

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ANNOUNCES

SPECIAL COMMISSIONS FOR THE NEW EAST BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D. C. May 5, 1978. Seven monumental works of art in the media of sculpture, painting, and tapestry, have been commissioned for the National Gallery of Art's East Building.

The artists and their works represented are: Henry Moore, a bronze sculpture, a gift of the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Alexander Calder, a mobile, a gift of the Collectors Committee; Joan Miró, a tapestry entitled Femme, a gift of the Collectors Committee based on a maquette given by George L. Erion; Robert Motherwell, a 31-foot-long painting, Reconciliation Elegy, a gift of the Collectors Committee; Anthony Caro, a sculpture, given by the Collectors Committee; James Rosati, a large sculpture, given by the Collectors Committee and based on a piece given in memory of William C. Seitz; and Jean Arp, a tapestry, Variation sur "Aubette", a gift of the Collectors Committee.

Moore's Knife Edge Mirror Two Piece is a sculpture composed of two bronze sections, the larger of which is 17'8" high, the smaller 17'4". The piece is to be located at the entrance to the East Building and is believed to be the largest work by the artist anywhere. As with other Moore works, the forms are taken from nature.

Hanging in the East Building's large central courtyard is one of the

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largest mobiles Calder created. For its size, the piece is very light, only 920 pounds, and amazingly sensitive; its balanced rods and free-form fins move with the slightest current. When asked to name the piece, Calder explained that one doesn't name a baby until it is born. Since he died just as the mobile was completed, but a year before it could be hung, he did not give a name to his last major work of art. Although trained as an engineer, Calder combined interests in form and motion to develop the mobile in 1931--a new concept in art.

The Miró tapestry, Femme, woven in Spain by Josep Royo, hangs on the courtyard's south wall. The textural tapestry is composed of loops and knots and conveys Miró's bold image as a surrealist. In Femme, fields of brilliant colors outlined in black combine to convey the artist's symbol for the archetypal woman.

The Motherwell painting, Reconciliation Elegy, hangs on the upper level's west wall. Acrylic on canvas, it is a predominately black and white work of irregular shapes. This is the latest in a series of paintings begun in 1949 and at 10 by 31 feet, the largest of them. Motherwell has remarked that his Elegies are not specifically political, but rather "general metaphors of contrast between life and death, and their interrelation."

Caro constructed National Gallery Ledge Piece in place for the ledge over the study center entrance. His cursive components of welded steel sprawl and expand horizontally and upward. After working with Henry Moore in England, Caro visited the United States in 1959 and admired the steel sculpture of David Smith. Caro worked on this sculpture for about a month at the Gallery's East Building. The size is approximately 14 by 20 by 8 feet.

Rosati's sculpture, named Untitled, is on the mezzanine level at the

head of the grand staircase. In this example of his mature style, he purposefully avoids symmetrical shapes, assembling thrusting and counter-thrusting diagonal lines to generate a controlled sense of energy. With light playing across the surface, the flat shadows enrich the crisp, planar variations of the four elements. The dimensions are approximately 10' by 20'.

The design for the Arp tapestry, Variation sur "Aubette", was taken from a mural Arp painted during the late 1920's for a building in Strasbourg. Arp adapted the mural theme to a silk-screen print in the 1950's and spoke of making it into a tapestry, but the weaving was accomplished after the artist's death when the National Gallery commissioned the tapestry for the East Building. This tapestry, displayed on the concourse level, was woven in Aubusson. Arp's flat composition features the organic shapes and undulating contours found in most of his works. The two "mushroom" shapes are ambivalent forms which Arp used elsewhere to suggest heads; similar elements were used by Arp in his work beginning in 1915. The tapestry measures approximately 10 by 20 feet.

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