

LACMA ACQUIRES MAJOR COLLECTION OF MODERN ART

Twenty works by Picasso are among the paintings, sculptures, and drawings included in the Janice and Henri Lazarof Collection, on view January 13.



Pablo Picasso (Spain, 1881–1973, active France),
Head of a Woman in Profile (Jacqueline)



Alberto Giacometti (Switzerland, 1901–1966),
Large Seated Woman (Annette)

Los Angeles—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) announced today the acquisition of a major collection of paintings, sculptures, and drawings by leading modern artists that will significantly transform the museum's collection of twentieth-century art. The fractional and promised gift of 130 works is remarkable for its concentration on the leading figures of modern art and for individual objects that in many cases represent LACMA's first major work by that artist.

Among the highlights of the gift are twenty works by Picasso—paintings, drawings, and sculpture that span the years 1905 to 1970, including bold portraits of Dora Maar from the 1930s. Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, who both taught at the revolutionary Bauhaus school in Germany in the 1920s, are represented by twenty-one watercolors and paintings that form a fundamentally interrelated group. Seven bronzes and one painting by the Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti are a particular strength of the collection. Numerous works by Alexander Archipenko, Constantin Brancusi, Georges Braque, Edgar Degas, Lyonel Feininger, Fernand Léger, Henry Moore, and Camille Pissarro are also included as part of this transformative addition to the museum's collection.

"We are deeply grateful to Janice and Henri Lazarof for bringing this collection to LACMA," said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "At a time when the art market has made it nearly impossible for museums to purchase works of this quality, this important acquisition brings to the people of Los Angeles works by key figures that define the modern century."

Mr. Lazarof, a well-known composer, was on the faculty of UCLA for many years. In making the gift to the museum, Mrs. Lazarof explains, "Having been residents of Los Angeles for most of our lives, we decided the Los Angeles County Museum of Art should become the permanent home for our Collection. Gathering this art has been an exhilarating and meaningful experience for us. We hope the many visitors that view the Collection in our Gallery will share the same experience."

Stephanie Barron, the museum's senior curator of modern art, who has worked for several years to bring the Lazarof collection to the museum commented, "This is a collection that has been built carefully and painstakingly over several decades. Having these works available at LACMA will forever change how future generations of visitors will understand modern art in Los Angeles. That these marvelous works of art will have a permanent home in the museum, is an example of the greatest philanthropy."

Kevin Salatino, the museum's curator of prints and drawings remarked, "The extraordinary quality, and equally extraordinary number of superb drawings, watercolors, and gouaches by the great twentieth-century triumvirate of Picasso, Klee, and Kandinsky, among others, utterly and permanently changes LACMA's modern works on paper."

Works from the collection will be on view beginning January 13, 2008. They will be installed in three galleries on the plaza level of the Ahmanson Building within the 22,000 square foot modern art galleries where a new presentation of paintings, sculpture, and selections of works on paper and decorative arts collection will be exhibited.

Highlights of the Collection

PICASSO

Among the twenty works by Picasso are seventeen portraits, many of them women with whom he shared his life. *Head of a Woman* (1906) is a late Rose-period painting from the autumn of 1906 that reflects the powerful influence of Iberian sculpture. This mask-like portrait, which may represent his companion Fernande, is characterized by a haunting face framed by arched eyebrows, exaggerated eyelids, and oversize ears. *Head of a Woman* is from the same period when Picasso was completing his *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*.

The Picasso group includes three portraits of Dora Maar with whom Picasso lived for a decade beginning in the mid 1930s: *Bust of a Seated Woman* (1938), *Head of a Woman with a Hat* (1939), and *Bust of a Woman* (1941). His portraits of her are among his most searing: she is alternately depicted as the weeping woman, the harpy, the woman with basketwork hat: a disfigured and monstrous subject that inspired some of his most haunting works.

At the end of 1954 Picasso began a series of fifteen paintings based on Delacroix's *Women of Algiers*. Completed in February 1955, this series, known by the same name, reveals his fascination with the harems of North Africa and their milieu of sexual abandon. The collection includes the fourth in the series depicting women in repose.

Picasso's depictions of his second wife, Jacqueline, constitute his largest group of portraits, and they dominate his oeuvre during his last two decades.

Among the works in the collection is the colossal *Head of a Woman* (1961-1962), over three feet tall and almost as wide, a daring canvas which attains its looming monumentality through the combination of absolute scale and the frame's abrupt cropping. This was the first of a group of four portraits of Jacqueline done between December 18 and December 21, 1961. In 1969, at the age of eighty-eight, Picasso painted the large, bold

canvas *Man and Woman*, a colorful and powerful celebration of sexuality. The last Picasso in the collection is a monochromatic large portrait of Jacqueline, *Head of a Woman in Profile* (1970) which retains a boldness that belies the artist's advanced age.

GIACOMETTI

The collection includes seven bronze sculptures by the Swiss Alberto Giacometti, as well as a single great oil painting. Postwar Giacometti sculptures were created as deliberate images of a humanity brutalized by recent events, or as spare existential images. In *The Cage* (1950) his thin, fragile, almost dematerialized figures convey a sense of profound loss and reflect a personal struggle for the impossible unity of world and ego. *The Leg* (1958) is a representation of a body fragment, suggested perhaps by the mutilation that Giacometti witnessed in survivors of the War. Here he elevates the lowly foot, places it on a pedestal, and makes a memorial of it. The collection includes *Monumental Head* (1960) one of a group of larger-than-life size figures conceived for the headquarters of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York. Bronze portraits of his wife Annette and his brother Diego, both frequent subjects, as well as a painting of the Japanese philosopher Isaku Yanaihara are part of the collection.

KANDINSKY

Wassily Kandinsky, often credited with the initial transition from representational to abstract art (suggested in *Untitled [Composition no. 1]*, 1915) was a crucial figure in the development of twentieth - century modernism. Between 1909 and 1914 Kandinsky's landscapes evolved into increasingly abstract compositions, to which he gave musical titles, including *Improvisations*, *Impressions*, and *Compositions*. Intense and sometimes dissonant color harmonies began to dominate his compositions, while representational elements were reduced to dark lines and compact colored shapes. He hoped these works would convey what he called the "largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character, non-material nature" in his 1912 book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.

The remainder of the Kandinsky works date from his years as a teacher at the highly influential Bauhaus school in Germany. *Three Free Circles*

(1923) harks back to Kandinsky's connection to Russian Constructivism, with its simple geometric shapes, lines, and patterns. *Study for Circles in the Circle* (1923) reveals Kandinsky's extreme precision and his reliance upon the most elementary form—the circle—which he believed to be "the synthesis of the greatest oppositions." As he once explained, "I love the circle today as I formerly loved the horse...perhaps even more, since I find more inner potentialities in the circle, which is why it has taken the horse's place." *Melodious* (1924) is an abstract watercolor imbued with the syncopation, dynamism and energy that Kandinsky associated with music and translated into visual forms. *Yellow Border* (1930), the single painting in the group reveals the close connection between Kandinsky and Paul Klee at the Bauhaus. Its precise geometric forms summarize in oil the elements that the earlier watercolors explore.

KLEE

A spectacular ensemble of eleven works affords an overview of Swiss artist Paul Klee's illustrious career as one of the most imaginative artists of the twentieth century, and an inspirational teacher at the Bauhaus. His luminous watercolors such as *In the Kairouan-Style, Transposed in a Moderate Way* and *Motion of a Landscape* both from his trip to Tunisia in 1914, abstract the bright sunlight and pure colors of the North African landscape and villages into compositions of colored squares and churning circular forms. So important was this new style for Klee that he wrote in his journal, "Color and I are one. I am a painter." *Lightning Stroke* (1920) exemplifies his masterful combination of line and color, as well as his lifelong procedure of occasionally cutting and reassembling his compositions in a collage-like fashion. Using the simplest means, a zigzag line of lightning becomes a fallen figure. This line is rendered using an oil transfer drawing process that Klee invented, which often enlivens his compositions with rich textures and smudges. In *Pride of the Gate Keeper* (1929) Klee's interest in children's art and gentle humor are combined in a charming and sly watercolor. Using a radically simplified vocabulary of fields of colored squares upon which simple configurations similar to ancient runes were painted in bold black lines, he created lucid works of child-like simplicity.

BRANCUSI

One of the sculptors who revolutionized modern art, Constantin Brancusi, while relying upon natural forms, increasingly abstracted and simplified them into essential organic shapes. Not interested in traditional modeling, he preferred to carve directly into wood or stone to create his forms. In his bronzes, he sought a specific golden-yellow finish that was his particular invention. He would frequently polish the surfaces of the sculpture to enhance the reflection of light, and repeatedly returned to the same forms, altering the sculpture through changes in dimensions and materials. He also often designed the bases for his sculptures. *Bird in Space* is a form that Brancusi first addressed in polished bronze, and then returned to in white and black marble and bronze—altering the height and proportion over the course of twenty years. In each treatment the figure seems to soar elegantly as it swells from a slight base and arches into the air before gracefully tapering. This collection includes two versions of *Bird in Space*; one fifty-four inches and a second seventy-two inches, the larger of which has a particularly exhilarating sense of height. These are the first works by Brancusi to enter the museum's collection.

DEGAS

Edgar Degas was one of the great masters of pastel, a medium he favored throughout his career. Beginning in the 1870s, in a series of pastels devoted to the subject of dancers, Degas tirelessly explored movement, light, and color, producing a body of work unrivalled in beauty and innovation. In *The Dancers* (1898) a late masterpiece, Degas used the medium with a freedom and power that belie his failing sight. He deftly defined forms with short, vigorous parallel strokes of pastel in bold colors, adding dabs of white chalk like strings of dazzling pearls to enliven the surface of his dancers' dresses. Degas's composition is daring; he decapitates one dancer, dangles the truncated leg of another, and slashes the left foreground with a prop tree, thus framing and isolating his balletic trio, who are caught, snapshot-like, frozen between rest and movement. *The Dancers*, whose subject is iconic within the artist's oeuvre, is only the second Degas pastel to enter the collection.

PISSARRO

Three paintings by Camille Pissarro illustrate the artist's versatility: a rare snow scene from 1871 was executed during the artist's stay in England. *The Path to Les Pouilleux, Pontoise* (1881) is a bold composition reflecting the influence of Paul Cézanne. The 1884 image of a peasant's house at Eragny shows Pissarro's interest in pointillism.

About LACMA

LACMA, the largest art museum in the Western United States, leads the field in devoting a greater share of its space and programming to contemporary art than any other encyclopedic museum. With a recently expanded modern collection and a new contemporary art museum, BCAM, on its campus, LACMA offers visitors a unique lens through which to view its renowned and established collections, including particular strengths in Asian, Latin American, European, and American art.

General Information: LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or visit lacma.org.

Museum Hours and Admission: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon-8 pm; Friday, noon-9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month, every evening after 5 pm, and on Target Free Holiday Mondays.

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(Left) Pablo Picasso (Spain, 1881-1973, active France), *Head of a Woman in Profile (Jacqueline)*, 1970, oil on canvas, 116 x 89 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, fractional and promised gift of Janice and Henri Lazarof, © 2007 Estate of Pablo Picasso/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo © 2007 Museum Associates/LACMA

(Right) Alberto Giacometti (Switzerland, 1901-1966), *Large Seated Woman (Annette)*, 1958, bronze, 78.74 x 20.32 x 30.48 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, fractional and promised gift of Janice and Henri Lazarof, © Alberto Giacometti Estate/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris, photo © 2007 Museum Associates/LACMA

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