

Release Date: March 14, 2014

Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker's Pledge to Transform the National Gallery of Art's Photography Collection



Thomas Demand, *Clearing*, 2003, chromogenic print, 75.5 x 195 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington, © Thomas Demand / Artists' Rights Society (ARS), New York / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, Collection of Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker

Washington, DC—A pledged gift from the collection of leading art collectors Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker will transform the National Gallery of Art's holdings of contemporary photographs. The promised gift features 30 large-scale, seminal photographs by Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth, Thomas Demand, Jeff Wall, Cindy Sherman, and Hiroshi Sugimoto, among others.

"In combination, the scale of the photographs and the brilliance of their color allow for new insights into the traditional divisions between photography and painting," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "This generous pledge from Robert Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker is truly one of our most significant photography donations to date."

The donation will give the Gallery its first-ever examples in any medium by critically important artists Marina Abramovic, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, Catherine Opie, Thomas Ruff, Cindy Sherman, and Jeff Wall. The gift will also double the Gallery's collection of work by Vera Lutter and Vik Muniz, and significantly expand its representation of Thomas Demand and Thomas Struth. The Meyerhoff/Becker collection also includes significant works by other important contemporary photographers as well as artists working in a variety of media, such as John Baldessari and Anselm Kiefer.

The entire Meyerhoff/Becker collection is to be shown upon the reopening of the East Building in 2016.

The Düsseldorf School

The Meyerhoff/Becker collection is particularly rich in photographs by the famed Düsseldorf School, a group that rose to prominence in the 1980s. Their work is characterized by a seemingly objective, straightforward style and the use of large-scale, vibrantly colored prints. Three works by Thomas Demand, two by Andreas Gursky, three by Candida Höfer, two by Thomas Ruff, and six by Thomas Struth, greatly strengthens the Gallery's representation of this important movement. On average, these photographs measure five-by-seven feet—a scale indebted to radical advances in digital technology that enabled artists from the late 20th century onward to make prints of increasingly larger sizes. Many of the Meyerhoff/Becker photographs are face-mounted to plexiglass, which adds a dazzling luminosity to the pictures.

Among the most outstanding examples of the Düsseldorf School in the Meyerhoff/Becker collection are four pictures from Thomas Struth's *Museum Photographs*, a series that examines

AVAILABLE PRESS IMAGES

Order Press Images

To order publicity images: Click on the link above and designate your desired images using the checkbox below each thumbnail. Please include your name and contact information, press affiliation, deadline for receiving images, the date of publication, and a brief description of the kind of press coverage planned.

PRESS KIT

Press Release

The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works
October 1, 2009—May 2, 2010

ONLINE RESOURCES

Exhibition Pages:

[The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works](#)
[The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: 1945-1995](#)

PRESS CONTACTS

Press Contact

Emily Bond
(202) 842-6598
e-bond@nga.gov

Chief Press Officer

Deborah Ziska
(202) 842-6353
ds-ziska@nga.gov

the ways in which viewers of works of art are not merely consumers of the past, but are also active participants in its reinterpretation. *Alte Pinakothek (Self-Portrait), Munich (2000)* depicts the artist standing in front of one of Germany's most iconic images: Albrecht Dürer's self-portrait. The result is two German artists examining each other across the span of 500 years.

Equally notable is Thomas Demand's *Clearing (2003)*, a stunning view of light filtering through a forest. To create this work, Demand constructed a handmade forest in a steel frame approximately 50 feet long, 18 feet high, and 32 feet deep, using 270,000 individual pieces of dye-cut paper. He illuminated the construction with intense studio lighting and captured the scene in a photograph that measures 6-by-16 1/2 feet.

Bernd and Hilla Becher

The Meyerhoff/Becker Collection also includes a grid of nine photographs by Bernd and Hilla Becher, the professors at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf who inspired the Düsseldorf School of photographers. Drawing their inspiration in part from the American New Topographic photographs of the 1970s, these photographers are known for dispassionate, documentary-like examinations of cityscapes and interiors, as well as portraiture.

The Meyerhoff Collection and the National Gallery of Art

In 1987 the National Gallery of Art announced that Robert and Jane Meyerhoff (1924-2004) had signed an agreement with the National Gallery of Art providing the terms for the eventual donation of the entire collection to the Gallery. It includes an unsurpassed holding of art by Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, Ellsworth Kelly, and Brice Marden, among others.

From March through July 1996, the Gallery displayed a number of these works in an exhibition entitled *The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: 1945 to 1995*. The Gallery also exhibited the Meyerhoff collection from October 2009 through May 2010 in the exhibition *The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works*. The later exhibition was curated by Harry Cooper, curator and head of modern art.

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 at 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 remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/modern-art-during-renovation.html>.

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

If you are a member of the press and would like to be added to our press list, [click here](#).

Subscribe to Our Free E-mail Newsletters

Stay up to date with the National Gallery of Art by [subscribing to our free e-mail newsletters](#):
Web, educators, family programs, fellowships/internships, films, lectures, music programs, and
teen programs. Select as many updates as you wish to receive. To edit your subscriber
information, please go to our [subscription management page](#).

[About](#) | [Opportunities](#) | [Press](#) | [NGA Images](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Notices](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Audio/Video](#)