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74 Drawings from Preeminent Woodner Collection and the National Gallery of Art's first Works by Held, Kawara, and De Rossi are Among Early Major Acquisitions of 2006

Washington, DC – In one of the most important gifts of European master drawings ever presented to the National Gallery of Art, Andrea Woodner donated 74 works by master artists. The drawings, which span five centuries, were once part of one of the foremost private collections of old master and modern drawings in the United States formed by her father, the late Ian Woodner.

At its annual meeting on February 16, the Collectors Committee of the National Gallery of Art made possible the acquisition of *The Slanted Sink* (1985), a sculpture by preeminent baby-boomer artist Robert Gober (b.1954), and *Black Angel* (1964) by prominent New York painter Al Held (1928–2005), as well as two photographs by Robert Frank, and several prints and drawings by modern and contemporary artists. Early acquisitions for 2006 also included the Gallery's first works by On Kawara and Angelo de Rossi, as well as paintings by Nicolas de Largillière and Frans Snyders.

Woodner Gift

The earliest work in the Woodner gift is a rare 14th-century drawing of St. Christopher by an unknown Austrian artist; the latest is a costume design by the 19th-century symbolist Gustave Moreau. Of particular note is a significant group of Renaissance drawings by Italian, German, French, and Netherlandish artists, highlighted by an exquisite pen study of two angels by one of the leading artists in Florence, Fra Bartolommeo, and a study of three philosophers by one of the major artists in Venice,

Vittore Carpaccio.

The Renaissance drawings also include a serene chalk portrait of a French noblewoman by François Quesnel; a rare, red chalk compositional drawing by the Brescian artist Girolamo Romanino; and mannerist compositions by Francesco Salviati and Niccolo dell'Abate.

Among the key works from the 17th and 18th centuries are a watercolor of Dutchmen enjoying a variety of winter activities and entertainments on the frozen surface of the IJsel River by Hendrik Avercamp; an impressive group of Venetian works by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo and his son Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, including one of the latter's drawings showing the commedia dell'arte comic figure Punchinello hunting waterfowl; a large, highly refined, and precisely detailed watercolor of Naples by Giovanni Battista Lusieri; and several excellent drawings by French artists, including a prime work by François Boucher.

All of the drawings mentioned above were once part of the collection formed by Ian Woodner, who died in 1990. Upon his death the stewardship of the collection, numbering more than 1,000 drawings, passed to his daughters Dian Woodner and Andrea Woodner. In 1991 the Woodner sisters decided to preserve the core of the collection at the National Gallery of Art and selected 145 works to put on deposit. Of these, 44 were donated in a series of gifts made between 1991 and 2005. With the latest gift of 74 works, a total of 118 from that selection have now been donated to the Gallery. In addition, Dian and Andrea Woodner have given a number of other drawings beyond the original selection.

Of the 74 works in this recent gift, approximately 35 will be in the upcoming show, **Master Drawings from the Woodner Collections**, on view April 30 through October 1, 2006, in the West Building Central Ground Floor galleries, and another four will be on view in **The Poetry of Light: Venetian Drawings from the National Gallery of Art**, on view April 30 through October 1, 2006, in the West Building Ground Floor prints and drawings galleries.

Collectors Committee

The Slanted Sink belongs to Gober's brilliant early series of some three dozen Sink sculptures from the 1980s. These works allude to the tradition of the Duchamp readymade, above all Marcel Duchamp's notorious *Fountain* (a replica of which appears in the current Gallery exhibition **Dada**). The Sink series includes deadpan square and round sinks as well as exaggerated, eccentric, or "distorted" sinks, all are bizarre quasi-hallucinatory surrogates for the ordinary appliance with and without drain and faucet holes, which come to resemble staring eyes. *Slanted Sink* is a large example from the group of distorted sinks and superbly demonstrates the wit and formal presence of these objects. It will be on view in the East Building Concourse galleries in early March.

Black Angel is one of Held's seminal works of the early 1960s when he emerged from abstract expressionism as a painter of large-scale canvases of gigantic shapes in bold primary and secondary hues. The title of the work, *Black Angel*, probably alludes to the quasi-symmetrical composition of the painting, one that resembles a schematic depiction of wings. Held's surfaces are thick, flat, and shiny; he referred to the colors as "taxi-cab colors," an allusion to the jazzy dissonance of urban and commercial visual culture. His work continued to develop an increasingly complex approach to shape through deep projections of pictorial space. *Black Angel* is the first work by Held to enter the collection and will complement the Gallery's holdings in painting from this period and on this scale by such artists as Ellsworth Kelly and Robert Mangold. It will be on view in the East Building Concourse galleries in early April.

Two gelatin silver prints—*Mabou* (2004) and *Walking Walking* (2005) by photographer Robert Frank—were made possible by the Collectors Committee and an anonymous donor, while a third photograph by Frank, *Silent Shadows* (1997) was given by the artist. In addition, the Collectors Committee provided funds for the purchase of an important futurist volume, *Les Mots en liberté futuristes* (1919) by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti; a portfolio of twelve poignant lithographs, *Krüppel (Cripple)* (1920), by Heinrich Hoerle (which can be seen in the Gallery's **Dada** exhibition); a double-sided drawing in graphite by Theodore Roszak, *Studies for Constructivist Sculptures* (1936–1937); a conceptual work on paper, *Blind Time IV (Drawing with Davidson)* (1991), by Robert Morris; and a watercolor and pastel, *Re-Membering Memo: All Things*

Became Words (2005), by South African artist Deborah Bell.

The Collectors Committee, chaired by art collectors John Pappajohn of Des Moines and Roselyne Swig of San Francisco, was formed in 1975 to help the Gallery acquire works of modern and contemporary art.

Other Major Acquisitions

The Gallery was also able to acquire the following works through its Patrons' Permanent Fund:

Title (1965) by conceptual artist On Kawara (b.1933), currently on view in the East Building Concourse galleries, was loaned to the Gallery in late 2005 by the artist. Kawara moved from Japan to New York in the 1960s and his work is widely admired for establishing new coordinates for the representation of or allusion to time in painting. *Title* consists of three magenta panels arranged in a row and respectively inscribed in white with the words: ONE THING – 1965 – VIET NAM. It is the artist's breakthrough work, the one that precedes the invention of his "date" paintings. Meticulously crafted in multiple layers, the work's neutral regard to a subject so fraught with complex emotions is the source of its quiet and remarkable power. An essential work of postwar and contemporary art, it also positions itself in surprising relation to the great old-master tradition of history painting represented in the Gallery's West Building.

White Garden, Sky (1951) by Pousette-Dart (1916-1992), is an example of one of the artist's important White Paintings of the 1950s, in which he applied a fine draftsman's hand to a manner of abstract-expressionist painting, creating monochromatic works that are incised with a proliferating network of lines. The surface effect is delicate and light-filled, yet the thick paint, the scale of the works, and the all-over nature of the composition allow these paintings to be expansive and strong. This painting is an important addition to the Gallery's deep holdings of abstract-expressionist works by such artists as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Clyfford Still.

Agony in the Garden (c. 1700) by Angelo de Rossi (1671–1715) is an oval relief made of repoussé copper with some separately made high-relief elements attached. It depicts with great clarity and compassion Christ's agony in the garden on the Mount of

Olives. Moving to Rome from his native Genoa, the young De Rossi quickly won recognition as a master of Roman baroque relief sculpture. His design for the oval *Agony in the Garden* may have been made for the great composer Arcangelo Corelli, a discerning collector and, like De Rossi, a protégé of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. The cardinal reportedly acquired the relief when the artist and composer could not agree on the price. There are few works in existence by De Rossi. *Agony in the Garden* will go on view in the West Building Sculpture Galleries in late May 2006.

Self-Portrait (1707) depicts the major French portrait painter Nicolas de Largillière (1656–1746) in his studio and reveals through its bravura brushwork and sophisticated coloring how the artist surpassed the sober Anglo-Flemish portrait tradition to forge a new freedom and fluency in French portraiture. Largillière studied in Antwerp and worked in London with portrait painter Sir Peter Lely before going to Paris in 1682, where he became a popular painter of the French bourgeoisie. The Gallery holds two portraits—one early and one late—by Largillière. Now it has a third, a mid-career self-portrait, which is on view in the West Building.

Still Life with Grapes and Game (c. 1630s) by Flemish artist Frans Snyders (1579–1657) is painted in the artist's characteristic bright and direct colors, with textures indicated by free and firm brushstrokes. The focus of the still life is an enormous central basket laden with grapes. On a deep red tablecloth are a tazza, Wan-li bowl, and dead game birds. Snyders created a new form of still life in the early 17th century by combining fruit and game in a single work. Born in Antwerp, he trained with Pieter Brueghel the Younger and collaborated with Sir Peter Paul Rubens before achieving international fame for his lavish and abundant still lifes.

Still Life with Grapes and Game fills a void created when the Gallery returned Snyders' *Still Life with Fruit and Game* (1615/1620) to the authorized representative of the Stern family who learned about the work's provenance from the Gallery's Web site. The Gallery determined that *Still Life with Fruit and Game* was likely to have been confiscated by the Nazis from the Stern collection in Paris sometime before the German art dealer Karl Haberstock acquired it in 1941. The Gallery has done exhaustive research on the provenances of works in its collections, the results of which have been posted on its Web site.

An impressive group of works on paper made possible by individual donors includes the following: Alessandro Allori's 1570 study of a muscular male nude in preparation for his major fresco in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, a gift from David E. Rust; Theodore Chasseriau's powerful black chalk portrait of his friend Auguste Ottin, made in 1833 (earlier than any of the portraits in the recent retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) with funds from Helen Porter and James T. Dyke; 13 British watercolors and drawings, including two landscapes by Thomas Gainsborough, a gift from Sanford and Mimi Feld; and six more works by Edvard Munch, including his haunting portrait of Eva Mudocci of 1903, from the Epstein family.

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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.

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