

MAJOR EXHIBITION OF RECENT ACQUISITIONS CELEBRATES DECADE OF UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH AT THE YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

With more than 300 objects, dating from ancient times to the present day, the exhibition marks the Gallery's 175th anniversary and centennial of Paul Mellon's birth.



Stuart Davis, *Combination Concrete #2*, 1956–58. Oil on canvas.
Yale University Art Gallery, Charles B. Benenson, B.A. 1933,
Collection

Art for Yale: Collecting for a New Century, a survey of works acquired by the Yale University Art Gallery in the past decade, celebrates one of the most exuberant periods of growth in the 175-year history of the institution. On view from September 18, 2007, through January 13, 2008, the exhibition features more than 300 objects, selected from the nearly 15,700 works acquired since 1998.

Representing both the full scope and special strengths of the Gallery's encyclopedic holdings, the selection includes works produced by the ancient cultures of Asia and the Mediterranean, masterpieces of African and early American art, Renaissance paintings and sculpture, and Impressionist and early modern art, as well as works reflecting the most recent developments in contemporary art. Highlights include works by Pontormo, Edgar Degas, Thomas Eakins, Gerald Murphy, Stuart Davis, and Kurt Schwitters; a rare and important group of Japanese and Korean tea bowls; and selections from the Charles B. Benenson Collection of

African art, one of the largest and most important single gifts in the Gallery's history.

Art for Yale: Collecting for a New Century is organized by Jock Reynolds, the Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Yale University Art Gallery; Susan Matheson, the Gallery's Chief Curator and Molly and Walter Bareiss Curator of Ancient Art; and Joshua Chuang, the Marcia Brady Tucker Assistant Curator of Photography. The exhibition will be installed on the first and fourth floors of the Gallery's recently renovated Louis Kahn building, with other objects installed in the permanent-collection galleries of its Egerton Swartwout building.

Mr. Reynolds stated: "While the Gallery has a long and storied history of attracting the support of generous and visionary donors, the last ten years have witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of gifts, both of artworks and of funds for new acquisitions. The bequest of the Charles B. Benenson Collection, for example, in one fell stroke transformed the Gallery into one of the nation's major repositories of African art. This exhibition of recent acquisitions expresses our profound gratitude to the Gallery's many supporters who have made this spectacular growth of Yale's collections possible. It also pays tribute to the

Gallery’s exceptional curators and educators, whose efforts and expertise have guided us to so many works of quality and importance.”

Ms. Matheson added: “The wealth of recent acquisitions immeasurably enhances the life of the Gallery not only as a public museum but also as teaching institution affiliated with one of the world’s most distinguished universities. Many of these objects have opened up new fields of research and study, while others are being incorporated into existing Yale University curricula in a wide range of academic disciplines.”

Among works featured in the exhibition are:

Asian Art

A group of five rare and historically important Korean and Japanese tea bowls, the promised gift of Peggy and Richard M. Danziger, is an outstanding addition to the Gallery’s renowned collection of Asian ceramics. Dating from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, they reflect the new aesthetic of simplicity and reverence for nature introduced into tea practices and implements by Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591), Japan’s most revered master of tea culture. A black Raku tea bowl, for example, attributed to Raku Chōjirō, Sen no Rikyū’s allegedly favorite potter, is named *Kaedegure (Twilight by the Maples)* and features



Attributed to Raku Chōjirō, *Tea Bowl*, known as *Kaedegure (Twilight by the Maples)*. Japanese, Momoyama period (1573–1615), late 16th century Raku ware; earthenware with black glaze. Collection of Peggy and Richard M. Danziger, LL.B. 1963

a dusted gold decoration evocative of autumnal maples at dusk. Another promised gift of the Danzigers’ is the early seventeenth-century screen *Whose Sleeves? (Tagasode)*. Lush with geometric patterns and depictions of fans, the screen is thought to have been painted by the workshop of Tawaraya Sotatsu, the fountainhead of the Rimpa school, famous for their refined design. Other notable acquisitions of Asian art include a spectacular six-and-a-half foot long, fourteenth-century Japanese hanging scroll depicting *The Death of the Buddha Sakyamuni (Nehan-zu)*; a Ming dynasty painting *Eagle in a Landscape Setting*; *Five Tang Poems*, a handscroll of Chinese calligraphy by Wang Duo from 1642; and a group of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Japanese folding screens.

Early European Art

Among the Gallery’s most significant recent acquisitions in any category is a *Virgin and Child* by Florentine mannerist Jacopo Carucci, called Pontormo. Regarded as one of the most important finds of Renaissance art in decades, the panel has been identified as the only surviving portion of Pontormo’s *Madonna del Libro* (ca. 1545–46), one of the artist’s last and most influential works. Other additions to the Gallery’s acclaimed collection of Italian art include paintings by the Florentine masters Neri di Bicci and Jacopo Zucchi and by the late Siennese master Francesco Vanni, as well as stucco relief sculptures by Donatello, Italy’s greatest fifteenth-century sculptor, and his gifted follower Desiderio da Settignano.



Gerald Murphy, *Bibliothèque (Library)*, 1926. Oil on canvas. Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Alice Kaplan in memory of Allan S. Kaplan, B.A. 1957, and with the Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., B.A. 1913, Fund

Recent acquisitions from other European schools include two panels from about 1505–7 by the anonymous German artist known as the Master of the Holy Kinship, and paintings by the seventeenth-century Dutch artist Abraham Bloemaert and eighteenth-century French painter Pierre Paul Prud'hon.

American Art

Long recognized as one of the nation's premier repositories of American art, the Gallery has recently acquired a number of pivotal works by leading nineteenth- and twentieth-century American painters. Prominent among them is American Realist Thomas Eakins's watercolor *John Biglin in a Single Scull* (1873), a gift of Paul Mellon. One of several depictions of rowers that Eakins famously produced during the 1870s, the work is a study for the artist's oil painting of the same subject, a treasured possession of the Gallery since 1897. Gerald Murphy's *Bibliothèque (Library)* (1926), an elegantly abstracted still life of objects from his father's

library, is one of only seven surviving paintings by the artist—perhaps the epitome of the sophisticated “American in Paris”—whose style lies midway between realism and abstraction. Stuart Davis's *Combination Concrete #2* (1956–58), monumental in scale (approximately six by four feet) and featuring a boldly painted matrix of shapes, letters, and numbers, is an important late work by one of America's most original pioneers of modernism. According to the artist, the title refers to an experimental form of music in which recorded sounds were cut, spliced, and recombined to create a composition. Also on view will be recently acquired works by John Brewster, Jr., Ralston Crawford, Sanford Gifford, Martin Johnson Heade, Winslow Homer, Walt Kuhn, Charles Sheeler, and Everett Shinn. The watercolor-on-ivory miniatures on view span the heyday of the art form in America. Among them are a portrait of statesman Elbridge Gerry by John Ramage, one of the most acclaimed miniaturists in the early republic.

Notable additions to the Gallery's collection of American decorative arts, one of the most comprehensive in the world, range from a tankard by Jeremiah Dummer, America's first native-born silversmith, from about 1610 to John La Farge's magnificent stained-glass window, *Cherry Blossoms against a Spring Freshet* (1882–83).

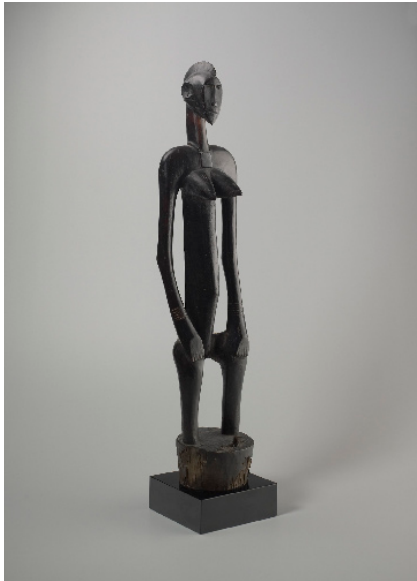
Modern and Contemporary Art

Recent additions to the Gallery's collection of Impressionist and Postimpressionist art include Claude Monet's *Camille on the Beach at Trouville* (1870); a still life by Paul Cézanne, *Bouteille, verre, et citrons (Bottle, Glass, and Lemons)* (1867–69); and Edgar Degas' sculpture *Dancer Ready to Dance, with Right Foot Forward* (1882–95); as well as works by Pierre Bonnard, Mary Cassatt, Henri Matisse, Auguste Rodin, and Alfred Sisley.

Among the most spectacular works by later pioneers of modernism is German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters's six-foot-high assemblage *Merzbild mit Regenbogen (Merz Picture with Rainbow)* (1920/39).

The Merzbild, an art form invented by Schwitters and for which he is best known, utilized various forms of cultural detritus (the term is derived from the German word for commerce, *kommerz*) as a commentary on the ruinous economic policies of the Weimar Republic. Also on view will be works by such notable Schwitters contemporaries as Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, George Grosz, and Pablo Picasso.

New acquisitions in the field of contemporary art, an area of enormous growth at the Gallery through both gift and purchase in recent years, include works by Louise Bourgeois, Chuck Close, Agnes Martin, Martin Puryear, Edward Ruscha, Robert Ryman, Richard Serra, David Smith, and Wayne Thiebaud.



Rhythm Pounder in the Form of a Female Figure (Doogele). Senufo, Kulibele (carvers) and Celibele (users) subgroups. Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso or Mali, late 19th-early 20th century. Wood. Charles B. Benenson, B.A. 1933, Collection

African Art

A Senufo rhythm pounder is one of several objects on view from the Charles B. Benenson Collection of African art, a 2004 gift to the Gallery comprising more than 500 objects, primarily masks and ritual objects from Central and West Africa. Carved in the form of a female figure, this rhythm pounder would have been used during the burial of an important elder and member of the powerful Poro, a ceremonial association of the Senufo people. Other notable works from the Benenson collection on display include a Bamileke mask, a Fang female reliquary figure, and a Yoruba maternity figure with a basket in the form of a rooster.

Prints, Drawings, and Photographs

Notable additions to the Gallery's collection of prints include Gabriel de Saint-Aubin's *Les deux amants (The Two Lovers)* (1750), two etched self-portraits from the 1970s by Chuck Close, and one of Helen Frankenthaler's 1998 series of six woodcuts inspired by the Japanese literary classic *The Tale of Genji*. The last, a gift of the artist, was printed from eighteen woodblocks in fifty-three colors. Recently acquired drawings range from Jacques-Louis David's study of an antique statue, made during his first trip to Rome, around 1775–80, to a group of ink and graphite drawings by American modernist Philip Guston. Recent additions to the Gallery's collection of photographs, another area of tremendous growth in the past decade, range from works by Eugène Atget, Walker Evans, and Robert Frank to examples by such important contemporary photographers as Judith Joy Ross, Philip-Lorca DiCorcia, Nathan Lyons, and Robert Adams, whose entire body of vintage "master sets" was recently acquired by the Gallery.

Ancient Art and Art of the Ancient Americas

The Gallery's collection of ancient art has been enriched by a number of notable Greek and Roman works, among them a magnificent Corinthian *alabastron* (a vessel for perfumed oils), produced around 610–600 B.C. and decorated with an image of Typhon, a dragonlike divinity associated with storms; a fifth-century B.C. Greek bronze of a running gorgon; a third-century B.C. Etruscan mirror with incised decoration; a Hellenistic marble head of Aphrodite; and a Roman marble statue of the Emperor Commodus as a boy, dated A.D. 172/73.

Recent additions to the Gallery's holdings of art of the ancient Americas include a Mayan quadruped vessel with bird and fish motifs (250–400 A.D.), an Aztec ceramic head of a deity (ca. 1440–1521), and a gold crown (900–1550) produced by the Lambayeque culture of Peru.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, *Art for Yale: Collecting for a New Century*, available in hardback (\$35) at the Gallery's Bookstore. The publication includes an essay by Jock Reynolds and commentaries on selected objects by curators, scholars, and students.

Exhibition Support

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Yale University Art Gallery

Founded in 1832, when patriot-artist John Trumbull donated more than 100 of his paintings to Yale College, the Yale University Art Gallery is the oldest college art museum in the United States. Today, the Gallery's encyclopedic collection numbers more than 185,000 objects ranging in date from ancient times to the present day. These holdings comprise a world-renowned collection of American paintings and decorative arts; outstanding collections of Greek and Roman art, including the artifacts excavated at the ancient Roman city of Dura-Europos; the Jarves, Griggs, and Rabinowitz Collections of early Italian paintings; European, Asian, and African art from diverse cultures, including the recently acquired Charles B. Benenson Collection of African art; art of the ancient Americas; the Société Anonyme Collection of early twentieth-century European and American art; and Impressionist, modern, and contemporary works. The recently completed renovation of the Gallery's 1953 Louis Kahn building is part of a comprehensive renovation and expansion of the museum's entire facility, scheduled for completion in 2011.

Located at the corner of Chapel and York Streets in New Haven, the Gallery is open to the public free of charge: Tuesday–Saturday 10:00 AM–5:00 PM, Thursday until 8:00 PM (September–June); Sunday 1:00–5:00 PM. For additional information, the public may visit <http://artgallery.yale.edu>, or call 203.432.0600.

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