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The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States, A National Gift Program of Contemporary Art is Launched by the National Gallery of Art, The National Endowment for the Arts, and The Institute of Museum and Library Services



Dorothy and Herbert Vogel look at a drawing by Richard Tuttle from their collection in the Print Study Room, National Gallery of Art, 1992. Photo by Lorene Emerson, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gallery Archives.

Washington, DC—(Updated December 9, 2008) New York collectors Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, with the assistance of the National Gallery of Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, have launched a national gifts program entitled *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States*. It is distributing 2,500 works from the Vogels' collection of contemporary art throughout the nation, with fifty works going to a selected art institution in each of the fifty states.

The best-known aspects of the Vogel Collection are minimal and conceptual art, but

these donations also explore numerous directions of the post-minimalist period, including works of a figurative and expressionist nature. Primarily a collection of drawings, the 2,500 works the Vogels are donating also include paintings, sculptures, photographs, and prints by more than 170 contemporary artists, mainly working in the United States, including Will Barnett (b. 1911), Robert Barry (b. 1936), Lynda Benglis (b. 1941), Dan Graham (b. 1942), Sol LeWitt (1928–2007), Robert Mangold (b. 1937), Sylvia Plimack Mangold (b. 1938), Edda Renouf (b. 1943), Pat Steir (b. 1940), and Richard Tuttle (b. 1941).

The National Endowment for the Arts funded the publication of a book, *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States* for limited distribution to the museums. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is providing funds for the disbursement of the art (under the supervision of the National Gallery of Art) to the fifty institutions and for the development of a Web site to serve as both an information center and exhibition area for this project.

The Vogel Collection and the National Gallery of Art

The National Gallery of Art has worked closely with Dorothy and Herbert Vogel since 1991, when it acquired a portion of their collection, through partial purchase and gift from the Vogels. Since the couple formed their association with the National Gallery, the Vogels' collection has continued to grow to include some 4,000 works, far more than can appropriately be placed in a single institution.

To date, the Vogels have donated 832 works to the Gallery and another 268 are promised gifts. "The generosity of Dorothy and Herb has enhanced our collection of contemporary art immeasurably," said Earl A. Powell III, Gallery director. "Of five wonderful wall drawings by Sol LeWitt donated by them, two are currently on view in the East Building, along with two works each by Lynda Benglis and Richard Tuttle."

Works from the collection have appeared in numerous exhibitions throughout the world, including two major exhibitions organized by the National Gallery that were selected solely from their collection. In 1994, *From Minimal to Conceptual Art: Works from the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection* was on view at the National Gallery of Art. It was

also seen in 1997 at the Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery in Austin, and the Portland Art Museum in Oregon. In 1998, the exhibition traveled abroad to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel, and the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku, Finland. Following its 2002 presentation in Washington, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude in the Vogel Collection* was on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego.

The Project Book

The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States, supported and published by the NEA, in association with the National Gallery of Art, features introductory remarks by Earl A. Powell III, Dana Gioia, chairman of the NEA, and Annelinda M. Radice, director of the IMLS; a note by Dorothy Vogel; and an essay by curator Ruth Fine on the history of the Vogel Collection, the Vogels' relationship with the National Gallery, and the development of the national gifts program. The book will be distributed in limited quantities for use as a catalogue at each of the participating venues and as a way for institutions to make the public aware of the artists represented.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support this ambitious project. The generosity shown by the Vogels in their eagerness to share their marvelous collection with the entire nation is truly inspiring. Part of the NEA's mission is to ensure greater access to the arts. What better way to promote that mission than through Fifty Works for Fifty States?" said chairman Gioia.

The volume lists the artists in the individual institutional donations and reproduces four works from each museum's gift, including at least one by each artist represented. Catalogue information for illustrated works has been compiled by Mary Lee Corlett, research associate in the Gallery's department of special projects in modern art.

The Project Web Site

The IMLS is funding the creation of a Web site, www.vogel50x50.org, which will serve as both an information center and exhibition area for this project. The interactive Web destination, which is being developed under the aegis of the National Gallery of Art, will enable each museum to create a section about its own Vogel Collection donation. This Web site will eventually allow museums with a limited Web staff to reach the widest

audience possible, and museums with strong Web programs to create features that link to the Vogel project Web site. "With this generous gift, the Vogels are sharing their passion for art and artists that represent a significant period of art-making in the United States—the last fifty years. IMLS is proud to help bring this extraordinary collection to people in every state and create a Web-based learning resource for all Americans," said Anne-Imelda M. Radice, director of the IMLS.

The Vogels and Their Collection

The Vogel Collection has been characterized as unique among collections of contemporary art, both for the character and breadth of the objects and for the individuals who created it. Herbert Vogel (b. 1922), spent most of his working life as an employee of the United States Postal Service, and Dorothy Vogel (b. 1935), was a reference librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library. Setting their collecting priorities above those of personal comfort, the couple used Dorothy's salary to cover the expenses of daily life and devoted Herbert's salary to the acquisition of contemporary art. With the exception of the collection formed by their friend, artist Sol LeWitt, no other known private collection of similar work in Europe or America rivals the range, complexity, and quality of the art the Vogels acquired.

As the first collectors to buy work by many artists who were then unknown to a wide audience, the Vogels offered encouragement at the start of the careers of several figures who went on to achieve considerable acclaim. Owing to these artists' continuing close relationship with the collectors, many works of art collected by the Vogels were gifts, marking special occasions—such as Dorothy and Herbert's birthdays and wedding anniversary—and often personally inscribed. In this sense the Vogels' collection is a keen reflection of their friendships with artists.

Artists' use of drawing as a primary medium has expanded during the years in which the Vogel Collection has been formed, and interest in drawings on the part of contemporary collectors has expanded as well. However, when the Vogels began collecting in the early 1960s, their focus on drawing was an unusual one, suggesting another aspect of their prescience. Many drawings in the collection represent an artist's initial form of an idea, and others act as plans to be followed by a collaborator in the

making of a work of art. This emphasis on drawings adds to the unique and intimate nature of the Vogel Collection, making their gifts an important educational tool for museums. Another educational focus of the Vogels since 1980 has been their ongoing donation of artist-related records to the Archives of American Art, Washington, DC.

"We hope this will be a truly national program, and that it will make the work of the many artists we admire familiar to a wider audience. We also hope our gifts will enable museums throughout the country to represent a significant range of contemporary art," said Dorothy Vogel on behalf of the couple. Inspired by the Kress Foundation's placement of old master paintings throughout the United States in the middle of the last century, the Vogels hope that their project will, as a parallel effort, enhance knowledge of the art of our time.

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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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