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Key Works by Caspar Netscher, Herman Saftleven, and Emil Nolde Acquired by the National Gallery of Art—Acquisitions include Gifts from Outgoing Trustees Council Chair Vincent Buonanno



Gordon Parks, *Langston Hughes, Chicago, April 1942*, gelatin silver print, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Corcoran Collection (The Gordon Parks Collection) © The Gordon Parks Foundation

Washington, DC—At the September meeting of the board of trustees, the National Gallery of Art acquired a stunning genre painting by Caspar Netscher (1639–1684), a charming landscape painting by Herman Saftleven (c. 1609–1685), and two expressive drawings by Emil Nolde (1867–1956). Additionally, the Gallery acquired photographs by Sally Mann (b. 1951), Andrew J. Russell (1830–1902), and Thomas H. Johnson (active 1860s–1870s), among others. At this meeting, the Gallery accessioned 304 works of art from the Corcoran Gallery of Art, including 173 photographs by Gordon Parks (1912–2006).

"We are delighted with the acquisition of these rare and important works by Caspar Netscher, Herman Saftleven, and Emil Nolde, as well as groundbreaking photographs by Andrew J. Russell, Gordon Parks, and Sally Mann," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are grateful as well to our donors, whose continuing generosity strengthens and enriches the Gallery's collection."

Paintings

Signed and dated "CNetscher. Ao. 16.66," *A Woman Feeding a Parrot, with a Page* (1666) is one of Caspar Netscher's finest genre paintings. It depicts an elegant young woman wearing a gold-colored dress with split sleeves who gazes out at the viewer as she feeds an African grey parrot. The woman and an attentive pageboy holding a silver tray both stand behind an illusionistic stone niche with a bronze-colored silk curtain pinned to the side. An oriental carpet spilling out over the bottom ledge adds to the illusionism, as it partially obscures roman numerals that appear to be carved into the stone. Netscher was an outstanding portraitist as well as a master of depicting the social interactions of the Dutch elite. He developed an exquisite painting technique that allowed him to imitate a wide range of textures, such as the linen, satin, and rough nap of an oriental rug featured in this work. *A Woman Feeding a Parrot, with a Page* is on view in the Gallery's exhibition [Drawings for Paintings in the Age of Rembrandt](#) through January 2, 2017, coorganized with the Fondation Custodia, Frits Lugt Collection, Paris (February 3–May 7, 2017). This painting was purchased with funds from The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund.

Imaginary River Landscape, monogrammed and dated 1670, is one of Herman Saftleven's most charming and delicately rendered depictions of a meandering river valley. Despite the painting's small scale, Saftleven harkens back to the expansive landscapes of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The viewer looks down across the valley from a rocky outcrop, travelers move along mountain trails, shepherds watch their flocks, and traders tend to their vessels. The earthy colors and precise execution of the scene's foreground elements morph into a more suggestive rendering of distant pictorial elements—walled towns, church towers, and villages situated along the river—bathed atmospherically in misty blues. This painting was purchased with funds from The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund.

Although Willem de Looper (1932–2009) is most often described as a second-generation Washington Color school artist or as a color field painter, his paintings demonstrate a unique style focused on pure planes of color. In the 1980s he began using a more saturated, vibrant palette to make formal configurations of what appear to be layered planes, creating unstable relationships between figure and ground. *The Duke* (1990) is directly related to these paintings of the 1980s; its forms suggest geometric order that is enhanced by the painting's visible brushstrokes and metallic palette, and its title, which refers to Duke Ellington, reflects De Looper's love of jazz. Currently on view in the East Building Upper Level galleries, *The Duke* is the first painting by De Looper to enter the Gallery's collection, joining a 1988 screenprint *Tunis (Tunis on My Mind)*. This painting is a gift of Frauke de Looper.

Prints and Drawings

Through the generosity of the Beatrix and Ladislaus von Hoffmann Fund, the Gallery purchased two drawings by Emil Nolde. Renowned for his expressive and vividly colored paintings, watercolors, and lithographs, Nolde also achieved powerfully emotive effects working in black and white—most notably in a series of brush-and-ink drawings done in Hamburg in 1910. *Hamburg Harbor with a Tugboat* gives a complex and richly atmospheric view of the bustling harbor. In contrast, *A Small Steamboat* is spare and simple, featuring just a few calligraphic strokes that coalesce into a scene of a boat navigating choppy waters, three puffs of smoke emanating from its stack

The Saul Steinberg Foundation's transformational gift of 34 drawings and a sketchbook by the artist Saul Steinberg (1914–1999) considerably raises the profile of Steinberg at the National Gallery of Art. Best known today for his work at the *New Yorker*, Steinberg was widely represented at leading galleries and museums during his lifetime. The drawings in the present gift date from 1945 to 1985 and cover a wide range of subjects: from the horror of World War II bombings (1945) to the grim faces of Bingo players in Venice, California (1955); from the unvarnished truth of the so-called urbane cocktail party (1953) to the absurdity of graphic symbols seated around a coffee table; from the raggedness of subway riders (1954) to the sheer beauty of the collage *Via Aerea* (1969) and the watercolor *Flowers and Ink Bottles* (1985). The works demonstrate that Steinberg not only was a brilliant and witty draftsman, but also a more complex artist than is generally recognized.

Offered to the Gallery by Dian Woodner for the Woodner Collection, as a gift of Dian Woodner, are two drawings: *Studies of Saint Francis Kneeling* (c. 1390/1410) from 14th-century Florence and Pieter Bruegel the Elder's (c. 1525/1530–1569) *The Bagpipe Player* (c. 1562/1563). *Studies of Kneeling Saint Francis*, which evokes the work of Taddeo Gaddi (c. 1300–1366) and his son Agnolo (c. 1350–1396), is one of the earliest drawings in the Gallery's collection. An unusually large study sheet, it shows an anonymous artist focusing on the fall of light over the draperies of several figures. The rare study by Pieter Bruegel the Elder humorously depicts a musician tipping precariously on a three-legged stool. It combines the artist's lively pen strokes with a keen eye for pose and expression and captures both the boisterous spirit and the clumsy charm of the peasants that populate so many of Bruegel's compositions.

The *Chinea* was an annual Roman festival celebrating the papacy's concession of its feudal rights to the Kingdom of Naples. In the 18th century, the festival came to feature monumental temporary architecture, elaborate decorations, and pyrotechnic displays. These "machines," designed by the leading architects of the day, were commemorated in large-scale etchings of their own considerable beauty. A gift from Vincent Buonanno in honor of Andrew Robison of two contemporary albums and another 66 plates (dating from 1726 to 1785) gives the Gallery the most complete set of *Chinea* prints outside Rome.

Offered to the Gallery by Beatrix von Hoffmann as a gift of Beatrix and Ladislaus von Hoffmann in honor of Andrew Robison is an outstanding double-sided watercolor from 1912 by the German artist Heinrich Campendonk (1889–1957). The work's front side is a self-portrait of Campendonk wearing a polka-dotted bow tie and holding a palette, with semi-abstract forms circling around him. The work's brilliant colors and forms are characteristic of early 20th-century avant-garde artists in Munich. This dazzling Campendonk watercolor becomes the Gallery's most important work on paper by a member of the *Blaue Reiter* (Blue Rider) group.

Photographs

The Gallery acquired three photographs by Sally Mann that reveal her fascination with both the Southern landscape and American history. In pictures such as *Deep South, Untitled, (Three Drips)* (1998), made in a miasmal swamp, she utilized the wet collodion method to capture the intermingling of light and air, creating a vision that is mysterious, melancholic, and fused with a sense of searching, or even struggle. *Battlefields, Untitled, Cold Harbor, (Battle)* (2003) was made at Cold Harbor Battlefield outside of Richmond, Virginia, a site of horrific loss of life during the Civil War. Embracing the streaks that occurred when grit most likely scratched her collodion negative, Mann reinvigorates the placid landscape, suggesting the bullets that riddled the air and begot so much pain and grief. In the simple but compelling picture *Deep South, Untitled, (Scarred Tree)* (1998), Mann suggests that the indelible scars of tragedy are embedded in the land itself. Although the Gallery has 25 photographs by Mann (including 22 from the Corcoran collection), these are the first works acquired from her important series on Southern landscapes and Civil War battlefields. These three photographs will be included in the Gallery's upcoming exhibition [Sally Mann: A Thousand Crossings](#), March 4–May 28, 2018, coorganized with the Peabody Essex Museum (June 30–September 23, 2018), which will tour multiple international venues. These photographs were purchased with funds from the Collectors Committee, The Sarah and William L. Walton Fund, and the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund.

Andrew J. Russell's powerful album of photographs *The Great West Illustrated* (1869) helped to shape the American understanding of the West, celebrating it as a land of vast untapped resources and unparalleled natural beauty. Made between Omaha and Salt Lake City in 1868 and 1869, the 50 large albumen prints in *The Great West Illustrated* were commissioned by the Union Pacific Railroad to document their role in the construction of the first transcontinental railroad. Together the photographs reveal the inextricable link between technology, Manifest Destiny, and westward expansion, as

well as the role that photography played in promoting these ideas. *The Great West Illustrated*, which was one of the first publications of photographs of the American West, is very rare and represents the Gallery's first acquisition of work by Russell. This portfolio was purchased with funds from the Avalon and New Century Funds.

Thomas H. Johnson made an extraordinary and incisive series of photographs capturing the landscape of the Pennsylvania coal regions. Though largely overlooked within photographic history, his rich albumen prints made for the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company in the mid-1860s mark his signature achievement in 19th-century American landscape photography. The majority of the pictures document the striking and unique architecture developed to facilitate the large-scale mining of anthracite, or hard coal. They show mining shafts and breakers—massive structures that broke the coal down into pieces and sorted it by size. Johnson's photographs also record with arresting clarity the dramatic transformation of the terrain through its development. They capture not only the new towns springing up to support the coal industry and their effects on the surrounding countryside, but also the intricate network of mines, breakers, and railroad tracks that was rapidly altering the landscape. Some of these photographs will be included in the Gallery's upcoming exhibition [East of the Mississippi: Nineteenth-Century American Landscape Photography](#), March 12–July 16, 2017. This group of 25 prints was purchased with funds from the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund.

Acquisitions from the Corcoran Gallery of Art

Among the 304 works accessioned in September from the Corcoran Gallery of Art are 290 photographs and films, bringing the total number acquired from the Corcoran's photography and media arts collection to 2,586. This new group includes 173 photographs and films by the celebrated American photographer and filmmaker Gordon Parks. When combined with already accessioned works by Parks, the Gallery's collection becomes one of the largest and most complete repositories of the artist's work outside the Gordon Parks Foundation, surveying his career from 1941 to 1996. From his roots in Kansas, where poverty and racism were rampant, to his meteoric success as the first African American photographer at *Life* magazine and the first to helm a major motion picture in Hollywood, Parks was both an instigator and witness to social and aesthetic change. His work spans a wide range of subjects: intimate portraits of African American and working class communities, segregation in the South, the civil rights movement, poverty and crime in Latin America and the United States, and international fashions, portraiture, theater, and sports. He consciously moved between depictions of intolerance and violence—which mirrored his own struggles growing up black in America—and the beauty of friendship, community, family, nature, art, and his own childhood memories. The Gallery's collection now includes some of Parks's most iconic images, such as a 1942 portrait of Langston Hughes, *Washington, D.C. Government charwoman (American Gothic)* (1942), *Red Jackson, Harlem Gang Leader* (1948), and *Flavio da Silva, Rio de Janeiro* (1961). A number of photographs from the collection will be included in the Gallery's upcoming exhibition [Gordon Parks: The New Tide, 1940–1950](#), November 11, 2018–February 18, 2019.

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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 Fifth Round of Acquisitions from the Corcoran Collection](#) (PDF 841 KB)

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