

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Museum of Modern Art

DONATION OF FOURTEEN WORKS BY NINE ARTISTS INCLUDES PAINTINGS BY PICASSO, BRAQUE, BONNARD, MIRÓ, AND LÉGER

November 25, 1996.....Ronald S. Lauder, Chairman of the Board of The Museum of Modern Art, announced today that the Museum has received a major bequest from the estate of the late Florene May Schoenborn. The gift consists of fourteen important works by artists including Pablo Picasso, Pierre Bonnard, Fernand Léger, Georges Braque, Alberto Giacometti, and Joan Miró.

Glenn D. Lowry, Director, The Museum of Modern Art, said, "We are thrilled with this important bequest. Mrs. Schoenborn, a longtime MoMA benefactor and Life Trustee, has left us a generous legacy of superb works that greatly enrich the scope and breadth of our collection."

During her lifetime, Mrs. Schoenborn donated *The Moroccan Garden* (1912) and *The Moroccans* (1915) by Henri Matisse directly to the Museum. She gave the Museum three other superb Matisse paintings—*Woman on a High Stool* (1914), *Artist and Goldfish* (1914), and *Variation on a Still Life by De Heem* (1915)—but retained possession of them until her death; they now officially become the property of MoMA. All five appeared in the Museum's 1992 exhibition *Henri Matisse: A Retrospective*. In recognition of her generosity, the room devoted to Matisse in the Museum's permanent collection galleries was named the Florene May Schoenborn Gallery in 1986.

In addition to the Matisse paintings, the Museum is now adding fourteen major works from Mrs. Schoenborn to its permanent collection. Among these are Picasso's *Woman Plaiting Her Hair* (1906) and *Woman with Pears* (1909); *Nude in Bathroom* (1932) by Bonnard; *The City* (1919) by Léger; and *Standing Figure* (c. 1949), a unique bronze cast by Giacometti.

Woman Plaiting Her Hair is a masterpiece of Picasso's so-called Iberian period, while *Woman with Pears* is arguably the greatest of the artist's early Cubist pictures from the crucial summer at Horta de Ebro, Spain, in 1909, according to William Rubin, Director Emeritus, Department of Painting and Sculpture. He also characterized *Nude in Bathroom* as "arguably the finest painting Bonnard ever made."

Agnes Gund, President of The Museum of Modern Art, said, "Florene May Schoenborn was a great star in the firmament of the Modern's collection. The gifts she gave and the longtime interest she had in the Museum were wonderful. Also special was her relationship with Bill Rubin. I feel very privileged to have known her."

The bulk of Mrs. Schoenborn's bequest was divided between MoMA and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, which received eighteen paintings and sculptures. The Art Institute of Chicago and the St. Louis Art Museum also received works from the estate.

"The Schoenborn collection was surely the single greatest collection of twentieth-century masterworks formed in the United States since World War

II," said Mr. Rubin. "As a New Yorker, I could not be happier with the division of these pictures in a way that makes the city's two most important museums much stronger."

Mrs. Schoenborn, who died in August 1995, became a MoMA Trustee in 1953 and served on the drawing and program committees. She was also a founding member of the Museum's International Council and over the years donated many significant paintings, drawings, sculptures, and prints to MoMA's permanent collection. Many of the paintings bequeathed to MoMA were included in the Museum's 1965 exhibition *The School of Paris: Paintings from the Florene May Schoenborn and Samuel A. Marx Collection*. Mr. Marx, a Chicago architect who died in 1964, was Mrs. Schoenborn's second husband. Her third husband, real estate developer Wolfgang Schoenborn, died in 1986.

"Especially in combination with her previous gifts of Matisse masterworks, this generous bequest places Mrs. Schoenborn in the ranks of this Museum's most illustrious benefactors," said Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture. "She will always be remembered here for her great discernment and public-spirited kindness."

For further information contact John Wolfe, Director of Communications, 212/708-9747.

No. 65



[press office](#) [menu](#)

©1998 The Museum of Modern Art, New York