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National Gallery of Art Acquires Important Works Across Media by Adams, Moran, Whistler, Vasari, Sweerts, Le Va, and More



Robert Adams, American, born 1937

Kerstin enjoying the wind. East of Keota, Colorado, 1969

gelatin silver print

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Washington, DC—At its most recent meeting in May, the National Gallery of Art's Board of Trustees accepted an impressive number of new acquisitions, augmenting the collections of paintings, sculpture, works on paper, and photographs. These new works included a collection of 169 photographs by Robert Adams hand-selected by the artist; the Gallery's first watercolor by Thomas Moran; its first paintings by Giorgio Vasari and Hendrik Willem Mesdag; a newly attributed portrait drawing by Michael Sweerts; and a major sculpture by Barry Le Va.

"There are a good number of 'firsts' in this exciting round of acquisitions, ranging from Giorgio Vasari's larger-than-life paintings of Saint Luke and Saint Mark and Thomas Moran's extraordinary watercolor *Mountain of the Holy Cross*, to Barry Le Va's post-minimalist sculpture. We are also pleased to add an important group of gelatin silver

prints of America's changing landscape by Robert Adams, which joins the Gallery's major holdings of works by fellow luminaries of American photography such as Alfred Stieglitz, Robert Frank, and Harry Callahan," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are dependent on the continuing generosity of private donors to continue building the nation's art collection—now standing at nearly 127,000 works—and we are enormously grateful."

169 Gelatin Silver Prints by Robert Adams

The department of photographs acquired 169 gelatin silver prints by Robert Adams (b. 1937), who has recorded America's changing landscape for more than 40 years, revealing both its sublime beauty and its wanton destruction. This group of photographs was carefully selected by the artist himself to complement the 25 works by him that the Gallery already holds and to represent his most important accomplishments. This extraordinary collection includes key photographs from each of his books, as well as 16 others from throughout his career. Adams made this group available to the Gallery because he believes "these photographs can tell Americans something they might want to know about their country" and because he wants these works to be in the nation's capital. These photographs were purchased from Fraenkel Gallery by the National Gallery of Art with funds from the Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and the Ahmanson Foundation, as well as a gift from Robert and Kerstin Adams.

Thomas Moran's *Mountain of the Holy Cross*

The extraordinary watercolor *Mountain of the Holy Cross* (1890) by Thomas Moran (1837–1926) is the most important work by the artist to come to light in many years. It was unknown at the time of the Gallery's 1997 Moran retrospective and has never been exhibited publicly or published. Commissioned in 1890 by philanthropist Caroline Phelps Stokes, the painting remained with her descendants for more than 100 years. This stellar watercolor joins three oil paintings, one drawing, and 15 prints by Moran in the Gallery's collection, including an 1888 etching of the same scene. The acquisition of *Mountain of the Holy Cross* was made possible by the Avalon Fund, Florian Carr Fund, Barbara and Jack Kay Fund, and Gift of Max and Heidi Berry.

Drawings by Whistler and Sweerts

Other works on paper acquired include one of the greatest pastels of Venice by James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), *White and Pink (The Palace)* (1879/1880). The residence has been identified as the Palazzo da Mosta; the drawing is signed with the artist's butterfly device and retains its original Whistler frame. Also remarkable is the pastel's provenance: it was purchased from Whistler between 1881 and 1904 by the distinguished American collector Louisine Havemeyer. Its acquisition by the Gallery has been made possible by the Paul Mellon Fund and the Patrons' Permanent Fund. The Gallery has also acquired a portrait in black chalk of Jan van den Enden (c. 1651), one of the most powerful portrait drawings made in mid-baroque Rome. Based on the stylistic evidence, Gallery experts have formally attributed this work to Flemish artist Michael Sweerts (1618–1664), and it thus becomes the first drawing reasonably attributed to that important Flemish baroque painter. The acquisition of *Jan van den Enden* was made possible by the New Century Fund and William B. O'Neal Fund.

***Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* Volume of Prints Nearly Completes Set**

With its recent purchase of a volume of the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* (*Mirror of Roman Magnificence*), the Gallery has doubled its holdings of this landmark of Renaissance printmaking, giving it one of the most complete sets in existence. The newly acquired volume consists of 52 engravings and etchings made between 1544 and 1572 along with three later 16th-century plates. The plates include depictions of critical ancient works as well as the earliest views of much of the celebrated architecture of the time, especially that by Michelangelo. In 2000 the Gallery acquired a volume with 55 different plates from the *Speculum*. Their identical 18th-century German bindings and the continuous numbering of their pages prove that the two volumes come from the same set, thus reconstructing much of the appearance of a very early collection of the *Speculum*. This acquisition was made possible by the Ahmanson Foundation Fund.

Paintings by Giorgio Vasari, Father of Art History

Although Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) is best known as the author of *Le vite de' più*

eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori (Lives of the Artists) published in 1550 and 1568. The so-called father of art history was also a prolific painter, draftsman, architect, and collector. Damon Mezzacappa has given the Gallery its first paintings by Vasari, *Saint Luke* and *Saint Mark* (both 1570–1571), in memory of Elizabeth Mezzacappa. These works, part of a commission for the Vatican's Torre Pio from Pope Pius V, join a sheet of drawings from Vasari's famed *Libro de' Disegni* and first editions of *Le vite* already in the Gallery's collection. *Saint Luke* and *Saint Mark* are currently undergoing conservation treatment and will be receiving new frames.

Second Major Hague School Painting

The Gallery has also acquired its first work by Dutch artist Hendrik Willem Mesdag (1831–1915)—the 1894 oil on canvas titled *Sunset at Scheveningen: A Fleet of Fishing Vessels at Anchor*. Currently on view in the East Building's Small French Paintings galleries, this luminous work joins the Gallery's *View of the Mill and Bridge on the Noordwest Buitensingel in The Hague* (1873) by Jacob Maris (1837–1899) as its second major painting of the Hague school, expanding the 19th-century collection beyond its French confines. This acquisition was made possible by the Paul Mellon Fund and the Frank Anderson Trapp Fund.

Post-minimalist Sculpture by Barry Le Va

The Gallery gained its first sculpture by the American artist Barry Le Va (b. 1941), one of the first sculptors to work in a post-minimalist manner. An assemblage of gray felt, aluminum lengths, and steel ball bearings, *Equal Quantities: Placed or Dropped In, Out, and On in Relation to Specific Boundaries* (1967) is the Gallery's first example of "scatter" sculpture by one of the inventors of this form. The Gallery also owns two photo pieces by Le Va. The sculpture will be installed in the East Building Concourse galleries in the coming months. The acquisition of this sculpture was made possible by the Patrons' Permanent Fund and the Edward E. MacCrone Fund.

Important Thesaurus Painting by Mel Bochner

On the occasion of the exhibition *In the Tower: Mel Bochner*, on view at the National Gallery from November 6, 2011, to April 29, 2012, Anita and Burton Reiner have

promised the Gallery one of Bochner's most significant thesaurus works: *Master of the Universe* (2010). It is the first of four large diptychs that Bochner (b. 1940) in 2010–2011 created in advance of the exhibition, where these works were placed on public view for the first time. The Gallery holds a number of works by Bochner, including the wall drawing *Theory of Boundaries* (1969–1970), works on paper, and three photographs. *Master of the Universe* is the first of the artist's paintings on canvas to enter the collection.

Contemporary Still Life by William Bailey

Another important first is the Gallery's acquisition of a painting by William Bailey (b. 1930). Mixing utilitarian and decorative vessels on an earth-toned background, *Piano Scuro* (2003) is a prime example of the still lifes for which this contemporary realist painter is best known. It joins 16 prints by Bailey in the Gallery's collection and will go on view this summer in the East Building Concourse galleries. This acquisition was made possible by the Charina Endowment Fund.

Works from Mrs. Paul Mellon

The board was delighted to receive the news that Mrs. Paul Mellon has released her life interest in eight works to the Gallery: William Merritt Chase (1849–1916), *Gathering Autumn Flowers* (1894/1895), oil on canvas; Winslow Homer (1836–1910), *East Hampton Beach, Long Island* (1874), oil on canvas, and *Three Fisher Girls, Tynemouth* (1881), pencil and watercolor; Eastman Johnson (1824–1926), *Lambs, Nantucket* (1874), oil on board; Odilon Redon (1840–1916), *Village by the Sea in Brittany* (c. 1880), oil on cardboard laid on masonite; Georges Seurat (1859–1891), *Seascape (Gravelines)* (1890), oil on panel; Eugene Boudin (1824–1898), *Crinoline sur la plage de Trouville* (c. 1865), watercolor; and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), *Verre, as de trèfle et poire coupée* (1914), collage, charcoal and gouache.

Study Rooms

Works on paper not on display may be viewed and studied by appointment in the Gallery's Print Study Rooms or Photograph Study Room by qualified scholars and students in accordance with the Gallery's rules and requirements. Single visitors as well

as small groups are welcome.

The Study Rooms are open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to noon and 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., except federal holidays.

To make an appointment to view prints or drawings, please telephone (202) 842-6380.

To make an appointment to view photographs, please e-mail photographs@nga.gov or telephone (202) 842-6144. Appointments should be made at least two weeks in advance.

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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:

Press Office

National Gallery of Art

2000B South Club Drive

Landover, MD 20785

phone: (202) 842-6353 e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Deborah Ziska

Chief of Press and Public Information

(202) 842-6353

ds-ziska@nga.gov