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National Gallery of Art Acquires Sculptures by Richard Artschwager, Allan McCollum, and Hans Haacke; Video Installation by Rineke Dijkstra and Seminal Work by Ed Ruscha Also Acquired

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Richard Artschwager

American, 1923-2013

Piano/Piano, 1963-65/2011

lamine on wood

88.9 x 200.7 x 121.6 cm (35 x 79 x 47 7/8 in.)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the Collectors Committee

Photo by Lee Ewing, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Washington, DC—At its annual meeting in March, the Collectors Committee of the National Gallery of Art made possible the acquisition of *Piano/Piano* (1963–1965/2011) by Richard Artschwager, a major example of the wooden sculptures that employ Formica as a laminate, for which he is known; *Plaster Surrogates* (1982/1989) by Allan McCollum, the last large grouping available of the artist's signature works in this series; and *Condensation Wall* (1963–1966/2013) by Hans Haacke, a breakthrough kinetic work from the artist's early career.

"This year, the Collectors Committee's selection brings the Gallery three important works of modern sculpture," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are very grateful to the Collectors Committee, which enables the Gallery to continually enhance its holdings of modern art."

The Collectors Committee discretionary fund for photographs, drawings, and prints also supported the acquisition of the Gallery's first work by Rineke Dijkstra, a three-channel HD video installation with sound, as well as Ed Ruscha's renowned *Stains* (1969), 75 individual stains on 75 sheets of paper.

Richard Artschwager, *Piano/Piano*, 1963–1965/2011

On view in the East Building, Richard Artschwager's *Piano/Piano* joins several other sculptures by the artist, including a small related study, *Piano #1* (1965), in the Vogel Collection. The artist's retrospective, *Richard Artschwager!*, closed at the Whitney Museum on February 3 and will tour to the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and the Haus der Kunst, Munich, later this year.

Piano/Piano reflects both Artschwager's purist training and his subsequent

work as a cabinetmaker. The project was planned in several drawings and a collage from 1963 to 1965, but only executed recently, under the artist's supervision, for a 2012 exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in Rome. Playing on the classic minimal box so much in evidence in the mid-1960s, Artschwager "fills" it with a depiction of two interlocked pianos, referencing both synthetic cubism (the wood graining) and surrealism (the mustache/bracket, one of his favorite devices).

Richard Artschwager (1923–2013) was a maverick who consistently resisted styles and categories while using sometimes repulsive materials to make objects of rare beauty. A native of Washington, DC, Artschwager studied in New York City with the purist painter Amédée Ozenfant before becoming a furniture maker. In 1958 a fire destroyed his business while exhibitions of the work of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg shook his faith in modernist painting and helped launch him on his singular artistic path. Artschwager died February 9, 2013, at age 89.

Allan McCollum, *Plaster Surrogates*, 1982/1989

This collection of Allan McCollum's *Plaster Surrogates* has been exhibited around the world, in the Museum of Modern Art's 1999 *The Museum as Muse* exhibition (where it became the show's centerpiece), as well as at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland; the IVAM Centre dell Carme, Valencia, Spain; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California, among others. The first major grouping of McCollum's *Surrogates* in the Gallery's collection, it joins two small *Surrogates* (both 1983, in the Vogel Collection) and a massive print project, *Each and Every One of You* (2002/2004). The installation of *Plaster Surrogates* at the Gallery will be announced at a later date.

McCollum is best known for his *Surrogates*—multiple, related objects installed en masse as anonymous stand-ins for paintings or sculptures. Part paintings, part sculptural objects, McCollum created the *Surrogates* as emblems, or signs, for his individual artistic practice. Made in quantity, they form collections and take on further meaning in regard to the history of collecting, viewing, and displaying art, which is underscored by the artist's instructions to hang the *Surrogates* in an all-over "salon" style.

Born in Los Angeles in 1944, Allan McCollum has devoted his career to exploring the nature of the art object and its audience in an era of mass production. *Plaster Surrogates* (1982/1989) was the last large grouping available. McCollum conceived its 480 elements in 1982, then cast them and painted the black "images" within "mats" and "frames" in 1989.

Hans Haacke, *Condensation Wall*, 1963–1966/2013

The acquisition of Hans Haacke's *Condensation Wall* introduces an important example of kinetic art into the collection, joining works by Alexander Calder, Harry Bertoia, and George Rickey. It also has strong resonances with the Gallery's holdings of minimal art, in particular Larry Bell's *Chrome and Glass Construction* (1965), Anne Truitt's *Knight's Heritage* (1963), and Tony Smith's *Die* (model 1962, fabricated 1968). *Condensation Wall* may be seen in the East Building's Concourse Galleries.

Reflecting Haacke's involvement with the West German-based group Zero, *Condensation Wall* is part of a set of works, including *Condensation Cube* and *Condensation Floor*, that combine geometric shapes and organic materials to reveal physico-dynamical processes. Contemporaneous with minimal sculpture, Haacke's work transforms the boxlike forms and industrial fabrication of artists like Donald Judd and Larry Bell into a micro-environment contingent with its surroundings: depending on the ambient temperature of the gallery, the water inside collects and "rains." The

transparent box allows the viewer to perceive this natural process, the gallery in which the works are displayed, and the surrounding works all at once.

Cologne-born artist Hans Haacke (born 1936) is one of the leading figures of conceptual art and post-minimalism, and one of the most important political artists working today. After studying in Kassel and Philadelphia, he moved to New York in 1965. There he befriended the emerging circle of minimalist artists including Eva Hesse and Carl Andre, and participated in the seminal conceptual exhibitions *When Attitudes Become Form* (Kunsthalle Bern, 1969), and *Information* (Museum of Modern Art, 1970).

Rineke Dijkstra, *I See a Woman Crying (Weeping Woman)*, 2009

For two decades, the Dutch artist Rineke Dijkstra has been celebrated for her penetrating portraits that strive to reveal, as she has said, "the specialness of the ordinary." While she is acclaimed for her large-scale photographic portraits that express emotional depth and complexity, she has also made videos since the mid-1990s. The most accomplished of these is *I See a Woman Crying (Weeping Woman)* (2009), which is on view through Labor Day in the West Building Project Room (on the Ground Floor adjacent to the West Building Lecture Hall). Its purchase was made possible by Joseph M. Cohen and the Collectors Committee.

The work consists of three adjacent screens across which viewers see nine British boys and girls, all about 11 years old, wearing Catholic school uniforms, standing before a white background. They have been asked to speak about a painting that is never shown or identified in the video: Picasso's *Weeping Woman* (1937, Tate Modern). They begin by slowly describing the painting, yet their remarks quickly escalate as their imaginations are sparked: "Maybe her stepmum was like...evil; maybe nobody liked her"; "Maybe that's a million-pound bill and she can't pay it." With the naïveté of youth and the safety of the camaraderie of a group of friends, the children are unconcerned with providing the "right" answers and instead simply express their ideas. Thus, the video achieves the same level of startling authenticity that Dijkstra captures in her still photographs.

Ed Ruscha, *Stains*, 1969

In the late 1960s Ed Ruscha tired of the way that painting, as he perceived it, resembled a "skin that sits on the surface of a canvas." As an alternative, he turned to staining. The Gallery's newly acquired *Stains* (1969) includes 75 sheets of paper stained with 75 different ingredients and represents Ruscha's first venture in this unusual medium.

An index that accompanies the work provides an authoritative inventory of all 75 stains: number 9 is spot remover (Energine), number 14 is gunpowder, 27 is sulfuric acid, 31 is bacon grease, 38 is petroleum jelly, 43 is blue cheese salad dressing (Kraft Roka), 45 is egg yolk, 57 is parsley, and so on. An additional 76th stain is the artist's blood—defiling, as it were, the white silk moiré fabric that lines the edition's black leather box. The high seriousness of *Stains'* presentation is at odds with the project's wonderful absurdity and underscores Ruscha's statement that "the important thing is to believe in what you are doing, even if it's absurd." Plans to display *Stains* will be announced at a later date.

Collectors Committee

The Collectors Committee was formed in 1975 to help select and finance commissions to fill the great public spaces of the East Building, which was then under construction. It has continued to acquire major 20th- and 21st-century paintings and sculpture for the Gallery and has also established a

curatorial discretionary fund for acquiring prints, drawings, and photographs. To date, the Collectors Committee has made possible the acquisition of more than 300 works of art; approximately half of these acquisitions have been works by living artists. Founding benefactor Paul Mellon asked Ruth Carter Stevenson, chair of the Gallery's Board of Trustees from 1993 to 1997, to be the first chair of the Collectors Committee. Denise Saul, a major collector of 20th-century art, is the current chair of the Collectors Committee. Saul lives in New York with her husband Andrew and is a leading cultural philanthropist.

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 at 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 remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/modern-art-during-renovation.html>.

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at www.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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