

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ACQUIRES SERIES OF 13 UNIQUE WORKS ON PAPER BY JASPER JOHNS**

**Acquisition of Works from the “Catenary” Series Deepens MoMA’s Significant Holdings and Commitment to Johns’s Work**

**New York, April 21, 2006**—The Museum of Modern Art has acquired a series of 13 unique works on paper by the acclaimed American artist Jasper Johns, Museum Director Glenn D. Lowry announced today. These works, created in 2001, are drawn from a larger body of work called the “Catenary” series, named for the curve that is formed by a cord hanging between two fixed points.

MoMA’s series is based on a composition that utilizes the catenary curve, juxtaposed with other visual elements, some autobiographical—images of a flag, a galaxy, a family photograph, tiny stick figures, and patterns referring to a traditional Harlequin costume and to a Halloween costume worn by Johns as a child. Johns varies his compositions by masking, cutting, collaging, reversing, and painting, to create a body of work that showcases the metamorphosis that recurs in his artistic vocabulary as he uses and reuses motifs to forge new meanings. These works are composed of acrylic, collage, watercolor, and gouache, over aquatint and etching.

Glenn D. Lowry says, “This series of superb works on paper by Jasper Johns is a significant addition to our holdings of a renowned artist to whom the Museum has been committed since the outset of his career. Comprising a virtuoso exploration into the artistic process, the series reveals new meaning with each individual work and weaves a range of symbols and motifs into a poetic and mysterious whole. We are profoundly grateful to the generous donor who made this fractional and promised gift, and who wishes to remain anonymous.”

Deborah Wye, Chief Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, states: “When viewing this series as a whole, one grasps not only the expressive range of the artist’s work, but also the creative process, as if watching over his shoulder as these works evolved. Here, Johns intertwines painting, drawing, and printmaking in a practice integral to his work overall.”

MoMA’s commitment to Johns’s work dates to 1958, when founding director Alfred H. Barr, Jr. purchased three paintings from the artist’s first solo exhibition: *Target with Four Faces* (1955), *Green Target* (1955), and *White Numbers* (1957). In 2004, MoMA acquired Johns’s painting *Bushbaby* (2003). The collection includes 11 works in the Painting and Sculpture Department, 15 in Drawings, and nearly 400 prints, including those in portfolios and illustrated books. The new series joins these distinguished holdings.

Johns’s career has been surveyed in numerous exhibitions at MoMA, including *Jasper Johns: A Retrospective* (1996), organized by Kirk Varnedoe, former Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture. Johns’s achievement as a printmaker has been explored in depth in *Jasper Johns: A Print Retrospective* (1986) and *Jasper Johns: Lithographs* (1970), both organized by Riva Castleman, former Chief Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books. The Marie-Josée

and Henry Kravis Gallery on the fifth floor of the Museum is devoted to a rotating display of work of Johns and Robert Rauschenberg.

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