

## PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION CELEBRATES FOUNDER IN YEAR OF HER CENTENARY

Press preview: Tuesday, September 29, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Remarks will begin at 12 p.m.

Opening reception: 6.30 p.m.

Commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Peggy Guggenheim's birth, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is presenting *Peggy Guggenheim: A Centennial Celebration*. The exhibition will be on view in the *New Wing* of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, from September 30, 1998 to January 10, 1999. Its opening coincides with that of a temporary installation in the main *palazzo* of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection dedicated to 'Three Collectors: Peggy Guggenheim, Solomon R. Guggenheim and Gianni Mattioli' (see press release #66).

*Peggy Guggenheim: A Centennial Celebration* traces the story of the art patron's extraordinary life, from her childhood in her native New York to her artistic activities in Europe and the United States, and finally to her later years in Venice, where she created a museum-home in Palazzo Venier dei Leoni for her outstanding collection of Modern art. The exhibition comprises paintings and sculptures from Peggy Guggenheim's collection, portraits and photographs of the art patron and her friends, guest book pages, documentation and personal memorabilia, including clothing, exotic earrings, sunglasses, and other accessories.

A highlight of the exhibition is a selection of Peggy Guggenheim's guest books, on public view for the first time. Peggy encouraged guests to her Venice home to sign the books in whatever manner they chose. They contain an extraordinary series of signatures, sketches, drawings, musical notations, poems, and comments by many cultural figures of the twentieth century, such as Jean Arp, Cecil Beaton, Truman Capote, Alberto Giacometti, Helen Frankenthaler, and Robert Motherwell. They include Clement Greenberg's sketch of a gondola on the Grand Canal, Saul Steinberg's whimsical drawings of Peggy and her dogs, Jean Cocteau's striking sketch of a head, Marino Marini's drawings of horses, Man Ray's irreverent female figure; and musical bars from such composers as John Cage, Goffredo Petrassi and Ned Rorem.

Another section of the exhibition is dedicated to Peggy Guggenheim's gallery ventures in London and New York. In the years 1938 to 1947, Peggy was active in Europe and the United States as a gallery owner. It was during these years that she began to amass the superb collection of twentieth-century art that forms the core of the holdings of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

Peggy's first gallery, Guggenheim Jeune, opened in London in January 1938 with an exhibition of works by Cocteau. Other shows included the first solo exhibition in London of paintings by Vasily Kandinsky and the "Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture" (with works by Arp, Constantin Brancusi, Alexander Calder, Henry Moore, and Antoine Pevsner, among others). Works from the sculpture exhibition and from an exhibition she gave Yves Tanguy represent this enterprise, which was active in London until June 1939 and which served as a catalyst for the growing appreciation of Modern art in England.

Paintings by Jean Hélion, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock and Clyfford Still (Peggy gave the first solo exhibitions to the latter two), are among those representing the 'Art of This Century' gallery, which she operated in New York from 1942 to 1947. Furniture by Frederick Kiesler designed specifically for that space will be on view, evoking the atmosphere of the legendary New York gallery.

In the summer of 1948, Peggy's collection was exhibited for the first time in Europe at the Venice Biennale. That winter, Peggy bought Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, an unfinished eighteenth-century palace on the Grand Canal of Venice, and installed her collection there. She lived in the *palazzo* for thirty years. In 1976, three years before her death, Peggy donated her *palazzo* and art collection to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation of New York. Works on view from Peggy's collection will include Arp's sculpture *Head and Shell* (1933), her first acquisition, Francis Bacon's *Study for a Chimpanzee* (1957), Joan Miró's *Dutch Interior II* (1928), Piet Mondrian's *Untitled (Oval Composition)* (1914), Giuseppe Santomaso's *Secret Life* (1958), Yves Tanguy's *The Sun in its Jewel Case* (1937), and Emilio Vedova's *Hostage City* (1945).

Images of Peggy Guggenheim include childhood portraits by Franz von Lenbach, a striking canvas painted by the French artist Alfred Courmes in 1926 and photo-portraits by Berenice Abbott and Man Ray, the latter featuring Peggy wearing a Paul Poiret dress.

Among the personal objects on view is a silver bed-head created by Alexander Calder (1945-46), several pairs of earrings (including miniature Calder mobiles and tiny Tanguy paintings), surrealistic sunglasses by Edward Melcarth, and an evening gown designed by Ken Scott.

A new, lavishly illustrated book on Peggy Guggenheim, with essays by **Karole Vail** and **Thomas Messer**, entitled *Peggy Guggenheim. A Celebration*. (152 pages, Guggenheim Publications, New York, available in English and Italian editions, Lit. 65.000), accompanies the exhibition.

The exhibition has been organized by **Karole Vail**, Project Curatorial Assistant at the Guggenheim Museum, and was presented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, from June 12 - September 2, 1998.

Exhibition sponsor: **Lufthansa German Airlines**, Global Partner of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

The exhibitions of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection are made possible by the support of the **Regione Veneto** and:

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**INTRAPRESÆ COLLEZIONE GUGGENHEIM**

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<b>Arlinea</b>	<b>e Zecca dello Stato</b>
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<b>Banca Antoniana</b>	<b>Lubiam 1911</b>
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*The Peggy Guggenheim Collection is owned and operated by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation which also operates the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain, and the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin.*

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***Peggy Guggenheim Collection.***

**Opening times:** 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily. Closed Tuesdays and December 25.

**Admission:** Lire 12.000; Lire 8.000 (concessions); children under ten and members free.

**Facilities:** Museum Shop, Museum Café, Audio Guides.

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