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## Salomon Van Ruysdael Masterpiece and Renowned Wolfgang Ratjen Collection are Among Late 2007 Acquisitions by National Gallery of Art



Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/03–1670)

*Ferry on a River*, 1649

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington

Patrons' Permanent Fund and the Lee and Juliet Folger Fund. This acquisition was made possible through the generosity of the family of Jacques Goudstikker, in his memory.

Washington, DC—A landmark of Dutch landscapes, *Ferry on a River* (1649) by Salomon van Ruysdael (1603–1670), and one of the finest private European holdings of old master drawings—the Wolfgang Ratjen collection of 185 Italian and German drawings—were acquired by the National Gallery of Art in late 2007. Salomon van Ruysdael's masterpiece will go on view in the West Building Dutch galleries on January 18, 2008. The Gallery plans an exhibition of the Ratjen Collection accompanied by a complete scholarly catalogue, within the next two years. Until then, works may be

viewed by appointment by calling (202) 842-6380.

“We are extremely pleased to add these important works to our collection,” said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. “*Ferry on a River* sets a standard in landscape painting and becomes our first Salomon van Ruysdael. The Ratjen Collection is a monument to a sophisticated connoisseur’s exquisite taste and his intense desire to continually refine his holdings.”

### **Van Ruysdael’s Masterpiece**

Salomon van Ruysdael, one of the leading landscape painters of his generation, was renowned for the atmospheric effects he created in his images of life along peaceful Dutch waterways. In the 1640s he helped lay the foundation for the classical period of Dutch landscape and influenced a generation of artists, including his nephew Jacob van Ruysdael, Meindert Hobbema, and Aelbert Cuyp, who are well-represented in the Gallery’s collection. A Gallery retrospective in 2001 featured the work of Cuyp.

Salomon’s *Ferry on a River*, signed and dated 1649, is both imposing in scale (39 1/6 x 52 1/2 in.) and visually compelling. It depicts a ferryboat filled with travelers, including some seated in a horse-drawn carriage, crossing a broad river near a turreted castle. A large clump of trees silhouetted against the windswept blue sky provides a framework for the animals and humans activating the scene. Light floods into this harmonious composition, illuminating the leaves of the trees as well as the distant sailboats and village church.

The acquisition, which was made possible with funds from the Patrons’ Permanent Fund and The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund, marks the first painting by Salomon van Ruysdael to enter the Gallery’s collection. The painting was in the collection of the Dutch dealer Jacques Goudstikker before World War II and was recently restituted to the Goudstikker heirs, from whom the Gallery acquired it in a private sale through the assistance of Christie’s, New York. Prior to its restitution, the painting had hung in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam from 1960 until 2005.

### **Ratjen Collection of Masterworks on Paper**

The Ratjen Collection includes 66 Italian drawings dating from the High Renaissance until the end of the 18th century and 119 German drawings dating from 1580 to 1900, which form a unique survey of works by the most important artists from the German-speaking areas of Europe, including Switzerland and Austria. Among the early Italian masterworks are a large mythological banquet scene by Luca Penni (1500/1504–1557) and the monumental *Holy Family with the Infant John the Baptist* by Pellegrino Tibaldi (1527–1596), one of the foremost artists working in papal Rome in the mid-16th century.

The Italian works also include the watercolor *A Marmot with a Branch of Plums* (1605) by Jacopo Ligozzi (1547–1627), the finest still-life draftsman at the court in Florence, as well as two fantastic designs for elaborate Medici banquet centerpieces by Stefano della Bella (1610–1664) and his large, elegant *Fall of Phaeton* (c. 1655). Among principal works from the 18th century are one of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's (1696–1770) most powerful studies of a male figure in red and white chalk on brilliant blue paper, as well as Canaletto's (1697–1768) finest surviving drawing, *The Maundy Thursday Festival before the Ducal Palace in Venice* (c. 1766).

The Ratjen Collection, added to the Gallery's already strong holdings, creates the finest survey of German drawings in a museum outside Europe. Many of the German artists represented in the collection are not as well known in the United States because American collectors typically have focused on Italian, Dutch, and French art. Among the outstanding early works are those by the three most important German mannerists, Friedrich Sustris (c. 1540–1599), working primarily in Munich; Hans von Aachen (1552–1615), working at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II in Prague; and Hans Rottenhammer (1564/1565–1625), working in Venice and Augsburg. Adam Elsheimer (1578–1610), a favorite artist of both Rubens (1577–1640) and Rembrandt (1606–1669), is represented by an extremely rare atmospheric gouache, his finest work in the United States.

Ratjen especially pursued art by the great 18th-century painters who filled Bavarian churches and palaces with elaborate rococo altarpieces and ceiling frescoes. In the next generation, German artists' development of a particular sensitivity to nature is represented by an extensive series of luminous drawings and watercolors, highlighted

by five works by Johann Georg von Dillis (1759–1841) and Caspar David Friedrich's (1774–1840) romantic masterpiece *New Moon above the Mountains of the Riesengebirge* (1810). All major movements of the 19th century are also represented, from romanticism to realism to impressionism and symbolism. A stunning group of five works by Adolph von Menzel (1815–1905) includes a famously bold but sensitive pastel portrait of his sister *Emilie* (1851).

Wolfgang Ratjen (1943–1997), one of the most discerning collectors of the 20th century, was born to a banking family in Berlin, but moved as an infant with his family to Liechtenstein. While at university, his love for classical music was followed by a passion for old master drawings. That passion, he once said with his characteristic humor, was “the most wonderful disease you can imagine,” and it led him to become a professional collector. Ratjen pursued art-historical knowledge as well as connoisseurship. With remarkable objectivity, he refined his collection throughout his life, frequently upgrading or replacing good works with better ones.

After Ratjen's death the collection was cared for by the Ratjen Foundation in Liechtenstein, from which the Gallery acquired it with private funds, including the Paul Mellon Fund and the Patrons' Permanent Fund.

### **Other Late 2007 Acquisitions**

Other gifts of drawings in late 2007 included a major 1914 collage by Sonia Delaunay and a powerful late work by Paul Klee, both from The Judith Rothschild Foundation, as well as an early work by Arshile Gorky, given by Ruth Cole Kainen. Gifts of prints were highlighted by the finest known impression of Jacques Villon's 1913 cubist drypoint, *Yvonne D. from the Front*, also from the Rothschild Foundation. These will all be included in the exhibition **Medieval to Modern: Recent Acquisitions of Drawings, Prints, and Illustrated Books**, on view from May 4 through November 2, 2008.

A diverse range of works was added to the Gallery's photography collection. Some 93 conceptual photographs from the collection of Eileen and Michael Cohen include the work of artists such as Bruce Nauman (b. 1941), Vito Acconci (b. 1940), Andy Warhol (1928–1987), Mel Bochner (b. 1940), Bernd and Hilla Becher (1931–2007; b. 1934),

and Giuseppe Penone (b. 1947), among others.

In addition, 120 American snapshot photographs from the collection of Robert E. Jackson were given to the Gallery. The Jackson images were included in a recent Gallery exhibition, **The Art of the American Snapshot: Photographs from the Robert E. Jackson Collection, 1888–1978**, and augment Jackson's 2006 gift of 16 snapshots and one album and his promised gift of an additional 87 works. All are featured in the Gallery's recent publication of the same title, which recently won the College Art Association's Alfred Barr, Jr. award for outstanding museum publication of 2007. The exhibition is on view at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, February 16 through April 27, 2008. Other notable additions include six photographs by Sid Grossman (1913–1955), five by Edouard Baldus (1813-1889), as well as works by Eugène Cuvelier (1837-1900), Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978), and others.

### **Highlights of Earlier 2007 Acquisitions**

Previously in 2007, the National Gallery of Art announced several important acquisitions, among them one of the finest European ivory carvings of the Roman baroque, *Christ Bound* (1620s), attributed to François Duquesnoy (1597–1643); and Martin Schongauer's (c. 1450–1491) *Christ Enthroned, with Two Angels*, 1475/80, which expands the Gallery's already outstanding collection of this artist's work. The Gallery acquired its first major sculpture by Donald Judd (1928–1994), *Untitled* (1963), currently installed in front of the wall drawing *Theory of Boundaries* (1967–1970) by Mel Bochner (b. 1940).

The National Gallery of Art also acquired one of J.M.W. Turner's finest late watercolors, *Oberwesel* (1840), featured in the recent Turner retrospective at the Gallery, as well as William Merritt Chase's outstanding pastel *Nude in an Oriental Setting* (1888), a bequest of Margaret and Raymond Horowitz. A major gift of more than 350 contemporary works was received from Herbert and Dorothy Vogel. In addition, a number of recent gifts and purchases of prints by Robert Rauschenberg are currently on view through March 30, 2008, in the Gallery exhibition **Let the World In: Prints by Robert Rauschenberg from the National Gallery of Art and Related Collections**.

The photography collection expanded with the addition of 41 rare and distinguished British 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s photographs, including 14 by David Octavius Hill (1802–1870) and Robert Adamson (1821–1848); nine by Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–1879); two by Oscar G. Rejlander (1813–1875); and one each by William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), Roger Fenton (1819–1869), Hugh Diamond (1809–1886), and Henry Peach Robinson (1830–1901), among others. The Gallery also acquired *Funkturm Berlin (Berlin Radio Tower)* (1928), a seminal work by László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946) included in the traveling exhibition **Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945**.

In March, the Gallery's Collectors Committee made possible the acquisition of two key works that expanded the Gallery's postwar art collection: *Twelve Events in a Dual Universe* (1978), the most ambitious painting done by Alfred Jensen (1903–1981), and *Untitled* (1976), a sculpture by Robert Morris (b. 1931) from his seminal Felts series. Also acquired were works by Ed Ruscha (b. 1937), Sean Scully (b. 1945), Ana Mendieta (1948–1985), and Sam Taylor-Wood (b. 1967).

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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) (<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](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.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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