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Rare Portrait by Mary Cassatt, Lewis Carroll Photograph, Jan Molenaer's Self-Portrait, and Gifts from Harry W. Havemeyer Join the Collection of the National Gallery of Art



Arshile Gorky, *Untitled (Cubist Figure)*, c. 1930  
gouache and collage on board  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ruth and Jacob Kainen Memorial Fund

Washington, DC—A rare early portrait by Mary Cassatt (1844–1926), a self-portrait by Jan Miense Molenaer (1610–1668), a groundbreaking work by Arshile Gorky (1904–1948), and a remarkable photograph of Alice and Lorina Liddell by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832–1898), better known as Lewis Carroll, are among works recently acquired by the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Three rare illustrated books and a portfolio, all highlighting aspects of the New World, were donated by Harry W. Havemeyer in memory of his father, Horace Havemeyer. Harry W. Havemeyer also pledged an extraordinary collection of 117 early American views and historical prints assembled by him and his father, in whose memory the pledge was made.

“We are delighted with the acquisition of these key works by Mary Cassatt, Jan Miense Molenaer, Arshile Gorky, and Lewis Carroll, as well as the exquisite gift from Harry Havemeyer in memory of his father Horace. Harry W. Havemeyer and his brother Horace Havemeyer, Jr., also donated Johannes Vermeer’s masterpiece, *A Lady Writing* (c. 1665) to the Gallery in 1962, among other works, in their father’s memory,” said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

#### Havemeyer Donations and Promised Gifts

An outstanding book included in the Havemeyer gift is a remarkably fine and unusually complete copy of Joseph F. W. Des Barres’s *The Atlantic Neptune* (London, 1780–1781), comprising four volumes bound in two monumental folios. *The Atlantic Neptune* transformed mapmaking, bringing a new level of scientific accuracy to the field. It also raised the bar for cartographic design, featuring hand-colored printed views and superbly engraved calligraphy, an overall melding of text and imagery that adds enormous visual appeal.

This donation is made more remarkable for its having been accompanied by a major promised gift—a distinguished collection of 117 early American views and historical prints assembled by Harry W. Havemeyer and his father, Horace Havemeyer. Considered one of the finest collections of early American prints in private hands, it includes such important and rare works as Amos Doolittle’s (1754–1832) set of four hand-colored engravings from 1775 depicting the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The present set has a remarkable provenance: it was given by Doolittle to a Capt. Daniel Harrington, who fought in the Battle of Lexington, and remained in the Harrington family for five generations until it was offered for sale to Horace Havemeyer in 1945.

#### Paintings

*Eddy Cassatt* (1875), a portrait of Edward Buchanan Cassatt, the eldest son of Mary Cassatt’s brother Alexander, offers a striking complement to Cassatt’s later painting *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair* (1878), also in the Gallery’s collection. This painting, which has remained in the family of Col. Edward Buchanan Cassatt since its creation, is a gift from his granddaughter—the artist’s great-grandniece—Julie Thayer Vehr.

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*Self-Portrait as a Lute Player* (c. 1635) depicts Jan Miense Molenaer wearing a wide-brimmed hat and quietly tuning his lute, an activity that symbolically suggests the sitter's commitment to conduct his life in a balanced and harmonious manner. On the table next to him is a still life depicting an array of foods, vessels, smoking implements, and a *pochette* (a small violin). The self-portrait of Molenaer, on view in the West Building Dutch and Flemish Cabinet Galleries, joins another self-portrait of his wife, artist Judith Leyster, already in the Gallery's collection.

This painting was purchased courtesy of The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund.

The Gallery also acquired Georg Emil Libert's (1820–1908) *View of Sommerspiret, the Cliffs of Møn* (1846). This pristine landscape depicts the dramatic topography, bright blue Danish sky, and small figures beholding the marvelous scene that is characteristic of this moment in the history of landscape painting.

This painting was purchased courtesy of Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund.

### **Drawings, Prints, and Illustrated Books**

Previously owned by his widow and children, *Untitled (Cubist Figure)* (c. 1930) shows Arshile Gorky wrestling with the abstract works of Picasso's analytic cubism. While the work, which is essentially a painting on paper, is largely abstract, a female nude is nonetheless recognizable from her triangular and circular breasts and rounded hips. Gorky also affixed collage elements—texts he tore from an art journal—to the work, evoking Picasso's and Braque's use of newspaper fragments in their classic cubist collages. Gorky furthermore added dense patterns of hatch marks, forecasting his next stage of development in the series *Nighttime*, *Enigma*, and *Nostalgia*.

This work on paper was purchased courtesy of Ruth and Jacob Kainen Memorial Fund.

### **Photographs**

Among the many photography acquisitions is a photograph by Lewis Carroll, *Alice and Lorina Liddell in Chinese Dress* (1860). This iconic photograph of Alice, the little girl who inspired Carroll's masterwork of children's literature, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, shows her with her older sister. The girls are posed wearing arresting costumes, evoking the theatricality of Victorian photography and the protean qualities of childhood that Carroll nurtured in his writings.

This photograph was purchased courtesy of Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund, Robert Menschel and the Vital Projects Fund, The Ahmanson Foundation, and New Century Fund.

### **Sculptures**

*Beaux Chair* (1975), by Ree Morton (American 1936–1977), belongs to a series of works by the artist in a variety of materials featuring a bow form. Using the homophone “beaux” in the title—an adjective meaning “beautiful” in French and a noun meaning “boyfriend” in English—the artist introduces an ambiguity to the feminized form. This work is the first by the artist to enter the Gallery's collection.

This sculpture was given by Pam Adler, Cynthia Carlson, and Barbara Zucker.

Betye Saar (b. 1926) created *Twilight Awakening* on a recycled printer's block and incorporated jewel-like elements made of plastic, ceramic, and glass. The work depicts Aquarius, the water bearer, suspended between the sun, the moon, the Earth, and the oceans; it is the second work by Saar to enter the Gallery's collection.

This sculpture was given by Francine Farr in honor of Samella Lewis, with gratitude to Scripps College.

### **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. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov). Follow the Gallery on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt), Twitter at [www.twitter.com/ngadc](http://www.twitter.com/ngadc), and Instagram at <http://instagram.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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