is followed by *We* (1969), a perceptive portrait on Armenian identity and fate; *The Inhabitants* (1970), a musing on the relationships of living things who inhabit the earth; and *Life* (1993), a profound visual essay on the experience of human birth. (Total running time 60 minutes)

The Seasons

followed by Our Century and The End Sunday, February 21, at 4:00 p.m.

The Seasons (1975), an essay on the ironies and harmonies of man and nature expressed through shepherds working in the Armenian highlands, is followed by *Our Century* (1982), a 50-minute ciné-poem fabricated from archival footage on the effect of present-day human endeavor. The program concludes with *The End* (1994), a tour de force of editing and an emblematic train ride through the darkness. (Total running time 90 minutes)

In Praise of Independents: The Flaherty

The Flaherty Seminar, the celebrated annual critical forum for filmmakers, artists, students, and scholars now in its 55th year, was named for the great American maverick filmmaker Robert Flaherty. The National Gallery of Art salutes this annual event with a two-day selection of works from the 2009 seminar, "Witnesses, Monuments, Ruins." *Special thanks to Linda Lilienfeld, Mary Baron, and Mary Kerr.*

Wedding of Silence

followed by White Sky

Saturday, February 27, at 2:00 p.m.

Wedding of Silence's vignettes from inside a St. Petersburg community portray daily life among neighbors who live, literally, in silence—men do not hear the din of their foundry and women do not hear their children. Yet, their lives are as rich and vibrant as lives anywhere in the city. (Pavel Medvedev, 2003, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 28 minutes)

White Sky's focus is the life of a family in the Russian city of Monchegorsk, home to a large nickel plant and one of the world's most polluted towns. "A tale of modern values, human dignity tied to work and productivity, and our ability to accept environmental risks as an inevitable part of life"—États généraux du film documentaire. (Susanna Helke

and Virpi Suutari, 1998, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 54 minutes)

The Chickens (al-Dajaj)

preceded by *Kristallnacht* and *Flaherty and Film*Saturday, February 27, at 3:45 p.m.

An artist's poetic tribute to the "tenacity of the human spirit," *Kristallnacht* was dedicated to the memory of Anne Frank. (Chick Strand, 1979, 16 mm, 7 minutes)

A surprising work of mordant social commentary, *The Chickens*—produced by Syria's state television just as official policies were starting to favor industrial production over the cottage trades—ostensibly shows the new chicken-farming industry in a village in the steppe. (Omar Amiralay, 1977, 16 mm transfer to digital beta, subtitles, 40 minutes)

In *Flaherty and Film* ethnographer Robert Gardner interviews Francis Flaherty (widow of Robert) about her husband's working methods and, in particular, his difficulties in filming Moana in the 1920s. (NET, 1960, 16 mm, 16 minutes)

Sweetgrass

Sunday, February 28, at 4:30 p.m.

Documenting the life and labor of Montana's sheepherding Allestad family—the last of their kind, recorded just as local herding was coming to an end—the filmmakers eschewed any voiceover commentary in favor of a considered observational style. Spectacular beauty, irony, adversity, and even humor are brought into play as *Sweetgrass* journeys deep into a world governed by ritual, tradition, and nature itself. (Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, 2009, 35 mm, 105 minutes)

Salute to The Film Foundation at 20

The Film Foundation is the key nonprofit organization in America dedicated to preserving our collective motion picture heritage through partnerships with major film archives (Academy Film Archive, Anthology Film Archives, George Eastman House, Library of Congress, Museum of Modern Art, UCLA Film & Television Archive, and the National Film Preservation Foundation). Founded in 1990 by Martin Scorsese and a group of prominent filmmakers, The Film Foundation has identified and funded the

preservation and restoration of over 525 motion pictures. Together with American Express, the foundation presents the Preservation Screening Program to bring these restored films to cities and festivals across North America. The National Gallery is pleased to salute the foundation's accomplishments on the occasion of its 20th anniversary year.

Drums Along the Mohawk

Saturday, March 13, at 3:00 p.m.

John Ford's first color film, inspired by Walter D. Edmonds' historical novel, portrays settlers on New York's 18th-century frontier through a remarkable roster of actors headed by Henry Fonda and Claudette Colbert. This commanding "display of Ford's skill" (Jean-Loup Bourget) was restored by the Academy Film Archive in cooperation with Twentieth Century Fox, with funding provided by The Film Foundation. (John Ford, 1939, 35 mm, 103 minutes)

The Red Shoes

Sunday, March 14, at 4:30 p.m.

Originally released in the late 1940s, this most beloved of all ballet movies required three years to restore. Weaving together the tragic tale of a determined young dancer (Moira Shearer) with that of the Hans Christian Andersen story, *The Red Shoes* is "the most dazzling flight of fantasy in Powell and Pressburger's career, and scarcely matched in the British cinema"—British Film Institute. Restored by the UCLA Film & Television Archive in association with British Film Institute, The Film Foundation, ITV Global Entertainment Ltd., and Janus Films with funding from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, The Film Foundation, and the Louis B. Mayer Foundation. (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1948, 35 mm, 133 minutes)

Senso

Sunday, March 28, at 4:30 p.m.

The Film Foundation joined several European agencies (including StudioCanal, Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia-Cineteca Nazionale, and Cineteca di Bologna-L'Immagine Ritrovata) to restore one of Luchino Visconti's most treasured works set

during the Risorgimento. With its unforgettable opening sequence in Venice's La Fenice, Senso features Alida Valli and Farley Granger as the famous lovers whose ill-fated passion destroys itself in a world that is fading away. Funding provided by Gucci, The Film Foundation, and Comitato Italia 150. (Luchino Visconti, 1954, 35 mm, Italian with subtitles, 123 minutes)

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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 at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter 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.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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