

Gift of Walker Evans' photographs enhances National Gallery's collection

A gift of 280 photographs by American photographer Walker Evans was made recently to the National Gallery of Canada. Walker Evans, considered one of the century's leading photographers, died in 1975 at the age of 71. According to *New York Times* art critic Hilton Kramer, he was "one of the greatest artists of his generation".

The 280 works join the 80 photographs by Walker Evans previously acquired by the National Gallery. Because the gift spans his entire career from 1927 to

1971, the National Gallery now owns the world's most important collection of works by this outstanding artist.

Walker Evans was born in 1903 in St. Louis, Missouri and received an Ivy League education. He acquired a keen interest in French art and literature when he first began scenic photography on a trip through Europe in 1926. He developed the craft as an art form through the Depression and later, for 20 years, was the only full-time staff photographer employed by *Fortune* magazine.

Free artistic hand

He would not take assignments or commissions as an illustrator, or work in commercial art, but insisted on a free artistic hand.

His subject matter ranged from people and animals to bridges and buildings, usually in an urban setting. Though he insisted he was not a social commentator, his works reflect mainly the poverty and struggles of those times.

The donor of the important gift is Phyllis Lambert, an internationally respected architect as well as director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal. She also lends support to numerous art institutions and has been a member of the National Gallery's Advisory Committee for several years.

A discriminating collector of photographs, Mrs. Lambert has been an enthusiastic supporter of photography at



Phyllis Lambert, donor of an important gift of photographs by Walker Evans.

the National Gallery as well as a donor of works of art. "Such gestures encourage other collectors to share cultural treasures with the Canadian public," she explains.

The National Gallery's photography collection contains 15 000 works covering the entire history of photography. "This collection is one of the most important in the world," adds Mrs. Lambert. "It is a pleasure for me to recognize its quality and to contribute to its development with this gift."

New literary award for authors

A major new literary award for Canadian authors has been established by a subsidiary of the Netherlands-based Philips electronics conglomerate. The award, with a total value of \$16 000, will be made annually to a writer under the age of 50 for a sustained contribution to Canadian letters, rather than for a specific work.

Brian C. Warton, executive vice-president of Philips Information Systems, said that the award would comprise \$5 000 cash — the same as the Governor General's Literary Awards — and a Philips word processor and accessories, worth \$11 000. The award will be made to a writer of fiction, poetry or drama who is regarded to be in his or her creative prime.

The first recipient of the Philips Information Systems Literary Prize will be announced during the 1984 International Festival of Authors at Toronto's Harbourfront, one year from now, and the winner will be a special guest at the festival.



Couple, Coney Island (1928).

National Gallery of Canada



Interior with Black Woman and Three Children (1960-1961) by Walker Evans.

National Gallery of Canada