MEMORIAL ART GALLERY RECEIVES WORK BY GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

When Georgia O’Keeffe: Color and Conservation closes December 31, most of the masterworks will be returned to their lenders. But one of them—the luminous abstract pastel Over Blue—will remain behind as part of the Memorial Art Gallery’s permanent collection.

Director Grant Holcomb has announced that Over Blue has been bequeathed to the Gallery by long-time Gallery friend Anne Whitman, who passed away in October 2006. A teacher and quiet philanthropist, Whitman was a dedicated champion of children and patron of music and the arts.

“Over Blue is a magnificent work of art by one of the iconic figures in the history of American art,” says Holcomb. “It is a glorious addition to the Gallery’s permanent collection.”

The work dates from 1918, when O’Keeffe moved to New York and her relationship with photographer and Gallery owner Alfred Stieglitz intensified. (The couple would marry in 1924.) An early champion of her work, Stieglitz encouraged her to produce more works on paper.

In 2000, Over Blue was included in the exhibition O’Keeffe on Paper, which was organized by the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, NM and traveled to the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

Following the close of Color and Conservation, Over Blue will be reinstalled on the Gallery’s first floor through the end of April. It will be the last opportunity for the work to be seen by the public for the near future. It will be taken off view and moved out of the light as a protective conservation measure. As it is a pastel on paper, more prolonged exposure to light would threaten its pristine condition and vivid colors.

O’Keeffe’s still life Jawbone and Fungus will also remain here following the close of Color and Conservation. The 1931 oil has been a favorite of visitors since the Gallery acquired it in 1951. It will be reinstalled in spring 2007 on the Gallery's first floor.

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