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The Museum of Modern Art

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART RECEIVES MAJOR GIFT FROM PHILIP JOHNSON

Nine Paintings by Artists Including Warhol, Johns, and de Kooning Join Hundreds of Other Works Given to MoMA by One of Its Greatest Patrons

Nine paintings by five of America's most important artists - Willem de Kooning, Philip Guston, Jasper Johns, James Rosenquist, and Andy Warhol - have been given to The Museum of Modern Art by Philip Johnson, its longtime architect, curator, patron, and Trustee, announced Glenn D. Lowry, Director of the Museum. The works have been integrated into the Museum's Third Floor Painting and Sculpture Galleries where they will remain on view through July.

"It isn't fair to the artists to keep these paintings at my home in the country," remarked Mr. Johnson. "They are too important and should be at The Museum of Modern Art where the public can share them."

These paintings, which join more than 2,200 works of art Mr. Johnson has donated to MoMA since 1932, were carefully selected by him from his personal collection to augment the Museum's holdings of contemporary art. "These works complement the Museum's collection in important ways, enhancing it immeasurably," said Mr. Lowry.

Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, remarked, "Philip Johnson has always been a farsighted collector and a tremendously generous patron. From Oskar Schlemmer's *Bauhaus Stairway* to Jasper Johns's *Flag*, many of his gifts epitomize their genres and have become icons of the collection. And it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the Museum would virtually not have a collection of art of the 1960s if not for him. This most recent gift, dominated by works from the 1970s and 1980s, adds a new dimension to Philip's role in building the Museum's contemporary collection and reminds us that he continues to be a great collector."

Perhaps best known of the nine paintings, Johns's momentous *Summer* (1985) is the first of the artist's Four Seasons series to enter a museum collection. One of his great, periodic self-assessments, *Summer* reflects on Johns's life up to the mid-1980s, juxtaposing the artist's long shadow with images that dominated his earlier works, including flags, half-circles, and an outstretched arm print. This gift, along with pivotal early works, such as *Flag* (1954-55) and *Target with Four Faces* (1955), and late masterpieces such as the monumental *Untitled* (1992-95) significantly enhances the Museum's ability to chronicle Johns's development.

Johns's diptych *End paper* (1976) unites two of the artist's major motifs - the flagstone image first used in *Harlem Light* (1967) and the crosshatch pattern initially employed in the monumental, four-panel *Untitled* of 1972 - with a gray and moody cast. The painting takes its title from the end papers of the book *Foirades/Fizzles*, the 1976 collaboration between Johns and Samuel Beckett. It adds depth to the

Museum's holdings of John's abstract paintings, joining the three-panel crosshatch work *Between the Clock and the Bed* (1981).

Two powerful de Koonings, *Untitled XIX* (1977), the first of the artist's 1970s works to enter the collection, and *Untitled V* (1982), enable the Museum to continue its commitment to the artist's late work, underscored by its 1997 exhibition *Willem de Kooning: The Late Paintings, The 1980s* and its prior acquisition of *Pirate* (1981) and *Untitled* (1986).

The late Guston, *Moon* of 1979, explores an important theme in his oeuvre—the artist at work. In this melancholy picture, a pale moon lights a desolate landscape, while an artist, nearly obscured by his canvas, sits behind a field littered with discarded brushes. While the Museum has strong holdings of the work of Guston, thanks to the artist's estate, it had no work that explored this important subject until now.

Two Rosenquists add important late examples to MoMA's significant holdings of the artist's earlier works, such as *Marilyn Monroe, I* (1962) and *F-111* (1964-65). In quintessential Rosenquist manner, inspired by his early employment as a billboard painter, *Untitled* (1980) and *Lady Dog Lizard* (1985), feature fragments of vivid, oversized images.

Two works by Andy Warhol add substantially to the landmark Warhols previously given by Mr. Johnson: *S&H Green Stamps* (1962), comprised of row after row of the famous stamp and *Self-Portrait* (1966), a signature work comprised of nine identical images of the artist in different vibrant colors. Mr. Johnson gave the Museum its first Warhol, *Gold Marilyn Monroe* (1962), acquired immediately after it was painted, as well as *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times* (1963), an important example of the artist's disaster pictures that he donated in 1991. These works, together with *Before and After* (1961) and *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962), give The Museum of Modern Art one of the finest collections of 1960s Warhol in the world.

Philip Johnson and The Museum of Modern Art

While the Museum has had many great and generous patrons over the years, perhaps none have contributed in as many different ways as Mr. Johnson has. He became involved with the Museum in 1930, a year after its founding, when he joined the Advisory Committee of the fledgling institution.

He was director of the newly created Department of Architecture from 1932 to 1934 and from 1946 to 1954. (The area was renamed the Department of Architecture and Design in 1949.) As a curator, he organized some of the most influential exhibitions in his field, including the groundbreaking 1932 show *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (with Henry-Russell Hitchcock); the 1934 *Machine Art* exhibition of twentieth-century industrial design, from which the Museum took the nucleus of its Design Collection; and *Deconstructivist Architecture*, in 1988 (with Mark Wigley).

As architect, Mr. Johnson designed the 1964 additions to the building, as well as the renowned *The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden*. He was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1957.

Certainly, one of his greatest contributions to the Museum is the art he has donated to the collection, or provided funds for, since 1932. Beginning with gifts of important German paintings in the 1930s and 1940s, Mr. Johnson went on to make extensive donations of postwar art; his gifts in the areas of Abstract Expressionism, Pop art, and Minimalism

are among the collection's masterpieces. This latest gift is a continuation of Mr. Johnson's long dedication to the Museum.

PUBLICATION

The sixth volume of *Studies in Modern Art*, the Museum's annual scholarly journal devoted to modern and contemporary art, examines *Philip Johnson and The Museum of Modern Art*. The volume focuses on Mr. Johnson's long association with the Museum, with essays examining his role as patron, as curator, and as the Museum's unofficial architect from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. The series is edited by John Elderfield, and this volume includes essays by Mr. Varnedoe, Terence Riley, Peter Reed, and Mirka Benes. As the publication predates the current gift, those nine paintings are not discussed in the text.

Philip Johnson and The Museum of Modern Art is 168 pages; 150 illustrations, 16 in color. Softbound. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Distributed in the U.S. and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Available in the MoMA Book Store. Price: \$19.95.

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