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**NOTABLE PAINTINGS, SCULPTURES, AND WORKS ON PAPER, INCLUDING RENOWNED  
EVELYN STEFANSSON NEF COLLECTION AND MOSAIC BY CHAGALL,  
ARE AMONG RECENT ACQUISITIONS BY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART**

Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art has received an extraordinary bequest of 19th- and 20th-century prints, drawings, and illustrated books by artists ranging from Edouard Vuillard to Alex Katz from the late Evelyn Nef, who passed away in December 2009. The gift from the collection she built with her late husband John Nef is composed of 31 drawings, 46 prints, 25 volumes, and a monumental mosaic.

In addition to the Nef bequest, a number of significant works of art have recently entered the Gallery's collection. They include paintings by Pieter Soutman, Adam van Breen, Gilbert Stuart, and William Stanley Haseltine; a sculpture by Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse and a large medallion by Jean-Baptiste Daniel-Dupuis; contemporary works by Nancy Graves, James Rosenquist, Nam June Paik, and Sean Scully; an exceptional 18th-century map of Venice; a volume of prints by Ludwig Schongauer; and photographs by Alfred Stieglitz, Jacques-Henri Lartigue, Charles Nègre, Linnaeus Tripe, Bill Brandt, and Alvin Langdon Coburn.

"We are extremely grateful to the donors who made these outstanding acquisitions possible," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We honor Evelyn Nef, a constant friend of the Gallery for more than 40 years, whose many contributions have left a lasting legacy."

**Evelyn Nef Bequest**

Dynamic, brilliant, and vivacious, Evelyn Stefansson Nef (1913–2009) was a psychotherapist, author, and benefactor to some of Washington's leading cultural institutions. In addition to direct gifts of art, her annual donations of funds to the Gallery supported many programs and activities, and made possible the acquisition of a dozen important French pastels, watercolors, drawings, and prints. Her personal joie de vivre was reflected by her delight in works by artists from the School of Paris, especially Pablo Picasso and Marc Chagall.

Evelyn Nef's bequest to the Gallery has now brought a financial endowment and more than 100 drawings and prints by Raoul Dufy, Wassily Kandinsky, Alex Katz, Le Corbusier, Fernand Léger, Auguste Renoir, Georges Rouault, Edouard Vuillard, James McNeill Whistler, and others. Also included are a number of works by Picasso and two dozen drawings and watercolors by Chagall—many in books personally dedicated by the artist to Evelyn and her late husband John Nef.

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### Chagall Mosaic

The most famous work in the Nef bequest is *Untitled* (1970) by Marc Chagall (1887–1985). It was designed by the artist to adorn the garden of the Nefs' Georgetown residence. A close friend of the Nefs, Chagall claimed he was “discovered” by John. The artist visited the Nefs in 1968 and declared, “Nothing for the house. The house is perfect as it is. But I will do something for the garden. A mosaic.”

Executed by Italian artist Lino Melano using only Murano glass and natural colored stones from Carrara, Italy, the mosaic is composed of 10 individually fashioned mosaic panels, each approximately 5 x 3 ½ feet and mounted to a concrete back panel, which was installed into a brick and concrete wall in the Nef garden. It depicts figures from Greek mythology—Orpheus with his lute, the Three Graces, and the winged horse Pegasus. On the lower left, Chagall, a Jew who found refuge in New York during World War II, included a personal homage to the United States with a scene of immigrants crossing the ocean to a new life in America. On the lower right, the artist also included a pair of lovers beneath a tree. When Evelyn inquired if the couple was intended to depict her and John, Chagall replied, “If you like.”

The mosaic has provided enjoyment to many people through the years after it was installed in 1971, including visitors to the Nef household as well as Washingtonians peering over the garden wall from the public sidewalk. Currently awaiting necessary conservation treatment by the Gallery's department of object conservation with a mosaic specialist, the Chagall mosaic is expected to find its new home in the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden in 2012.

### Picasso Works on Paper

The bequest includes 18 works by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who was also favored by the Nefs. Perhaps the finest example is the neoclassical drawing *Young Woman Seated in an Armchair*, 1921–1922. Set against a pale blue wash, the young woman's robust body is sketched in a loose shift. She is seated in an overstuffed armchair like a classical goddess in a thoroughly modern interior. The scholar William Rubin has identified this drawing as the earliest image documenting Picasso's acquaintance with the stunning Sara Murphy, who with her husband, the artist Gerald Murphy, was among the most elegant and fashionable American expatriates during the early 1920s. The freshness of this drawing reflects Picasso's first vision, and yet his style gives the figure the monumentality of a full-scale painting.

A complete set of Picasso's 14 early *Saltimbanques* etchings and drypoints is included in the Nef bequest. These works complement the Gallery's masterpiece by the artist, *Family of Saltimbanques* (1905), which is currently on view in the West Building in the exhibition *From Impressionism to Modernism: The Chester Dale Collection*.

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## Other Acquisitions

### **Northern Baroque Paintings**

The department of Northern Baroque Paintings added two handsome works to the Dutch and Flemish collections through the generosity of private donors. The most recent of these is the masterfully rendered painting by artist Pieter Soutman (c. 1580–1657), entitled *Young Man Holding a Staff*. This recently discovered head study, which Soutman painted in 1640, was purchased with The Derald H. Ruttenberg Memorial Fund. Also acquired was the charming ice scene *Skating on the Frozen Amstel River* by Dutch artist Adam van Breen (c. 1585–1640). Donated to the National Gallery through The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund, this lively winter scene depicts the joy of skating and outdoor life in the Netherlands in the early 17th century. It is a welcome addition to the Dutch Cabinet Galleries. Both works are currently on view in the Dutch and Flemish Galleries.

### **American Paintings**

One of the most important paintings by Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828)—a striking 1794 portrait of John Jay, first chief justice of the United States Supreme Court—has entered the Gallery's collection as a partial and promised gift of the Jay family and is now on view in the American galleries. A model of judicial intellect and rectitude, Jay is shown in the academic robe he received when he was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree by Harvard College. Following a commission from Jay, it was painted in New York during a brief two-year period when Stuart completed at least eight of the portraits of America's political, social, and business elite already in the Gallery's collection. It was also Jay whose letter of introduction led to an invitation to paint the man who would be Stuart's most renowned subject—George Washington.

Also on view in the West Building's American galleries is another new acquisition by William Stanley Haseltine (1835–1900), whose geologically precise views of New England's rocky coast brought him his earliest acclaim. A gift of Alexander M. and Judith W. Laughlin, the splendid—and previously unknown—*Narragansett Bay* (1864) is in pristine condition, complete with its original stretcher. The Gallery received one of Haseltine's earliest oil studies, *Marina Piccola, Capri* (c. 1858), from the artist's daughter in 1953 and the stunning *Natural Arch at Capri* (1871) from Guest Services Corporation in 1991. This new acquisition adds one of his celebrated American "rock portraits" to the collection.

### **Sculpture**

Two 19th-century French sculptures were acquired: Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse's terra-cotta *Fantasy Bust of a Veiled Woman* (c. 1865–1870) and a *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Medallion* (1892–1893) by Jean-Baptiste Daniel-Dupuis.

This previously unrecorded *Fantasy Bust of a Veiled Woman* by Carrier-Belleuse (1824–1887) is the best of three mold-made examples of the same composition. Carrier-Belleuse employed Auguste Rodin at various junctures, and the similarity between this terra-cotta and the Gallery's *Bust of a Woman* (1875) by Rodin is striking. Purchased with funds from the New Century Fund, the *Fantasy Bust* balances recently acquired of academic 19th-century marble sculptures by Randolph Rogers, Pietro Magni, and Thomas Crawford, providing an important chronological bridge between these artists and Rodin. It will be displayed in the Ground Floor Sculpture Galleries in September.

The design of the *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Medallion* was commissioned by the Academy in 1892 to award to American artists who merited great honor. The prolific Daniel-Dupuis (1849–1899), whose work is not yet represented in the Gallery's extensive collection of medals and plaquettes, engraved the dies of the smaller gold medal in Paris. This grandly scaled, cast medallion is also linked to the Gallery's renowned collection of sculptures by Rodin: the plaster *Age of Bronze* by Rodin, which entered the Gallery's collection in 1991, was originally ordered by the Academy in 1898. The acquisition of the medallion was made possible by Mark and Lynne Hammerschlag. It will also go on view before year-end in the Ground Floor Sculpture Galleries.

### Modern and Contemporary Art

Nancy Graves' *Aqualine* (1980) and James Rosenquist's *Spectator—Speed of Light* (2001) were both generously donated by Robert E. Meyerhoff and will be added to the growing Collection of Robert and Jane Meyerhoff at the Gallery, on view in the East Building.

*Aqualine* is the first painting by Graves (1940–1995) to enter the collection. The canvas' high-key colors and expressive linear gestures mark a departure from her more controlled paintings of the late 1970s and seem to signal her later sculpture, such as the Gallery's *Spinner* (1985). The title, an invented adjective including the Spanish word for water, underscores the fluidity of the composition.

An energetic late painting by Rosenquist (b. 1933), *Spectator—Speed of Light* is the second to enter the collection after the 2008 purchase of *White Bread* (1964). The newly acquired work is part of a series inspired by Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity, in which Rosenquist explores the disjointed perceptions of artist and viewer, as well as the ambiguous distinction between figuration and abstraction.

The Hakuta family donated *Untitled (Red Hand)* (1967) by Nam June Paik (1932–2006) after the Collectors Committee purchased Paik's *Ommah* (2005) in March. The work features a blinking light bulb that flashes through an antique Japanese scroll painting to illuminate a handprint made on the glass of the frame. Paik offers a humorous meditation on authorship and scavenger hunting, technology and tradition. This important early work captures both the artist's wit and his deep interest in the intersection of traditional and modern cultures.

Generously donated by William Zachs, *All There Is* (1986) by Sean Scully (b. 1945) is the third and earliest painting by the artist to enter the collection. Characteristic of his paintings from the 1980s, it confronts the viewer with its weighty, highly physical presence. With this work, Scully breaks away from the rigid geometry of his earlier work while still keeping to his characteristic vocabulary of stripes. The painting is on display in the installation *American Paintings, 1959–2009* on the Upper Level of the East Building.

### Prints and Drawings

The Ahmanson Foundation has enabled the Gallery to acquire one of the greatest printed maps of cities in terms of art and of science: a first edition of *Iconografica Rappresentazione della Inclita Città di Venezia* (Venice, Giuseppe Baroni, 1729). This map combined the talents of the leading Venetian figure painter in the decade, Sebastiano Ricci (1659–1734), and the leading Venetian printmaker in the 1720s and early 1730s, Giovanni Antonio Faldoni (c. 1690–c. 1770). Francesco Zucchi (1692–1764) contributed the views (mostly after Luca Carlevaris). Using groundbreaking surveying tools and mathematics of the day, Lodovico Ughi (active 1710–1730) prepared precise measurements of buildings, streets, canals, and gardens, making this map authoritative for more than a century. It will be on view in the East Building as part of the exhibition *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals* (February 20–May 30, 2011).

Continuing its acquisitions focused on major artistic series of woodcuts, the Gallery has acquired *Gaistliche usslegung des lebes Jhesu Cristi* illustrated by Ludwig Schongauer (c. 1450–1494) and other artists, made possible by the Paul Mellon Fund. Published in Ulm, Germany, circa 1482 by Johann Zainer, this volume contains one of the most beautiful and important series of woodcuts before Dürer's *Apocalypse*. Ludwig Schongauer, the brother of Martin Schongauer, the greatest engraver of the period, designed 35 of the 95 cuts included here. An unnamed second major artist designed 39 woodcuts for this book, showing broader, more substantial figures in an open style that evokes the simple but intense religious images of the romanesque.

The Department of Modern Prints and Drawings recently enriched its collection of works by the American artist John Taylor Arms (1887–1953). With astonishing dexterity and an eye for minute detail, Arms created prints of monumental presence despite their modest scale. *Towers of San Gimignano* (1932), is one of five works given to the National Gallery by David F. Wright in addition to four others promised by him, and underscores Arms' keen interest in medieval buildings and his attentiveness to patterns of light and dark stonework. The masterly rendered *West Forty-Second Street Night* (1922), purchased with funds from Donald and the late Nancy de Laski, captures the artist's fascination with the atmosphere and rhythm of New York City. Both prints will be on view as part of the exhibition *The Gothic Spirit of John Taylor Arms*, opening May 15, 2011.

### Photographs

The department of photographs has acquired a number of works, including Alfred Stieglitz's *Sherwood Anderson* (1923), Jacques-Henri Lartigue's *Bouboutte, Rouzat* (1908), Charles Nègres' *Chartres Cathedral, Royal Portal* (1855–1857), Linnaeus Tripe's *Namkal Drug* (1858–1860), Bill Brandt's *Bloomsbury* (1940–1941), and Alvin Langdon Coburn's *New York* (1910).

In 1923 Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) photographed the author Sherwood Anderson, posed in front of Georgia O'Keeffe's painting *Lake George with Crows* (1921), for inclusion in Paul Rosenfeld's forthcoming book *Port of New York* (1924). This vintage print of that portrait adds to the collection an important photograph, which Stieglitz had intended to include in the "Key Set" of photographs that was donated by Georgia O'Keeffe to the National Gallery in 1949. It was purchased with funds from the Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund.

Jacques-Henri Lartigue (1894–1986) made exuberant photographs, such as *Bouboutte, Rouzat*, that depict his family and friends pursuing the pastimes of an affluent and active family at the dawn of the 20th century. The first work by Lartigue to enter the collection, this extremely rare vintage print captures the artist's cousin leaping off a wall and expresses both the youthful zeal of its author and the young century's fascination with instantaneity, movement, and speed. Its purchase was made possible by the Vital Projects Fund.

One of the most influential 19th-century photographers, Charles Nègre (1820–1880) was also one of the early champions of photogravure. In 1855, Nègre was commissioned by the French government to produce a series of photogravures from his photographs of Chartres Cathedral, then under restoration by the architect Jean-Baptiste Lassus. Nègre employed an extremely large negative to create this spacious, luminous, and richly detailed photogravure of the cathedral's Royal Portal. It was acquired through the Diana and Mallory Walker Fund.

## Nef Bequest & New Acquisitions...6-6-6

An early pioneer of photography, Linnaeus Tripe (1822–1902) made striking photographs of India and Burma during the 1850s while working for the British government and published them in a series of portfolios called *Photographic Views*, including this photograph of a “drug” or fort, *Namkal Drug*, acquired through the generosity of Edward J. Lenkin and Roselin Atzwanger and the Diana and Mallory Walker Fund. Made from a paper negative that Tripe skillfully retouched, this subtly textured print reveals how he combined technical expertise with an eloquent artistic sensibility, creating beautiful, historic documents.

In the 1930s, Bill Brandt (1904–1983) established a career in London as a photojournalist in the emerging market of pictorial magazines. During the London blitz in World War II, Brandt made several photographs of the blacked-out city. Taken by moonlight, as the unlit street lamp suggests, *Bloomsbury* captures the stark contrast of the buildings, reduced to dark, flat silhouettes, against the glow of moonlight from the pavement. Its purchase was made possible by the Diana and Mallory Walker Fund.

Mastering the complicated technique of photogravure, Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882–1966) published two portfolios, *London* (1909) and *New York* (1910), and printed the photogravures on his own printing press in London. Acquired through the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund, this important volume *New York* consists of 20 prints, exploiting the soft quality of the photogravure while simultaneously capturing the energy of the new city under construction and its muscular, geometric beauty.

### **Study Rooms**

Works on paper not on display may be viewed and studied by appointment in the Gallery's Print Study Rooms or Photograph Study Room by qualified scholars and students in accordance with the Gallery's rules and requirements. Single visitors as well as small groups are welcome.

The Study Rooms are open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to noon and 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., except federal holidays.

To make an appointment to view prints or drawings, please telephone (202) 842-6380. To make an appointment to view photographs, please e-mail [photographs@nga.gov](mailto:photographs@nga.gov) or telephone (202) 842-6144. Appointments should be made at least two weeks in advance.

### **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 the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, 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) and on Twitter at [twitter.com/ngadc](http://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.

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# Greetings

from

John and Evelyn Nef

bring

## A GIFT FROM CHAGALL

by Evelyn\*

\*REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE  
Washington Post, POTOMAC, JANUARY 23, 1972.

In the garden behind our house in Georgetown, hard by a tall magnolia tree, there is a 30-foot-high brick wall, into which is set a brilliantly colored mosaic. The creator of the mosaic was Marc Chagall. The story of how this marvel came to be in our back yard is not offered as a guide to acquiring great art, but to say something about the mind and methods, and perhaps the heart, of a great artist.

There is no artistic medium that Chagall has not tried and mastered: paint, stained glass, tapestry, sculpture, ceramics. His works are in museums and public places circling the globe. He probably has the largest army of appreciators of any living artist, and surely he is the most beloved.

I first met Marc Chagall and his wife, Valentine, almost eight years ago, while on my honeymoon. Chagall took me aside and told me that his friend John Nef—my newly wedded husband—had “discovered” him 40 years ago, before he was famous.

At their first meeting Marc was delighted to find in John's apartment a small but fine art collection which included two early Chagalls painted in Russia between 1915 and 1917. John had bought them in Paris in 1925.

In 1941 John Nef founded the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought. Among others, including T. S. Eliot, Schoenberg, von Neumann and Igor Stravinsky, John invited Chagall to speak there. The two men found that they shared many ideas about life and art, and began a friendship that has lasted.

Now, every summer, in a protected corner of the south of France, the Nefs and the Chagalls meet by arrangement for several weeks as fellow guests at the same hotel.

Sharing the quiet life and a bathing cabin in the piney woods, we all swim several times a day, have our meals together, and do a little work. The Chagalls escape being home during the height of the tourist season, when strangers always manage somehow to find their remote house in St. Paul de Vence, ring the bell and try to rob Marc, now 84, of his precious working time.

As close friends, John and I have seen too many people, ranging from nice to nutty, try to enter his private life, using any pretext, and always wanting something—a photograph, an autograph, a signature on an unsigned lithograph, a little sketch for a talented child, or acknowledgment of a family relationship. Desire is the mother of fantasy. The unsigned Chagall lithographs are always fakes, and Chagall has accounted for all his relatives.

We have therefore made it a semireligious practice not to ask for anything, but instead to take pleasure in doing things for them.

When Marc and Valentine (“Vava”) visited us in Georgetown in 1968, the possibility of his “doing something” for our old house had been delicately touched on—but not by us. Then, toward the end of the visit, Marc announced one morning at breakfast: “Nothing for the house. The house is perfect as it is. But I will do something for the garden. A mosaic.”

In 1970, the Nefs and the Chagalls again met in France. Soon after our first days together, to our surprise and delight, Vava said that Marc had finished the maquette—colored sketch—for our mosaic.

We dared not think it could happen. But at vacation's end we were invited to St. Paul for lunch and a view of the maquette.

For the very first time, we entered Marc's studio—the holy of holies which few people have ever seen. With

some ceremony, Marc approached a large brown paper-covered rectangle on the wall. After a short speech, he tore off the covering to reveal a stunning, brilliantly colored gouache design.

The main figure was Orfeo and his lute, flanked by the three graces, and the winged horse Pegasus—all from Greek mythology. The secondary theme, Marc explained, was immigrants and refugees crossing the ocean to the United States. During the Nazi occupation of France, Marc, a Jew, had been smuggled out by the International Rescue Committee and found refuge in New York for five war years. This was his way of saying "thank you for my life," to the United States. Finally, in the lower right hand corner of the maquette were "les amoureux" sitting beneath a tree, a couple in love. "John and me?" I inquired. "If you like," replied Chagall.

Besides Vava, with us was Lino Melano, an Italian artist who executes mosaics from his nearby studio at Biot for Chagall, and, in the past, for Leger, Braque and others. Following a lively discussion, it was decided that Melano would make our mosaic and then come to the United States when it was finished to install it. The Chagalls would follow later to bless it at a ceremony.

Arriving at Cap d'Antibes the summer of 1971, we learned the mosaic had been finished in June. With Marc and Vava we went to Melano's studio to see it. Melano makes mosaics in the style of his birthplace, Ravenna. He uses only natural colored stones from Carrara and neighboring towns, and glass especially made for the purpose in Murano, Venice. There are no ceramic tiles in his mosaics, indeed, there are no smooth stones. The varicolored pieces are purposely rough cut and many faceted. Each stone is set at a

slightly different angle from its neighbors, so that the light, whether natural or artificial, is captured, held and released continuously.

With the completion of the mosaic at Biot we were faced with a complicated schedule of events. First, we had to build a 30-foot-high wall at the far end of our garden to receive the work of art. Second, it had to be insured, packed and shipped to the United States. Last, but most important, we had to arrange for the Chagalls to visit us again in Georgetown for the dedication. All of us, the Chagalls, Melano, John and I, are working people with obligations and commitments elsewhere. The design had to fit all schedules, and since each new step depended on the completion of the last, must occur in a strict chronological order. I designed a lovely timetable taking all these factors into consideration. But I reckoned without the Fine Arts Commission.

Later in the summer, John and I were in the old town of Avallon in search of Romanesque churches when, to our astonishment, we were called to the telephone by a long distance overseas call. It was Colden Florance, our architect, who said he was unable to obtain a building permit for our garden wall from the Fine Arts Commission unless we promised to face the wall with brick. I couldn't believe my ears. "But Chagall doesn't want a brick wall," I wailed. "Traditionally mosaics go on smooth walls. A rough stucco finish, yes, but brick, no!" "Did you tell them that Chagall wants a smooth wall?" I asked. "Yes," he replied, "but they believe they know better than Chagall what does or does not belong in Georgetown," came the reply. I had always thought of the Fine Arts Commission, like the Georgetown Citizens Association, as my protector. They were supposed to preserve the best of Georgetown and protect us against

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ugliness and honky tonk. How could we be on opposite sides of the fence? From all the back windows of our Georgetown house we can see buildings with smooth walls, why must ours be brick? Surprised, and a little angry, I telephoned Vava with the sad news. Vava, wise from long experience with the French equivalent of the Commission, said, "Don't fight. You won't win and you will waste time and adrenalin." So I cabled Florance, all right, brick, and wondered how I could face Marc.

Just before we left Europe for home, another letter came from our architect explaining that the hearings before the Fine Arts Commission had delayed issuance of a building permit and our wall couldn't be finished on schedule. Taking a deep breath and starting again, I made up a new schedule. The wall was now to be completed by October 15.

Back in Georgetown, we were introduced to a building contractor named Elvin L. Brincefield. He said building a 30-foot-high wall would be extremely difficult because of the limited access to our garden. But he loved doing difficult things, especially if they were connected with artists. During the war he had been an Army officer in France and had worked out a scheme whereby artists like Raoul Dufy and others, virtually starving thanks to the German occupation, could earn a little feeding money by painting primitive souvenirs to be sold to GI's. Enchanted to discover such an artistic contractor, we signed an agreement.

Operations began with the digging of a hole large enough to take the foundation and footing necessary for so high a wall. The wall had to be tall enough to hide completely the neighboring building which had a slanting roof and other distracting features. As the digging

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continued, my archeological instincts were aroused as ancient horseshoes, and beautiful bits of solid brass horse harness turned up, as well as old mason jars, and an antique soup tureen, unfortunately broken. I immediately appropriated all the goodies for my "found objects" sculpture. Several chic belt buckles and half a dozen new pieces of sculpture resulted from the finds.

Less than a week later, Coke Florance called with more bad news. Elvin Brincefield, our contractor, had had a heart attack, his third, was hospitalized and out of commission for at least six months. Fortunately for us, he had two brothers, also in the building business, who would try to carry on with the work. Both of them had businesses of their own to run and often were not in touch with one another during emergencies. I soon found myself, like it or not, learning about the building business in order to keep the work moving.

There are District rules and regulations governing the building of all structures, and in our case they decreed that our wall must be heavily reinforced with steel. Even if the adjoining building were to be taken down the wall must still withstand winds of hurricane force without tumbling. There had to be enough steel strengthening in our concrete wall to compete successfully with the Egyptian pyramids. I never realized just how high 30 feet tall could be until the wooden concrete forms, growing upward like Jacob's ladder, eventually hid the neighboring house entirely. First the back of the frame rose, then tall, slender, upright steel rods were planted vertically at regular intervals, eventually forming a thick forest.

When the forms were completed, the largest crane in the world, bright shiny yellow and taller than our four story

house arrived for the "pouring" of the concrete. Pouring a concrete wall is something like D-Day. It requires a lot of preparation, you look forward to it, and count from it, and it's dangerous. Before it is over you know something about what the rest of the job is going to be like. By late afternoon the bottom half of the wall was filled and the men moved to the top of the wall and the tedious pouring process was repeated until the second half of the form was filled, too. A startling silence followed the departure of trucks and crane. We had come to the "critical" moment.

The critical moment in pouring a concrete wall of this size comes within two hours. The unstable mass of molten concrete can rampage like a flooded river and destroy anything in its path if the forms are not strong enough or there has been a miscalculation. After two hours the slow hardening process secures the wall's boundaries. I practiced shallow breathing for the next two hours and absolutely nothing happened.

A minimum of three days of ripening is required before it is safe to strip the wooden forms from a wall of our size. When the time was up the wooden walls which had gone up so slowly came down quickly in a day with horrid, wood crushing, nail pulling scream sounds. Then the incredible mess had to be removed so that the bricklayers whose turn it was next, would have room to move around with their bricks and mortar.

The day the bricklayers arrived to begin work, the bricks themselves hadn't. The drama of watching five idle master bricklayers waiting at union wages through a morning and most of an afternoon for bricks that were promised but hadn't arrived is traumatic. In late afternoon a young helper, like Magellan's sailors sighting land after their round-the-world voyage, reported, "Bricks in sight!"

I hated those bricks. Chagall hadn't wanted a brick wall. They added considerably to the cost of the wall. Paying heavily for something you don't want is entirely disagreeable. Still I had to admire their warm rosy pink color and my sculptor-carpenter soul responded with admiration and pleasure to the sight of five skilled bricklayers in simultaneous action. It's beautiful. The economy of motion, the knowing slap of mortar against the brick, the graceful removal of any excess, the slight, exact gentle blow with the handle of the trowel to set the brick just the right depth into the mortar, and the easy shift of trowel handle back to palm. Dance-like and hypnotizing to watch.

Just before the brick laying began, a brother of the contractor came to inquire how the mosaic panels were to be attached to the wall. In France, Melano had explained why he had to have a smooth concrete wall to work with. He always pins the mosaic panels to the wall with bronze pins set in cement, and then the entire face of the wall is covered with cement to the thickness of the panels, six centimeters. This encloses the mosaic and makes the smooth finish that Chagall demanded. Marc had said the mosaic must not protrude from the wall, nor must it be indented. We couldn't do it Melano's way and satisfy the Fine Arts Commission. But pinning the mosaic to a wall whose brick must remain visible would leave us with the mosaic protruding from the wall. We had to find a new way to do it.

But it was a weekend. Our architect was in the country out of reach. The bricklayers were scheduled for Monday morning. What to do? We had to invoke what we call chez nous Evvie Nef's law. This is an anti-panic device invented to calm nervous husbands, irritated housekeepers, and stumped plumbers and reads, "There is a

solution to every problem, the only difficulty is finding it." Sitting down with Mr. Brincefield, knowing a decision of some kind had to be made, we, of course, found an answer eventually. This was to lay the bricks an inch and a half away from the wall, except where the mosaic was to go. There they would be set back, flush against the wall, forming an indentation the exact size of the mosaic, 10 feet high and 17 feet wide. Mr. Brincefield left, and I developed a growing terror. Had I anticipated the ghastly possibilities for error? Had I measured the panels correctly? Suppose they didn't match? Poor Melano was tense and worried, too. He was kept waiting for more than a week before he could begin work because, of course, the wall wasn't ready when promised. He spoke no English! We spoke no Italian. French was our common language. Every question he asked had to be translated into English and the reply back into French. John's perfect French turned out to be too literary, strangely lacking the vocabulary needed by the workmen and he found switching difficult. My inferior French switched on and off quickly and seemed to include words like "beton" for concrete, "marteau" for hammer without searching. Pantomime, pen and pencil sketches, designs made with a stick in the earth—I used anything and everything to clarify communication. Knowing people often agree to something they don't understand, I developed the habit of recapitulation at the end of each discussion to make sure, and all too often found it was a good thing I had.

While Melano was restlessly waiting for the wall to be finished, 10 huge packing cases, each containing one mosaic panel, crowded the back of the garden. To divert his mind from his troubles which included opposition to brick walls in general, worry about delays, and the exact placement of the mosaic in the wall, I suggested

that we unpack the panels and lean them against the side of the house in the order that they would go up on the wall. Since Mr. Brincefield's heart attack, I had lost five pounds, running, scolding, fetching (everything we needed was always three flights up in my studio), telephoning and worrying. But when the first panel was removed from its excelsior packing, all grievances were instantly forgotten.

I was unprepared for the glorious color. Seen before only in the artificial light of Melano's studio in Biot, the mosaic was now entirely different in the bright sunlight for which it had been designed. It was dazzling. When all the panels were lined up in order, work stopped although there were hours to go before quitting time. Finally the silence was broken by the workmen's comments. "Isn't that something?" "Pretty, ain't it?" "Say, how long did it take to do that?" I was reminded of Chagall's classical answer to a young reporter who asked the same question: "70 years!"

Placing the first lower five panels in the depressed brick area was relatively simple. Gravity would hold them in position. But the upper panels, their bottoms resting only on the tops of the lower panels, they must be pinned in place and secured somehow until the cement dried. If one fell or slipped—disaster would result.

Time was now so short that Melano who was staying with us rose while it was still dark, breakfasting before the sun was up, so that no moment of daylight would be wasted. I got up too, to get his breakfast, and be available as translator and supplier of needed items ranging from plastic ice cream containers to hold different colored stones to raincoat and boots when it rained. He was on the scaffold from the moment it was light until sunset. By the time the lower panels were in place, the two masons

assisting Melano knew exactly what he wanted and began to anticipate his needs.

The weather had been marvelously kind just until the concrete and brick were properly cured. Rain was predicted, however, for the following day. Melano had to continue working if the mosaic was to be completed in time for our dedication party. One hundred invitations had been sent out and the French Ambassador had agreed to say a few words. We solved the problem by getting some of that heavy, enormously wide plastic that builders use to shelter workers from cold and wind and rigged up an enormous curtain across the entire top of the mosaic starting well above it and reaching far below. By draping it over the top of the scaffolding it made a cozy rainproof little house into which Melano disappeared at dawn and reappeared only for lunch and with the failing light. Undisturbed by the heavy, steady rain which continued all week long, he patiently, skillfully, covered the seams of all the panels and the outer frame with pieces of stone and glass. He was delighted with his shelter because unlike others erected for him his plastic tent permitted the light to penetrate, facilitating the matching of color and pattern.

At long last Melano was finished. When the scaffolding was finally removed, we found that, where it had rubbed against the mosaic, several stones had been dislodged. "May I see if I can replace one," I asked? Melano agreed, and, under his direction, I found the correct greenish stone that was needed, borrowed his hammer, which had one chisel-like cutting edge instead of the usual claw, chipped it until it was the proper shape, and then succeeded in splitting it against a small iron anvil until it fitted. Then Melano showed me how to chip away with his miniature chisel the underlying cement until a

little bed was prepared, how to wet the surface down, fill it with cement, place the stone and wipe away the excess. We were both surprised when I succeeded. Melano left behind his large box full of colored stones and glass and predicted that I would have no difficulty in making minor repairs should they be necessary in the future.

The brick wall, when finished, was a beautiful brick wall, and the color of the brick was lovely. Perhaps Chagall should have a chance to see it before it was painted. It would mean a delay of only one day, and there was a small chance that he might like it. Then the wall would not have to be painted. Saving a little money for a change was a wildly attractive idea. But Marc took one look at the brick and said *cauchemar, cauchemar*. (Nightmare, nightmare). So we instantly switched the conversation to what color gray it was to be painted. After a discussion which included consultation with Lino Melano and knowledgeable Vava Chagall the problem was solved by Marc's decision to mix the paint himself.

The next morning Mr. Clayborne, the painter, arrived, and Marc turned up early in the garden. At first the painter began to mix the paint under Marc's direction, but that didn't satisfy Marc. He asked for a brush. Once more I ran up to my studio and came down with a suitable one and picked up a board in passing to try out a sample color. Chagall rejected the board. The color wasn't going on wood, bring me a brick, several bricks, he said. A dozen bricks were brought, and Marc turned them with their long, narrow ends up, as they appeared on the wall itself, and only then would he begin to mix color—not just on the brick, but on the right side of the brick. He added a little black, and a little yellow. It wasn't dark enough, so more black was added, and then more yellow to balance. At last he had the color he wanted. Then he watched

while Mr. Clayborne mixed his paint to match. Darker, darker, he insisted. Satisfied at last, he said, put some on the wall, I must see it on the wall next to the mosaic. This was done but Marc could still see the "cauchemar" colored brick between the sample and the mosaic. Paint right up to the mosaic. The painter did. The paint was too light. Once more it was darkened, tried and pronounced right.

Marc Chagall has a fierce concern for every tiny detail connected with his art. It is one of the signs of his genius. Nothing is left to chance. That evening, he declared, "It must not have a second coat."

Tiptoeing, so as not to wake the sleeping house, I rose at the crack of dawn to warn Mr. Clayborne. But by the time I donned my dressing gown and looked out, half the wall already had a second coat. There was nothing to do but let him finish, and hope that Marc wouldn't notice. Actually, it looked splendid, and after a day of reassurance from Vava and me and John, Marc finally let the matter rest. Marc often says, "I have doubts about my work." This questioning is another sign of his greatness; he continues to strive for something better.

With the ending of daylight saving time, the days became noticeably shorter, and I realized our reception to honor the Chagalls was going to take place in the dark. The mosaic would have to be properly lit. It would not be easy because of the nature of mosaic, the myriad stones and its great size. Our architect found a lighting expert for us, Claude Engle, and soon he and his young architect apprentices came to experiment. Electricians laid new power lines, and a matter of hours before our party the temporary lighting was finished. The mosaic was ravishingly beautiful, different from the way it looked in the daytime, but beautiful.

At last everything that could be done was done. The

garden was clean, the temporary light covers painted brick color to blend with the old garden wall, the porch, from which we could look down on the mosaic, had been tidied. There had been no time to paint the floor so I unrolled an old oriental hall rug to make it look festive and removed most of the furniture. John sent a huge order of green orchid sprays airmail, special delivery, from Hawaii to beautify the house. We prayed the fine weather would hold. It had gotten warmer and still warmer, and, despite the fact that it was November 1, the thermometer registered over 80. I would never survive in the new, long-sleeved, black velvet dress, edged in fur, which I had bought for the event. Reluctantly, I slipped into a short-sleeved little black number, newly lengthened, theorizing that survival was more important than being decorative and that everyone would be looking at the mosaic and not at me.

Our best friends crowded into our living room. John made a short speech in French and introduced Charles Lucet, the Ambassador from France. When the ceremony was over we all gratefully trooped downstairs into the garden and fresh air. There a wonderful sight awaited.

The mosaic, perfectly lit, was vivant—alive. Only Chagall could have designed a mosaic light as air, that appeared to float and move. We could almost hear Orfeo's lute. His golden crown and silver girdle glistened in the light, rosy hued dresses of the three graces were joined by a winged green horse, and a yellow sun spread its sunshine throughout and was reflected in the brilliant blue water below. Somehow, gazing at great art, we were all transformed—we felt friendlier and more affectionate toward each other. A perfect demonstration, I thought, of what art is all about—a shared pleasure drawing us all closer and nourishing our spirit.