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**Press Release**

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**BREAKTHROUGH SCULPTURE BY RACHEL WHITEREAD  
ACQUIRED BY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART**

[New Acquisitions  
Announced by Director  
Powell](#)

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pictured above and below:

**Rachel Whiteread**

***Ghost*, 1990**

Plaster on steel frame

269 x 355.5 x 317.5cm

Gift (Partial and Promised) of The Glenstone Foundation

photo: Gagosian Gallery, New York



Washington, DC--National Gallery of Art director Earl A. Powell III announced the acquisition of British sculptor Rachel Whiteread's *Ghost* (1990), made possible by a partial and promised gift of The Glenstone Foundation, a foundation established by Mitchell P. Rales. The breakthrough piece by this celebrated artist will be prominently on view on the mezzanine above the East Building atrium beginning November 5, 2004.

"Whiteread is one of the most important artists of her generation," said Powell. "The acquisition of this late-20th-century icon demonstrates the Gallery's continuing and meaningful commitment to collecting contemporary art." The National Gallery's holdings in modern and contemporary paintings and sculptures span the 20th century and number approximately 1,017.

*Ghost*, Whiteread's best-known work, takes the form of a negative plaster cast of the space of an entire room in a London Victorian townhouse. It measures approximately nine feet wide, 11 1/2 feet high, and ten feet deep. Over the course of a three-month period, Whiteread cast the walls of the room in square sections that were based on compositional proportions derived from paintings by Italian Renaissance painter Piero della Francesca (1410/20–1492). The result is a spectral monument: a structure composed from a void in which the architectural elements defining and articulating that space--windows, doors, fireplace, tile grids, molding, light switch--appear in reverse.

*Ghost* engages multiple complex themes: the history of memorial architecture and symbolic space, the history and temporal implications of plaster as a medium that preserves or "freezes" an original, and the unexpected emotional potential of a minimal form.

### **Rachel Whiteread**

Born in 1963, Whiteread began working in London during the mid-1980s

when she was a student at the Slade School. From the beginning her work was closely engaged with the legacy of minimal and post-minimal art, including such figures as Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Bruce Nauman, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Eva Hesse. Eventually she turned to the casting process--initially in wax and plaster, later in resin--that allowed her to create quasi-abstract replicas of ordinary objects, parts of the body, and eventually empty space. In 1988 she made several works by taking plaster casts of domestic features which, as she put it, carry "the residue of years and years of use."

For the past 15 years, Whiteread has developed various approaches to casting and impression as both a process and a vehicle for content. She is represented in most major museums of modern and contemporary art and in many private collections. In 1993 she won the Tate Gallery's Turner Prize and in 1997 she represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale. Her public commissions include the Holocaust Memorial in Vienna, Austria, which was completed in 2000 and is located above the site of an excavated medieval synagogue.

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#### **General Information**

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden, located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, are open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free. For general information, call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176.

Visitors are 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 entrance of the East or West Building to permit X-ray screening and must be checked in the checkrooms at those entrances. Any items larger than 17 x 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms. For the safety of the art work and visitors, nothing may be carried on a visitor's back. Any bag or other item that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be checked.

The galleries for photographs are most easily accessed through the 7th Street and 6th Street entrances to the West Building.

[Click here](#) for detailed information on National Gallery location, hours, and policies.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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