

THE LOIS BEURMAN TORF PRINT COLLECTION
FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

The University Gallery of the University of Massachusetts Amherst celebrates the opening of its fall 1997 season with an exhibition featuring over 50 prints and artist books given to the University Collection by internationally regarded print collector and UMass alumna Lois Beurman ('46) Torf. The Lois Beurman Torf Print Collection offers a survey of contemporary graphic art from the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, during which time printmaking flourished in this country to an unprecedented degree. The Torf Collection, on view from September 6 through October 17, includes a significant gift of 18 prints promised to the University Collection on the occasion of Mrs. Torf's 50th reunion in 1996. An opening reception will be held in the University Gallery on Friday, September 5th from 5 to 7 p.m., offering guests an opportunity to meet Mrs. Torf and to preview the 18 new prints and the Torf Collection in its entirety.

Lois Torf's association with the University Gallery began in 1979 with a donation to the University Collection of "Resurrection" (1978), a color etching and aquatint by Joan Snyder, a painter who is known for her expressive brush stroke and for the incorporation of personal iconography and social commentary in her mixed media works. This gift was followed by Mrs. Torf's donation of "Day and Night I" (1978), an etching and aquatint by Jennifer Bartlett which completed a series of three prints, two of which were already in the University Collection. In "Day and Night," Bartlett's first print, two houses sit side by side beneath two tumultuous skys: a day sky and a night sky. Based on one in a series of house paintings Bartlett worked on between 1969 and 1977, the print conveys the artist's interest in the passage of time and the related effects of changing light on the dwelling. The Lois Beurman Torf Print Collection also includes Gerhard Richter's collotype "Schattenbild I" (1968), Robert Wilson's 1985 lithograph "Parsifal, Act I (pl.10)" and prints by Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Claes Oldenburg, and Susan Rothenberg among other artists.

Lois Torf bought her first print on impulse in 1961, an intuitive selection which led to a passionate intellectual vocation as a collector. Today Lois Torf's collection includes many of the finest graphic images of the twentieth century with concentrations in early modernism: Picasso, Braque and the Cubists; Nolde, Kirschner and the German Expressionists; and Gabo, Maholy Nagy and the Constructivists. In 1969 she began collecting the work of contemporary masters Dine, Johns, Rauschenberg, and

Oldenburg, who are among the extraordinary painters and sculptors who inspired the expansion of the contemporary art world in the 1960s and who were at the forefront of the printmaking renaissance. Her collection also includes a younger generation of artists: among them are Mel Bochner, Bryan Hunt, Kiki Smith and Susan Rothenberg. While the majority of her collection has been promised to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Mrs. Torf has been generous to other museums and galleries in Massachusetts, including her alma mater. Over the years, she worked with the University Gallery selecting particular images to complement existing holdings with a view toward helping to build a collection of distinction. A graduate of the University's History department, Mrs. Torf has fond memories of the University -- "They were wonderful years."

Lois Torf has always been generous with institutions and students, making her collection available for study and loan. She loaned several key prints to the University Gallery's 1980 exhibition Contemporary Prints: The Figure Beside Itself and in 1984 the Williams College Museum of Art and the Boston MFA co-organized The Modern Art of the Print from her collection. Mrs. Torf has been a long-time supporter of museums and has sat on various boards and committees at the Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis, and the Williams College Museum of Art among others. In 1986 the University of Massachusetts awarded her an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts. She is an honorary member of the Friends Board of Directors of the Fine Arts Center. A catalogue of The Lois Beurman Torf Print Collection will be available at the University Gallery in December.

The University Gallery, located on the lower level of the Fine Arts Center, is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. The Gallery is also open during evening performances held in the Concert Hall of the Fine Arts Center. For further information, please call (413) 545-3670.

