

JANUARY 01, 2018

Acquisition Press Releases: 2018

Release Date: November 20, 2018



Theaster Gates, *Ground Rules (black line)*, 2015, wood flooring, overall: 245.1 x 609.6 cm (96 1/2 x 240 in.), National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the Collector's Committee
[Press images available](#)

The National Gallery of Art has recently installed a newly acquired work by cross-disciplinary American artist Theaster Gates (b. 1973)—the first by him to enter the Gallery's collection. Gates selects the raw materials often lost amidst rapid urban change and reimagines them, as with *Ground Rules (black line)* (2015), a composition of salvaged gymnasium floor boards from a decommissioned Chicago high school. At 20 feet wide—the largest in his *Ground Rules* series of gym floors—*Ground Rules (black line)* fully engages with architecture while staking a claim for its place in the history of art. The titular black line breaks across the horizontal plane and is recomposed by the artist to incorporate jump cuts. Gates has explained that these broken lines serve as a metaphor for "the importance of rules learned through play, and the social consequences of their breakdown and loss." An evocation of abstract color field painting, Gates's *Ground Rules* series engages the linear structure of the boards and remixes the taped lines

originally meant to structure play.

In 2017 Gates presented a new body of work, *The Minor Arts*, which examined how discarded and ordinary objects acquire value through the stories we tell about them. On view in the East Building's Tower 3 gallery from March 5 through September 4, 2017, *In the Tower: Theaster Gates: The Minor Arts* marked the artist's first solo exhibition in Washington and on the East Coast.

The recipient of many notable awards, Gates received the 2018 Nasher Prize, the world's leading award for contemporary sculpture. He is the 2018/2019 artist-in-residence at the Getty Research Institute, where he will join visiting scholars to conduct research for a project related to the theme "monumentality."

Release Date: November 7, 2018



Imogen Cunningham: Platinum and Palladium, introduction by Elizabeth Partridge, excerpts from an interview with Imogen Cunningham conducted by Rondal Partridge, South Dennis, Mass.: Steve Albahari, 21st Editions, 2012, National Gallery of Art Library, Gift of The Thompson Family Foundation

The National Gallery of Art Library has acquired a complete set of more than 50 titles produced by the fine press book publisher 21st Editions. These volumes include platinum/palladium, silver gelatin, gum-over-platinum, Fresson, and photogravure prints ranging from the archives of early 20th-century photographers, such as Imogen Cunningham, to contemporary artists like Sally Mann. Also included are approximately 16 books produced by photographers who are represented

in the Gallery's collection. The Gallery is deeply grateful to The Thompson Family Foundation whose generous gift made this acquisition possible.

More than a dozen titles published by 21st Editions relate directly to the Library's fine press collection. Some of these are different editions of existing titles, some are the work of the same contributors, and others feature similar subject matter to titles in the Library's collection. Of particular note are four "deluxe" titles—trade editions of William Blake/Joel-Peter Witkin's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*—and the six volumes of *The Journal of Contemporary Photography, 1998–2004*.

Inspired by the books of William Morris's Kelmscott Press and Alfred Stieglitz's photographic journals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, 21st Editions promotes fine art photography and the art of the book. Through the publication of limited edition fine press books that combine photographic images with prose, poetry, and artisan bindings, 21st Editions carries on the traditions of letterpress printing, hand binding techniques, high quality photographic printing, and reproductive processes through collaborations between artists, craftsmen, and authors.

The National Gallery of Art Library's Special Collections focuses on works by book artists that include, respond to, or pay homage to the artists in the Gallery's permanent collection. An important collection of more than 300 fine press and artists' books given to the Gallery by Patricia England in 1990—along with some 50 volumes donated by Gil Ravenel and Frances Smyth-Ravenel and reference books from the Rosenwald Collection—forms the core of a collection that has grown to nearly 1,000 titles covering the history of fine press printing from the late 19th century to the present.

Release Date: September 27, 2018



Andrew & Ives, *Frederick Douglass*, 1863, albumen print, 4 x 2 1/2 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund

The acquisition of nine cartes-de-visite of African-American subjects—made at a decisive turning point in America’s troubled history of slavery and race relations—is a significant addition to the Gallery’s collection of 19th-century photography. The works include a rare full-length portrait of Frederick Douglass taken in Hillsdale, Michigan, by local photography studio Andrew & Ives. It is the first portrait of him to enter the Gallery’s collection. Six of the cartes-de-visite are directly related to the Civil War, including two from a popular series depicting children from Louisiana emancipated from slavery. The series was a fundraising effort managed by the National Freedman’s Relief Association, who used the proceeds to build schools and hire teachers to educate newly freed children and adults in Louisiana. Members of the association posed for several portraits at the New York studios of Myron H. Kimball and Charles Paxson. *Portrait of Christopher Anderson* is part of a rare series made by the studio Gayford & Speidel of a segregated regiment created in 1864—one of many established when the ban on African Americans serving in the Union Army was lifted after the Emancipation Proclamation. *Gordon, the Whipped Slave*, also known as *The Scourged Back*, is an icon of 19th-century American visual culture and became one of the most well-known images of formerly enslaved people. It appeared as an engraved illustration in a *Harper’s Weekly* article describing Gordon’s harrowing escape from a Mississippi plantation to a Union Army encampment

plantation to a British Army encampment.

Release Date: September 11, 2018



Jan van Kessel, *Insects and a Sprig of Rosemary*, 1653, oil on panel, 11.5 x 14 cm (4 1/2 x 5 1/2 in.), National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Richard C. Von Hess Foundation, Nell and Robert Weidenhammer Fund, Barry D. Friedman and Friends of Dutch Art

Thanks to the generosity of The Richard C. Von Hess Foundation, the Nell and Robert Weidenhammer Fund, Barry D. Friedman, and the Friends of Dutch Art, the Gallery has purchased Jan van Kessel's *Insects and a Sprig of Rosemary*. Formerly in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, the painting is an especially fine example of the artist's work.

The painting depicts a sprig of flowering rosemary surrounded by two butterflies, a bumblebee, a moth, beetles, a cockchafer bug, and several other insects. Although his rendering of the insects is so accurate that individual species can be identified, Van Kessel composed his scene to suggest an animated world. The little creatures climb all over the sprig of rosemary, seemingly drawn to its sweet fragrance; the delicate shadows they cast on the off-white ground enhance the three-dimensional, lifelike character of the scene. *Insects and a Sprig of Rosemary* relates to the way collections of *naturalia* were displayed in Antwerp during the 17th century. Van Kessel likely referred to drawings of plants and animals made from life when he painted this small panel.

although he also consulted printed sources for some of his images. This work—remarkable in both quality and condition—joins five paintings by Van Kessel and his workshop that are already part of the Gallery's collection.

Release Date: July 3, 2018



Jean-Claude-Richard, Abbé de Saint-Non, *Naiads and Tritons*, after François Boucher, 1766, etching and aquatint printed in brown, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund

The Gallery has purchased, courtesy of Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund, a collection of nearly 50 superb and historically significant aquatints made by European artists from the 1760s to the 1780s. The group includes 23 rare prints by French artist François-Philippe Charpentier and three by the Swedish artist Per Gustav Floding, the inventors of the aquatint technique. In Paris on July 19, 1762 the two men announced six works created in this "new manner of printmaking" after designs by François Boucher and others. Amateur artists also were experimenting with the aquatint technique in France, as shown by six especially fluent plates by Jean-Baptiste Claude Richard, Abbé de Saint-Non, some created after ink and wash drawings by Jean Honoré Fragonard and Hubert Robert as well as by intriguing historical compositions by Charles-Paul-Jean-Baptiste de Bourgevin de Vialart, who was the Comte de Saint-Morys, and Pierre Lélou. Also noteworthy are seven aquatints by Jean-Jacques Lagrenée II of elegant mythological and ornamental subjects. The French works in this collection are complemented by outstanding examples of aquatints from other schools, including Peter Perez Burdett's *Two Brigands Frightening Three Fisherfolk* (1771)

OTHER SCHOOLS, INCLUDING PETER PEREZ BURDELL'S *TWO DRIGARUS FIGHTING THREE FISHERMEN* (1771)—

the first aquatint published in England—and *The Ascension of the Virgin* (1776), a monumental interpretation of a Guido Reni drawing by Johann Gottlieb Prestel (or Theophilus), one of the most accomplished early German masters of this tonal intaglio technique.

Press Release

Press Contact

Laurie Tylec

phone: (202) 842-6355

e-mail: l-tylec@nga.gov

Contact Information

General Information

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Department of Communications

National Gallery of Art

2000 South Club Drive

Landover, MD 20785

phone: (202) 842-6353

e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Chief of Communications

Anabeth Guthrie

phone: (202) 842-6804

e-mail: a-guthrie@nga.gov

Newsletters

The National Gallery also offers a broad range of newsletters for various interests. [Follow this link](#) to view the complete list.

Related Resources

Exhibitions

Press Releases

Newsletters

RSS News Feed