

Release Date: November 4, 2005

National Gallery of Art Lends Art to Hong Kong and Seoul for the First Time with Exhibition of Works by Rothko; Co-Organized by Gallery and U.S. Department of State

Washington, DC – The National Gallery of Art, Washington, is lending an exhibition of 27 works by the preeminent American artist Mark Rothko (1903-1970) to Hong Kong and Seoul. Organized by the Gallery in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, **The Art of Mark Rothko: Selections from the National Gallery of Art** includes drawings, watercolors, gouaches, and paintings on canvas and paper in oil and acrylic dating from the late 1920s through 1970. They offer an overview of the artist's aesthetic and intellectual evolution over five decades.

Currently on view through January 8, 2006, at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, the exhibition will travel to the Hong Kong Museum of Art, March 31 through June 4, 2006, and to Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, which has the only works by Rothko in a public collection in the Republic of Korea, June 22 through September 10, 2006. This is the first survey of art by Rothko ever seen in each of the three countries. In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the artist's birth, a smaller version of the show traveled to Riga, Latvia, in 2003, and then to St. Petersburg, Russia, in time for the city's 300th anniversary in that same year.

"Since it opened to the public in 1941, the National Gallery of Art has worked with the U.S. Department of State and others to bring art to people throughout the world," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "Thanks to the Mark Rothko Foundation, the Gallery owns the largest and most comprehensive public repository of art by Mark Rothko and we consider it our responsibility to the international community

to share the collection as widely as possible.”

Rothko was born Marcus Rothkowitz in Dvinsk, Russia, (now Dugavpils, Latvia), on September 26, 1903, and immigrated to the United States with his family, settling in Portland, Oregon, in 1913. A central figure in the development of postwar painting in the United States, Rothko is best known for the powerful and hypnotic fields of color that characterized his work from the late 1940s onward, paintings on both canvas and paper that are among the landmarks of abstract expressionism.

The exhibition, which includes early representational images of figure, land, and city, followed by works from the transitional decade of the 1940s, reveals Rothko’s embrace of key modernist concerns and ends with his signature abstractions. Educational programs including tours and lectures, and special presentations by Gallery staff, will accompany the exhibition at each venue. The curator of the exhibition is Ruth Fine, curator of special projects in modern art, National Gallery of Art, who wrote an overview of the exhibition for bilingual catalogues and/or brochures to be available at each venue.

In 1986 the National Gallery was the primary recipient of the Mark Rothko Foundation’s largesse when it received 296 paintings on canvas and paper, as well as a study collection of more than 600 drawings and watercolors. The variety of this gift is reflected in the current exhibition. A changing selection of paintings is continuously on view at the Gallery and works on paper are available for study by appointment by calling (202) 842-6380. The Gallery also received research materials such as conservation records, photographs of works of art, and albums documenting the exhibition history of Rothko’s career. In 2005, Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko designated the National Gallery as the recipient of the manuscript for their father’s book, edited by Christopher Rothko and published in 2004 as *The Artist’s Reality: Philosophies of Art*.

As part of its commitment to Rothko’s art, the Gallery has copublished, with Yale University, *Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas* by David Anfam, which documents 835 paintings. The Gallery is currently seeking works by Rothko on paper, including paintings on paper mounted on canvas, wood, fiberboard, and other supports, for inclusion in the catalogue raisonné of this aspect of his production. These volumes are

being compiled by Ruth Fine with Laili Nasr and Janet Blyberg and presently include documentation for approximately 2,600 works.

To celebrate the Mark Rothko Foundation's planned gifts to institutions, the exhibition **Mark Rothko: Works on Paper**, organized by the Foundation and the American Federation of Arts, opened at the Gallery in 1984 and then traveled to seven museums throughout the United States. In 1998 Jeffrey Weiss, the Gallery's curator of modern and contemporary art, organized a retrospective exhibition, **Mark Rothko**, which opened in Washington and traveled to The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In 2003, to mark the centenary of Rothko's birth, the Gallery mounted **Mark Rothko: The Mural Projects**, including eight canvases from the Gallery's collection plus one major canvas borrowed from a private collector. As of November 2005, this installation remains on view indefinitely.

Additional information about Mark Rothko can be obtained by visiting the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov for a site search for "Rothko."

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State manages a wide range of academic, professional, and cultural exchanges that include approximately 30,000 participants annually, with the goal of increasing mutual understanding and respect between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. ECA arts and cultural programs reach out to foreign audiences to highlight the creativity, diversity, and dynamism of American society and its achievements, as well as to demonstrate the respect of the United States for the achievements of other cultures. For more information, visit www.exchanges.state.gov.

###

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 at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter 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:

Press Office

National Gallery of Art

2000B South Club Drive

Landover, MD 20785

phone: (202) 842-6353 e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Deborah Ziska

Chief of Press and Public Information

(202) 842-6353

ds-ziska@nga.gov