

Release Date: September 30, 2011

Family of Harry Callahan Gives Stellar Collection of Artist's Photographs to National Gallery of Art



Harry Callahan, *Eleanor*, New York, 1945

gelatin silver print

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the Callahan Family

© Estate of Harry Callahan, courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York

Washington, DC—In honor of *Harry Callahan at 100*, the Callahan family—including the artist's wife, Eleanor, and daughter, Barbara—has given the Gallery an extraordinary gift of 45 of his photographs, 34 of which are included in the exhibition.

"It was Callahan's hope that the National Gallery's collection of his work would one day be one of the finest in the world and would rival its exceptional holdings of photographs by other 20th-century photographers, such as Walker Evans and Robert Frank," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "These generous gifts from the Callahan family, as well as gifts from other donors, have helped to accomplish that goal. Together with earlier gifts and purchases of Callahan's art, the Callahan family

photographs bring the Gallery's collection to 152 photographs by this important American artist, making it one of the most distinguished in existence."

The works from the Callahan family range from a very rare early self-portrait, made in 1942 in homage to Alfred Stieglitz, to six exceptionally beautiful portraits of Eleanor from 1942 to 1953, to his last vivid color photographs of the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, there are examples of his innovative experiments of the 1940s and 1950s, including multiple exposures of urban scenes, as well as powerful portraits of anonymous pedestrians from the early 1960s. These prints, many of which were included in the Gallery's 1996 show *Harry Callahan* and have been on long-term loan ever since, were selected by Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head of the department of photographs, in consultation with Callahan himself, to represent his finest contributions to the art of photography.

The National Gallery's collection of photographs by Harry Callahan has largely been formed through gifts from several individuals. In addition to the present gift from the Callahan family, Susan and Peter MacGill and Ann Solomon have given many Callahan photographs to the National Gallery, several of which were included in the 1996 *Harry Callahan* exhibition and are presented in *Harry Callahan at 100*. The MacGills have also promised seven more Callahan photographs to the Gallery. These include four vintage photographs of Eleanor and Barbara from the late 1940s and early 1950 and two evocative pictures of Cape Cod from the 1970s which are included in *Harry Callahan at 100*.

Harry Callahan at 100

The year 2012 marks the centenary of the birth of Harry Callahan, whose highly experimental, visually daring, and elegant photographs made him one of the most innovative artists of the 20th century. On view in the West Building of the National Gallery of Art from October 2, 2011, through March 4, 2012, ***Harry Callahan at 100*** explores all facets of his work in some 100 photographs, from its genesis in the early 1940s in Detroit to its flowering in Chicago in the late 1940s and 1950s, and finally to its maturation in Providence and Atlanta from the 1960s through the 1990s. Organized thematically and chronologically, the exhibition examines Callahan's work in relation to

the places where he lived and to his family, unveiling his unparalleled devotion to both his subjects and the medium of photography.

The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art.

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the Trellis Fund.

Harry Callahan (1912–1999)

Born in Detroit in 1912, Callahan began to photograph in 1938. Although he received no formal training in the medium, his exceptional talent was immediately recognized. In 1946 László Moholy-Nagy hired him to teach at the Institute of Design in Chicago. There and at the Rhode Island School of Design (he moved to Providence in 1961) Callahan taught generations of younger photographers, inspiring them both with the creativity of his vision and his steadfast commitment to the medium. In a career that spanned nearly six decades, he repeatedly explored a few select themes—his wife, Eleanor, and daughter, Barbara; nature; and the urban environment. Yet each time he returned to a familiar subject, he reinvented it, endowing each photograph with both a personal and symbolic significance.

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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 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:

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