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Important Works by Lichtenstein, Martin, and De Kooning are Latest Gifts to National Gallery of Art from Preeminent Collectors Robert and Jane Meyerhoff; Gifts Since 1986 Have Transformed Postwar Collection

Washington, DC—The latest gifts of leading art collectors Robert and Jane Meyerhoff to the National Gallery of Art are three significant 20th-century works by major artists: *Girl with Beach Ball III*, a 1977 homage to Picasso and 1930s surrealism by Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997); *Field #2*, a 1963 classic grid painting by Agnes Martin (b.1912); and *Two Women*, 1952, an experimental and exploratory charcoal by Willem de Kooning (1904-1997) of one of his most prevalent subjects. This brings to 42* the total number of works given to the Gallery by the Meyerhoffs since 1986, works that have transformed the shape of the Gallery's postwar art collection.

"Through their remarkable acuity, exhaustive study, and close relationships with the artists, the Meyerhoffs have amassed one of the world's most outstanding collections of postwar art, primarily American, including an unsurpassed collection of works by modern masters Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, and Brice Marden," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "Their connoisseurship and generosity continue to help the Gallery build a superb contemporary collection, an effort that gained momentum with the construction of the East Building in the late 1970s."

Recent Gifts

Lichtenstein's *Girl with Beach Ball III*, an oil and magna on canvas measuring 80 x 66 inches, combines his early pop images with Picasso's 1932 painting *Bather with a*

Beach Ball. The girl with the tear and flowing blond locks is typical of many of Lichtenstein's surrealist images. He also incorporates elements from his 1960s landscapes, such as clouds floating across the sky and a blazing sun. Fields of black and white are a subtle contrast to fields of blue and white (the calm sea and sky). A curvilinear form in the lower register suggests sand piles or nude buttocks, while the craggy shape in the background is reminiscent of Monet's paintings of similar forms off the coast of France.

Martin's *Field #2*, measuring 74 7/8 inches square, is an early example of the strict grid in her oeuvre, a device that she adopted in 1962. The painting consists of a ghostly pencil grid over a thinly painted cool white ground and exemplifies the importance of drawing in Martin's work of this period. The lines are drawn to within almost two inches of the edge of the canvas, framing the grid with a narrow border. While the canvas is square, the ratio of vertical to horizontal lines drawn within is roughly three to two, creating a rectangular grid inside the square support. The lines fluctuate subtly, and the overall visual sensation is one of both flickering activity and whispering nuance.

In the early 1950s Willem de Kooning began his series of *Woman* paintings and related drawings. The velvety textures and wonderfully animated surface of *Two Women* are the result of the artist's gestural application of charcoal lines as much as his adept removal of them with the eraser. The architectural elements that form the background of this double-figure composition suggest the interior-exterior environment of the summerhouse porch in East Hampton, where de Kooning painted in the summer of 1952 as a guest of the late Leo Castelli and his then-wife Ileana Sonnabend, distinguished art collectors and dealers.

All three works were on view in the 1996 exhibition, **The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: 1945 to 1995**, at the National Gallery of Art, and *Two Women* was most recently on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and at the Gallery in the exhibition **Willem de Kooning: Tracing the Figure**. The paintings by Lichtenstein and Martin will be on view later during 2003 in the Gallery's East Building concourse galleries.

Past Gifts

The Meyerhoffs' most recent gifts reflect the level of quality that has been the trademark of their giving since 1986, the year they provided funding for the Gallery to purchase Barnett Newman's *Stations of the Cross* (1958-1966). This epic series of 14 abstract canvases is regarded by many as Newman's most important work and as a crucial link between New York action painting and minimal art of the 1960s generation.

Among the other gifts to date are works which often reflect an artist's turning point, such as Jasper Johns' *Perilous Night* (1982), which announced his new expressionistic direction, and Frank Stella's *Chodorow II* (1971), which signaled his push off the wall with constructed reliefs. Other important gifts include Claes Oldenburg's sculpture *Soft Drainpipe - Red (Hot) Version* (1967), a subject that inspired many interpretations by the artist; Clyfford Still's monolithic *1951-N* (1951), which reveals his repudiation of symbolism; and Howard Hodgkin's largest painting of an interior, *Souvenirs* (1980-1984).

The Meyerhoffs have made significant gifts to the Gallery annually in the past several years: in 1999, Robert Rauschenberg's *Bypass* (1959) and Andy Warhol's *Small Campbell's Soup Can, 19¢* (1962); in 2000, Franz Kline's *Turbin* (1959) and Mark Rothko's *(Untitled) Mauve and Orange* (1961); and in 2001, Roy Lichtenstein's *White Brushstroke II* (1965).

Future Gifts

Based on a 1987 agreement between the Meyerhoffs and the Trustees of the National Gallery of Art that was announced widely in the press, the Meyerhoffs' collection will eventually be donated to the National Gallery of Art and will be on public view in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and in galleries at Fitzhugh Farm, the Meyerhoffs' estate in Phoenix, Maryland, outside Baltimore.

The Meyerhoff Collection

While pursuing their passion of collecting art, Robert E. Meyerhoff, a real estate developer, and his wife, the former Jane M. Bernstein, raise thoroughbred racehorses and actively support the arts and higher education. Their children, now grown, are Rose Ellen Meyerhoff Greene, a member of the National Gallery of Art's Trustees' Council; Dr.

John O. Meyerhoff; and Neil A. Meyerhoff.

The Meyerhoffs began collecting art in the late 1950s with their purchase of Hans Hoffmann's *Autumn Gold* (1957), now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art. The New York School of abstract expressionism is well represented, from the gestural paintings of Willem de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Hans Hoffmann, Franz Kline, and Jackson Pollock, to the field compositions of Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, and Barnett Newman. The collection also embraces paintings and drawings by the most important members of succeeding generations, including contemporary artists Richard Serra and Terry Winters. The breathtaking concentrations of works by Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella, and Brice Marden demonstrate the intense aesthetic pleasure that the Meyerhoffs have found in the works of these artists.

* - The series of 14 canvases in Stations of the Cross is counted as one work.

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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 along 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. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on [Twitter](http://twitter.com/ngadc) at 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.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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