

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SWISS COLLECTIONS JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES FOR ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EXHIBITION

**The Phillips Collection is the only American venue to host  
the Staechelin and Im Obersteg collections.**

Washington, DC—As the 2014 ART fair in Basel, Switzerland, draws near, The Phillips Collection announces plans to host a special exhibition in fall 2015. *Gauguin, Picasso, and Masterworks from Swiss Collections: Staechelin / Im Obersteg* pays tribute to two pioneering supporters of the arts, Rudolf Staechelin (1881–1946) and Karl Im Obersteg (1883–1969), both from Basel, who enthusiastically championed the work of impressionist, post-impressionist, and school of Paris artists. The exhibition will be on view from October 10, 2015–January 10, 2016.



Marc Chagall, *Jew in Red*, 1914. Oil on cardboard laid down on canvas, 39 3/4 x 31 7/8 in. Im Obersteg Foundation, permanent loan to the Kunstmuseum Basel.

The Phillips will exhibit more than 60 celebrated paintings—created during the mid-19th and 20th centuries by 22 world-famous artists—from the renowned Rudolf Staechelin Family Trust and The Im Obersteg Foundation during the renovation of the Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland, where the collections are on permanent loan. Masterpieces including Paul Gauguin's *Nafea faa ipoipo (When will you Marry?)* (1892), Pablo Picasso's double-sided canvas *Femme dans la loge / Buveuse d'absinthe* (1901), and Marc Chagall's three monumental Rabbi portraits will be presented in context with extraordinary paintings by artists of international stature, such as Swiss master Ferdinand Hodler and Russian expressionist painter Alexej Jawlensky.

"I am thrilled by the opportunity to bring such spectacular works to Washington—pieces that don't normally travel," says Dorothy Kosinski, Director of the Phillips and exhibition co-curator. "The exhibition shows the perspicacity of these two very important 20th century patrons and supporters of modernism, and dovetails nicely with the history of collectors in this

country, including our own founder, Duncan Phillips. As a longtime resident of Basel—and Swiss citizen—who had the privilege to accomplish exhibition projects for the Kunstmuseum, I understand fully the importance of these collections and how they reflect the extraordinary cultural vitality of a city I love so well."

A groundbreaking shift occurred in the development of Swiss collections in the first decade of the 20th century, as patrons began to look beyond the contributions of regional painters and broaden their definition of modern art. Both Staechelin and Im Obersteg built their collections based on dealer relationships or personal friendships with contemporary artists, a practice reflected as well in the collecting of Duncan Phillips. Phillips, passionate about



Vincent van Gogh, *The Garden of Daubigny*, 1890. Oil on canvas, 22 x 40 in. The Rudolf Staechelin Collection.

French painting, acquired important examples by artists such as Cézanne, Gauguin, Soutine, Utrillo, and van Gogh, along with many works by American painters who looked to French artists for inspiration.

The city of Basel's vital support for modern art and the approaches of the two collectors, who knew each other personally, will be highlighted in this exhibition. Their shared preference for colorful, expressive paintings of figures, still life, and landscape unifies these impressive works. The presentation of *Gauguin, Picasso and Masterworks from Swiss Collections: Staechelin / Im Obersteg* at the Phillips—after first appearing at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, in Madrid, from April–September, 2015—marks the first occasion for these collections to be exhibited together in the United States.

### **ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION**

The Phillips Collection is one of the world's most distinguished collections of Impressionist and Modern American and European art. Stressing the continuity between art of the past and present, it offers a strikingly original and experimental approach to Modern art by combining works of different nationalities and periods in displays that change frequently. The setting is similarly unconventional, featuring small rooms, a domestic scale, and a personal atmosphere. Artists represented in the collection include Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Claude Monet, Honoré Daumier, Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery, Jacob Lawrence, and Richard Diebenkorn, among others. The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, has an active collecting program and regularly organizes acclaimed special exhibitions, many of which travel internationally. The Intersections series features projects by contemporary artists, responding to art and spaces in the museum. The Phillips also produces award-winning education programs for K–12 teachers and students, as well as for adults. The museum's Center for the Study of Modern Art explores new ways of thinking about art and the nature of creativity, through artist visits and lectures, and provides a forum for scholars through courses, postdoctoral fellowships, and internships. Since 1941, the museum has hosted Sunday Concerts in its wood-paneled Music Room. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

### **ABOUT THE IM OBERSTEG FOUNDATION**

The Im Obersteg collection is one of the most significant private art collections of the classic modern period in Switzerland, one that has continued to grow in historical significance since 1916. Developed by Basel shipping entrepreneur, Karl Im Obersteg (1883-1969), it includes some of the best work by world famous painters such as Marc Chagall, Paul Cézanne, André Derain, Ferdinand Hodler, Alexej Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky, Amedeo Modigliani, Emil Nolde, Pablo Picasso, Georges Rouault, Chaim Soutine, and others. In addition to its nearly 200 highly significant artworks, there are over 500 letters by artists who were in contact with Im Obersteg. The artworks decorated the private residence of Im Obersteg until his death in 1969, after which the collection was endowed to his son, Jürg Im Obersteg. In 1992, the Im Obersteg Foundation was founded with the purpose of caring for the collection, preserving it, and making it accessible to the public. Since 2004, there have been works from the collection on permanent loan to the Kunstmuseum Basel. The Im Obersteg Foundation also regularly carries out rotating exhibitions both at the Kunstmuseum Basel and beyond.

### **ABOUT THE RUDOLF STAECHELIN TRUST**

Rudolf Staechelin, a successful businessman, assembled his collection during the First World War (principally 1917–18) and in the early postwar years and served as an advisor to the Kunstmuseum Basel. In his collecting, Staechelin focused on important works of impressionism by Renoir, Pissarro, Monet and post-impressionism by Gauguin, van Gogh, Picasso. After Staechelin's death, his son Peter, in the late

1940s and early 1950s, placed the core of the collection on long-term loan in the Kunstmuseum Basel, where it has remained. A much noted international event occurred in 1967 when the citizens of Basel voted to acquire two Picassos from the Staechelin collection, for which Picasso was so grateful that he himself donated four more of his paintings to the city of Basel. Loans from the Rudolf Staechelin Family Trust were exhibited in the U.S. for the first time at the Kimball Art Museum in 1997, the majority of which have not been on view in this country since that time.

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