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## PRESS RELEASE

# THE CENTRE POMPIDOU RECEIVES A NEW DONATION FROM DANIEL CORDIER

**A major collector and a founding member of the Centre Pompidou, Daniel Cordier is behind one of the largest donations of art works to the French State. His successive donations since 1973 have enriched the Centre Pompidou collection with over a thousand objects and contemporary art works.**

**Daniel Cordier has now made a further donation to the Centre Pompidou, consisting of 150 objects from non-Western societies, and thirteen major works by Paul Klee, Dado, Georgik, Bernard Réquichot and Louise Nevelson.**

### **The 2015 donation**

With this new donation in June 2015, as with the previous ones, the objects have been brought together through an approach based not on ethnography or the idea of the masterpiece, but on a particular sensibility marked by a penchant for the organic and materials. In addition, **archives have been added to these successive donations for the first time**: firstly, archives from the Cordier Gallery, providing a comprehensive overview of the gallery's activities (1956-1964); secondly, more personal archives retracing Daniel Cordier's artistic activity from the late Forties to the mid-Nineties. Some 50 boxes containing letters, dossiers on works and exhibitions, press books and photographs, make up **a collection of considerable documentary value**, all shedding light on the collector's choices.

### **History of the Cordier donations**

In 1973, long before the Centre Pompidou opened (it was inaugurated in 1977), Daniel Cordier sat on the purchasing committee of the Musée National d'Art Moderne. He then conceived the idea of a donation consisting of his initial collection and successive purchases specifically intended for the museum. This was spread out over more than 16 years, until it was officialised in 1989, when over 500 works by 66 artists joined the Centre Pompidou collection. It contained most of the artists promoted by Daniel Cordier's Paris gallery, and others he discovered as the years went by.

Consisting of works by key artists – of whom the museum already held some often sizeable collections (such as Jean Dubuffet, César, Simon Hantai and Matta) – they added to the existing collection, illustrating a number of periods that were still little-represented. With artists more on the fringe of the mainstream history of art (Henri Michaux, Bernard Réquichot, Dado, Fahlström, Millares and Gabritschevsky), their work was introduced to the public through groups of pieces. In his Paris gallery, Daniel Cordier was the first to exhibit Nevelson and Rauschenberg, while acquiring works by Robert Morris, Charles Simonds and Richard Stankiewicz for himself. During his rounds of the Paris galleries, he bought works by young Seventies artists such as Viallat, Rouan, Meurice, Raynaud, Le Gac and Titus Carmel. This donation was the subject of an exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, *Donation Daniel Cordier, le regard d'un amateur*, from 14 November 1989 to 21 January 1990.

In 1999, most of the donation was loaned to Les Abattoirs de Toulouse, and very largely exhibited there.

#### **A further donation in 2010**

At the same time as his collection of contemporary art (by Réquichot, Michaux, Hantai, Robert Morris, Raynaud, Dubuffet and many others) Daniel Cordier continued to gather together all sorts of disparate objects at his home in Juan-les-Pins, including Chinese dreamstones, roots, bones, fetishes and totems, whale ribs and vertebrae, Ethiopian stools, Cambodian rice sickles and wedding money from Zaire. This deeply original, often serial collection reveals Daniel Cordier's formal interest in more everyday objects from these distant cultures, whose elementary forms illustrate the highly unusual focus of his taste. Here the main approach is not context or period, but a joyous mixture where Asia, America, Oceania and Africa come together and dialogue. These objects, which have no utilitarian, symbolical or ritual purpose, metamorphose into "anonymous ready-mades", structured through analogies and contrasts. They evoke other artistic forms and are reminiscent of the links forged with ethnic art by 20th century artists.

This was the reasoning behind this second donation in 2010. In proposing a group of 808 items, mainly objects from non-Western societies in every non-European continent, everyday "curios" and contemporary art works, Daniel Cordier offered the Centre Pompidou his "collection". Like an anti-museum reminiscent of the wall in André Breton's studio, the donation plays on the similarities between objects and works of art, as largely illustrated by the Centre Pompidou and Les Abattoirs de Toulouse in the twofold exhibition *Donations Daniel Cordier, les désordres du plaisir*, presented simultaneously in Paris and Toulouse between December 2008 and April 2009. The two museums made a commitment to present the 1,356 works representing all the gifts and donations made by Daniel Cordier over the years.

#### **Presentation of the Daniel Cordier Donation at Les Abattoirs de Toulouse**

Since 2000, Les Abattoirs, where the lion's share of the collection is on loan, constantly display these 1,313 works in rotation as part of their permanent collections.

Meanwhile the Centre Pompidou exhibits a series of works by Bernard Réquichot, and works by Michaux, Dado and Fahlström from the extraordinary collection built up by Daniel Cordier are regularly shown in rotation.

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### **Daniel Cordier – biography**

Daniel Cordier, born in Bordeaux in 1920, was one of the first to join General de Gaulle in England. After completing his training, he was sent back to France and became secretary of Jean Moulin. The latter, an artist and collector of Picasso, Renoir, Delacroix and Van Gogh, chose the profession of painter and gallery manager as his "cover" during the war. At this point, Daniel Cordier became the gallery's official secretary. He bought his first work in 1946, an abstract painting by Jean Dewasne. This was rapidly followed with works by Hartung, de Staël, Soutine and Braque. In 1956, he opened his first gallery in Paris, inaugurated another in Frankfurt in 1958 and yet another in New York in 1960, in partnership with Michel Warren, another art dealer, and Arne Ekström, a diplomat. He acted as an art dealer for not only Jean Dubuffet (with whom he was very close until 1961) and Henri Michaux, but also Hans Bellmer, Fred Deux, Dado, Matta, Bernard Réquichot, Manolo Millares, Jean Dewasne, Öyvind Fahlström and Louise Nevelson.

In his Rue de Miromesnil gallery, Daniel Cordier staged the first historic exhibitions of Dubuffet ("Célébration du sol", 1958-1959) and Michaux ("Encres", 1959), together with the Exposition internationale du Surréalisme (1959). In 1960, he presented sculptures by Louise Nevelson; then, in 1961, the first French exhibition of Robert Rauschenberg's "Combine paintings".

He closed his Paris gallery in the summer of 1964. While maintaining close contact with his New York gallery, he became an "amateur" once more, ceaselessly giving rein to the libertarian inspiration of his collection.

In the 1970s, Daniel Cordier focused on his work as a historian, based on his activities as a member of the Resistance during the Second World War, with his impressive, definitive biography of Jean Moulin. Daniel Cordier is now in the process of publishing his memoirs. After "Alias Caracalla" in 2009, and "Les Feux de Saint-Elme" in 2014, he is currently working on a third volume.