

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 43

30 January 1973

FELIX MAN COLLECTION OF LITHOGRAPHS

The Prime Minister today announced that the Australian Government had acquired for the future Australian National Gallery one of the richest private collections of lithographs ever assembled.

The collection is that of Mr. Felix Man, one of the pioneers of modern photo-journalism, who first became interested in lithography in the early 1930's and began putting together and documenting his now famous collection.

The purchase price of the collection was 165,000 pounds sterling (\$330,000).

Items in the collection date from the beginnings of lithography and many are either unique or extremely rare. It is believed that for quality and depth the collection has few rivals. Its acquisition will place the Australian National Gallery among the leading centres of the world for the study of the history and development of this art form.

Felix Man, well-known as a pioneer of photo-journalism, and from 1933 to 1945 chief photographer of Picture Post, began to assemble in the 1930's what is now probably the best known and most extensive private collection of lithographs in the world. Mr. Man is now 81. He is an acknowledged authority on the medium and has known personally many of the great artists of our time who have used lithographic techniques. It has been long his wish to see the collection housed intact in a major museum.

Extensive inquiries were made by the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board before the decision to purchase was taken. The Director of the National Gallery, Mr. James Hollison, and a member of the Board, Mr. Fred Williams, visited Europe last November to examine the collection in detail and personally assess its importance.

The collection constitutes a unique survey of the work of the many artists who have made significant use of lithography. It contains rarities which even great museums, such as the British Museums and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, do not own. While other museums undoubtedly have fine collections of lithographs, it is believed that few would rival or surpass the Man collection in depth.

With the documentation accompanying the collection, the Australian National Gallery is well-placed to become one of the leading world centres for the study of lithography.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.