

Alumni Donate Collection of 20th- Century Prints to University

**Gifts Enhances UNH Museum of Art Collection, Expands
Research Opportunities**

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Jasper Johns, *Target with Four Faces*, 1979, Five color etching, 30" x 22-1/8." Gift of Dr. Lawrence F. and Marilyn E. Staples. [VIEW THE COLLECTION >>](#)

Two University of New Hampshire alumni have donated a collection of prints by notable mid-20th century American and European artists, enhancing the collection at the UNH Museum of Art and expanding research opportunities for UNH students and faculty.

Lawrence Staples '49,'50G, and Marilyn Staples '48 of Des Moines, Iowa, have given 62 works of art to the UNH Museum of Art. "We are very fond of UNH. It gave us the foundation for the following years. Hence, our selection of UNH as a home for our collection. We hope the art will be enjoyed by others and be a resource for the Art Department. We are proud of the growth of UNH since our graduations," Marilyn Staples said.

The Staples collection includes prints by celebrated mid-20th century American and European artists such as Alexander Calder, Eduardo Chillida, Richard Diebenkorn, Sam Francis, David Hockney, Jasper Johns, Sol LeWitt, Kenneth Noland, and Frank Stella.

"This collection fills a gap in our own holdings of works on paper. It represents a selection of artists who were working during that time, especially artists who were important contributors to the resurgence of print making," said Kristina Durocher, director of the museum.

The Museum of Art cares for a permanent collection of 1,700 works of art, including paintings, drawings, prints, photography, ceramics, and sculpture. The collection emphasizes 19th- and 20th- century prints and drawings and includes nearly 200 Japanese woodblock prints. Approximately 80 percent of the Museum of Art's collection is composed of prints, drawings, watercolors, and photography.

Durocher said the Staples collection furthers the museum's goal of providing a resource for students to conduct research and be a basis for instruction in the techniques and methods of art, art history, and art preservation. Durocher explained that faculty from diverse disciplines utilize the museum's collection as an opportunity to expand student learning. For example, an English professor recently utilized the museum's collection as an opportunity for students to expand their understanding of major themes in American literature.

The Staples built their collection over several decades, purchasing mostly from dealers who sell to museums. Larry Staples served on the acquisition committee and board of directors of the Des Moines Art Center, which specializes in contemporary art.

The couple met at UNH in late September 1945 at a social at the Commons, now Huddleston Hall, after enrolling that fall. "I came with a year's worth of engineering and math, so I entered as a sophomore. Larry was just barely out of three years in the South Pacific — five years in the service — and was discharged in August. The GI Bill made it possible for Larry to attend UNH. Without that financial support, there was no way he could have afforded a college education," Marilyn Staples said.

The couple married in December 1945 during Christmas break. Marilyn Staples, who loved chemistry and wanted to be a teacher, graduated in 1948 with a bachelor's degree in mathematics and was hired by Harold Iddles to work as a lab instructor and instructor in the UNH Chemistry Department. The couple called UNH home, including time living in the new Navy barracks, until 1950 when Larry Staples graduated with his master's degree after earning his bachelor's degree in 1949.

The couple moved to Iowa where Larry Staples attended the University of Iowa College of Medicine and became a cardiologist. However, they spent two years working — Larry Staples teaching physiology to osteopathic students in Des Moines while Marilyn Staples worked conducting chemical analyses after a male chemist left to serve in Korea — to save enough money for Larry Staples to attend medical school.

Larry Staples joined Iowa Methodist Medical Center where he helped establish its first fully staffed emergency room and create the intensive and cardiac care units. He served as director of medical education and chief of staff, and also had his own private practice. In addition, he served on the boards of the Des Moines Symphony and the Civic Music Association. Marilyn Staples was involved in the Des Moines public school system in the 70s, on the board of what is now the Grand View University, active in governance policies in the metropolitan area and in the League of Women Voters. The couple has three children, and Larry Staples, 91, still works as a medical consultant.

The UNH Museum of Art plans to exhibit a selection of prints from the Staples collection in fall 2014. The Museum of Art presents eight to 10 exhibitions yearly that cover a range of periods, styles, and media. Works from public and private collections throughout New England, as well as the museum's permanent collection, provide the focus of important, widely acclaimed exhibitions. The Museum of Art also regularly presents exhibitions of UNH art faculty members, alumni, and graduate and undergraduate art students. For more information, visit <http://cola.unh.edu/moa>.

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