

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
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## FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION	JASPER JOHNS: A PRINT RETROSPECTIVE
DATES	May 19 - August 19, 1986
ORGANIZATION	Riva Castleman, Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art
CONTENTS	<p>Although Jasper Johns's work has been the subject of several important exhibitions and publications, this retrospective is the most comprehensive examination of his printmaking to date. Despite the artist's firmly established position in the history of twentieth-century art, his work is consistently engaging and intriguing. He has produced a body of work of exceptional stature, characterized by multiple layers of meaning and distinguished for its elegant, elusive, and highly ambiguous style.</p> <p>The exhibition represents twenty-five years of printmaking, revealing the passage of the artist from provocative youth to undisputed master. 175 lithographs, etchings, silkscreens and monotypes, as well as three paintings related to major prints of the seventies and eighties will be presented. For the first time a group of eight-foot wide monotypes, completed in 1983, will be shown. Most of the works in the exhibition are from private collections, including that of the artist; approximately one-third are from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art.</p>
THE ARTIST	<p>Jasper Johns was born in 1930 in Augusta, Georgia, and spent his childhood and early youth in rural South Carolina. He studied at the University of South Carolina before moving to New York in 1949, where he briefly attended art school. He served in the army in the early fifties, returning to New York in 1952.</p> <p>In 1954 Johns underwent a spiritual shift and decided "to stop <u>becoming</u> and to <u>be</u> an artist." He destroyed most of his earlier collages and began to explore the techniques of encaustic painting. That year he had a dream in which he was painting the American flag, which inspired him to do so. He also met Robert Rauschenberg, with whom he collaborated on window displays and paintings. Through Rauschenberg he was introduced to John Cage and Merce Cunningham, whose respective innovations in music and dance influenced him. From 1968-75 he was artistic advisor to the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.</p> <p>Johns painted his first Target, Number, and Alphabet paintings in the mid-fifties. He first exhibited his work in the 1957 group exhibition at The Jewish Museum, <u>Artists of the New York School: Second Generation</u>, to widespread acclaim. Within a year Johns had achieved international prominence, and his first solo exhibition opened at the Leo Castelli Gallery, where he continued</p>

to exhibit regularly. The first museum to acquire his paintings, The Museum of Modern Art, featured his work in the exhibition, Sixteen Americans in 1959. In 1972 Johns received the Skowhegan Medal for painting, and in 1977 one for graphics. In 1977 The Whitney Museum of American Art opened his major retrospective of more than 200 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper.

Tatyana Grosman, who founded Universal Limited Art Editions in 1957, invited Johns by letter to make prints at her workshop. In 1960 she delivered two lithography stones to him at his loft in New York, and that year he made his first lithograph, Target. Johns's prints have been made primarily at the workshops of Universal Limited Art Editions in West Islip, New York; Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles; Simca Print Artists in New York; and Aldo and Piero Crommelynck in Paris (published by Petersburg Press, London and New York).

PUBLICATION

Riva Castleman has written the exhibition catalog, in which she discusses the evolution of Johns's printed oeuvre in the context of his paintings, sculpture, and drawings; running parallel to her text are over 100 quotations compiled from conversations with the artist and from his writings. The book, featuring 105 reproductions of prints, 43 of which are in color, and a bibliography, will be published by The Museum of Modern Art in both clothbound and paper editions. The hardcover edition will be distributed by New York Graphic Society Books/Little, Brown and Company, Boston (9½ x 11"; 156 pp.; 43 color, 62 black-and-white illustrations; \$40.00 clothbound, \$18.95 paper).

A poster created by the artist will be published for the exhibition.

TRAVEL

Following its showing at the Museum, the exhibition will travel to the Fort Worth Museum, Texas; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the Kunsthalle, Frankfurt. Additional locations are to be announced.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.