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Remarkable Painting by Frans Van Mieris, Early Portrait by Alex Katz, Stunning Dutch Trompe l'Oeil Painting, and an Exemplary Artist's Book by Joan Miró Enter the Collection of the National Gallery of Art



Frans van Mieris
An Interior with a Soldier Smoking a Pipe, c. 1657
oil on panel
32.4 x 25.4 cm (12 3/4 x 10 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington
The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund/The Folger Fund

Washington, DC—At its January 2016 Board of Trustees meeting, the National Gallery of Art acquired a number of works including an extraordinary painting by Dutch master Frans van Mieris (1635–1681), an early portrait by Alex Katz (b. 1927) of his wife, Ada, a remarkable trompe l'oeil painting by an unknown 17th-century Dutch artist, and a deluxe-format artist's book with 80 woodcuts by Joan Miró (1893–1983).

The Gallery also acquired works on paper by Edvard Munch (1863–1944), Jim Dine (b. 1935), and Sam Francis (1923–1994) and photographs by Dora Maar (1907–1997), Rogi André (1905–1970), and Idris Khan (b. 1978). At this meeting, the Gallery accessioned 331 works of art from the Corcoran Gallery of Art including a painting by Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975) and photographs by Andy Warhol (1928–1987).

"We are delighted with the acquisition of these important works by Frans van Mieris, Alex Katz, Joan Miró, and others, which strengthen the Gallery's collection," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are grateful as well to our donors whose continuing generosity deepens and enriches the nation's art collection."

Paintings

Frans van Mieris was one of the most celebrated Dutch Golden Age painters. His elegant works were marked by smooth execution, invisible brushwork, and extraordinary attention to detail. In his beautifully preserved *An Interior with a Soldier Smoking a Pipe* (c. 1657) he displays all the qualities that earned him his fame. Intimate in scale and humorous in subject—the roguish soldier has apparently just bested a companion in a game of cards—it possesses a high degree of refinement, particularly in the soldier's aubergine costume and the gold fringe of a nearby cloak. The painting comes with a remarkable provenance, having once belonged to the Elector of Saxony, August the Strong (1670–1733) from whom it went by descent to the Kings of Saxony and ultimately entered the Gemäldegalerie Dresden. The Dresden museum deaccessioned the painting in 1927 to the Gallery van Diemen, which sold it later that same year to a private collector in Germany. The painting remained in that family until 2008, when it was auctioned by Sotheby's in London and entered a private English collection. The National Gallery of Art acquired this masterpiece through the generosity of Lee and Julie Folger/The Folger Fund.

Alex Katz's *Portrait of Ada* (1959), his wife and muse, represents a breakthrough in his approach to the figure, one that revolutionized his art. Cropped dramatically with lively brushwork and slight asymmetries, this painting combines an early pop awareness of advertising imagery and posed snapshots with the immediacy of direct observation.

This painting was purchased courtesy of the Avalon Fund.

Trompe l'Oeil of an Etching by Ferdinand Bol (c. 1675) is the illusionistic tour de force of an unidentified 17th-century Dutch artist. The painting depicts a wooden plank with an etching by Ferdinand Bol affixed with a red wax seal. By using toned glazes and carefully built-up pigments, the artist masterfully imitated the look of the pine wood panel with its rough grain and knots. He also rendered the crinkles and creases of the print so convincingly that it looks like a real piece of paper.

This painting was purchased with a fund given in honor of Derald Ruttenberg's grandchildren.

Drawings, Prints, Illustrated Books, and Photographs

In 1947 Joan Miró began a collaboration with the surrealist poet Paul Éluard to produce *À toute épreuve*, one of the 20th century's most enchantingly beautiful books and among Miró's greatest. The deluxe-format volume features 80 woodcuts in brilliant color, some with collage elements—torn papers, butcher's paper, 19th-century wood engravings, and more—pasted on individual pages. Published in 1958, *À toute épreuve* is a visual and tactile delight and a triumph of book illustration.

The artist's book was purchased with the Eugene L. and Marie-Louise Garbáty Fund, Ahmanson Foundation Fund, and the Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund.

Given to the Gallery as a gift of The Epstein Family Collection are four extraordinary Edvard Munch prints. Exceptional in ink color and richness of printing, *The Kiss* (1895) is probably the finest impression in existence of this characteristic subject. In the *Old Woman with Umbrella* (1902), Munch transforms a modest image into an especially vigorous experiment with intaglio printmaking. Conventional by comparison, two portrait prints—*Linde Sons* (1902) and *Munch and Director Ludvig Didrichsen* (1916)—involve important figures in Munch's life as an artist. Ophthalmologist Dr. Max Linde was one of his principal patrons, while Ludvig Didrichsen owned and directed a lithographic print shop.

An outstanding work by the abstract-expressionist Sam Francis was a gift from the Sam Francis Foundation at the bequest of Robert Shapazian. Painted in acrylic on heavy white paper, *Untitled* from the artist's *Mandala* series (1976–1977), features a loosely rectangular form, positioned slightly off-center and surrounded by splashes of liquid color. In January 2015 the Gallery acquired its first two unique works on paper by Francis—drawings made with acrylic and gouache—from the collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

Among Jim Dine's best early collages, and donated to the Gallery by Milly and Arne Glimcher, *Shellac Orientale* (1973–1974) reveals the artist's substantial talents as a draftsman and wonderful inventiveness as an artist. Including everything from screw heads to human hair, the drawing and collage was featured in the Gallery's 2004 exhibition, *The Drawings of Jim Dine*.

The Gallery also acquired its first photograph by Dora Maar, *Christian Bérard's Head Posed at the Edge of Basin of Water, Appearing to Float in the Water at the House of la Vicomtesse de Noailles* (c. 1935), along with a powerful portrait of Maar by Rogi André from 1941, both through the Robert Menschel and the Vital Projects Funds. Idris Khan's *Every...Bernd and Hilla Becher Spherical Type Gasholder* (2004), a gift from Mary and Dan Solomon, layers iconic photographs by the celebrated German photographers Bernd (1931–2007) and Hilla Becher (1934–2015) one on top of another, transforming their cool and objective images into hauntingly evocative pictures.

Acquisitions from the Corcoran Gallery of Art

One highlight among the 331 works recently accessioned from the Corcoran Gallery of Art is Thomas Hart Benton's *Martha's Vineyard* (c. 1925). This painting features the signature serpentine forms that distinguish the artist's American Scene and regionalist paintings of the 1930s. In 2008 the Corcoran Gallery of Art received a gift of 158 photographs by Andy Warhol from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. Comprised of 105 Polaroids and 53 gelatin silver prints of celebrities, friends, and his daily life, the group demonstrates Warhol's prolific use of photography and suggests how it pervaded his practice.

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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 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. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at 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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Press Release

[List of Third Round of Acquisitions from the Corcoran Collection](#) (PDF 5 MB)

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