



MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM *of* ART
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Mississippi Museum of Art Receives Major Donation of Contemporary Art
*Gift is part of The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection:
Fifty Works for Fifty States*

Jackson, Miss. – The Mississippi Museum of Art is receiving this week a gift of fifty works of contemporary art from New York collectors Dorothy and Herbert Vogel.

The donors began purchasing art in the 1960s, using Dorothy's salary as a reference librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library to cover the expenses of daily life and devoting Herbert's salary as a United States Postal Service worker to the acquisition of contemporary art.

By the 1990s, the number of pieces crowding the couple's small rent-controlled New York apartment reached into the thousands.

At that time, the National Gallery of Art acquired a portion of their collection through partial purchase and gift from the Vogels. Now The National Gallery of Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services have worked with the Vogels to create a program entitled *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States*.

Inspired by the Kress Foundation's placement of old master paintings throughout the United States in the middle of the last century, the program

targets one art institution in each of the fifty states to receive a share of 2,500 works.

Artists whose work was donated to the Mississippi Museum of Art includes such highly regarded contemporary artists as Will Barnet, Claudia deMonte, and Richard Tuttle. Museum officials plan to stage an exhibition of the works in 2010.

“We are thrilled that the Mississippi Museum of Art was chosen as Mississippi’s recipient of this amazing gift,” said director Betsy Bradley. “*Fifty Works for Fifty States* is a brilliant and generous gesture on the part of the Vogels and their supporting institutions. By sharing the works in this way, Mississippians will have an unprecedented opportunity to experience contemporary art.”

In addition to the 50x50 initiative, the Vogels have donated 832 works to The National Gallery and another 268 are promised gifts. “The generosity of Dorothy and Herb has enhanced our collection of contemporary art immeasurably,” said Earl A. Powell III, Gallery director.

With the exception of a collection formed by the Vogels’ friend, artist Sol LeWitt, no other known private collection of similar work in Europe or America rivals the range, complexity, and quality of the art the Vogels acquired.

Primarily made up of drawings, the 2,500 works donated by the Vogels also includes paintings, sculptures, photographs, and prints by more than 170 contemporary artists, mainly working in the United States. When the Vogels began collecting in the early 1960s, their focus on drawing was unusual. Many drawings in the collection represent an artist’s initial form of an idea, and others

act as plans to be followed by a collaborator in the making of a work of art. This emphasis on drawings makes their gifts an important educational tool for museums.

“We hope this will be a truly national program, and that it will make the work of the many artists we admire familiar to a wider audience. We also hope our gifts will enable museums throughout the country to represent a significant range of contemporary art,” said Dorothy Vogel.

Bradley will travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in a series of kickoff events for the initiative taking place this weekend. Part of The National Gallery’s “Conversations with Collectors” program will include the Vogels and film director Megumi Sasaki in a conversation about the gifts project and a screening of Sasaki’s film “Herb and Dorothy.”

In addition, The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is funding the publication of a book, *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States*, scheduled for release this month.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support this ambitious project," said NEA chairman Dana Gioia. "The generosity shown by the Vogels in their eagerness to share their marvelous collection with the entire nation is truly inspiring. Part of the NEA’s mission is to ensure greater access to the arts. What better way to promote that mission than through *Fifty Works for Fifty States*?"

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) provided funds for the disbursement of the art (under the supervision of the National Gallery of Art) and

for the development of a web site, www.vogel50x50.org, to serve as both an information center and exhibition area for this project.

The interactive web destination enables each museum to create a section about its own Vogel Collection donation. This web site will eventually allow museums with a limited web staff to reach the widest audience possible and museums with strong web programs to create features that link to the Vogel project web site.

“With this generous gift, the Vogels are sharing their passion for art and artists that represent a significant period of art-making in the United States—the last fifty years,” said Anne-Imelda M. Radice, director of the IMLS. “IMLS is proud to help bring this extraordinary collection to people in every state and create a web-based learning resource for all Americans.”

The Mississippi Museum of Art and its programs are sponsored in part by the city of Jackson and the Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau. Support is also provided in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.