



FIRST INTERNATIONAL LOAN EXHIBITIONS OF FONDATION GANDUR POUR L'ART

Geneva, Switzerland, December 7, 2011 – **December 2011 marks the opening of the first international loan exhibitions of the Swiss-based Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, in France and in the USA. "I am convinced that access to culture - and thereby to different cultures - creates bridges between peoples and facilitates social integration from a very young age," says Jean Claude Gandur. "This is why museums should have collections that are as rich and diverse as possible, and loan exhibitions help enrich that offering."**

Each exhibition is accompanied by a program of events that includes guided tours for schools and art students as part of the Foundation's philosophy of "Education through Art".

Fabre Museum, Montpellier, France

The first exhibition outside Switzerland opens tomorrow at the Fabre Museum in Montpellier, France, entitled *Subjects of Abstraction (1946 – 1962), 101 Masterpieces from the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art*.

The exhibition was initially shown at the Rath Museum in Geneva (part of the city's Art and History Museum) earlier this year, as the first-ever showing of works from the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art. The Foundation's collection of approximately 400 works from the European post-war period (often called the Second School of Paris) is widely considered second only to that of the Pompidou Center in Paris. The quality and coherence of the collection inspired Dr. Eric de Chasse, Director of the French Academy in Rome - the Villa Medici - as guest curator for the exhibition at the Rath Museum, "to help the public rediscover an important period that is under-represented in art history."

The exhibition includes some of the greatest names of the period, including Pierre Soulages, Georges Mathieu, Hans Hartung and Gérard Schneider. The Fabre Museum is home to the largest collection of Pierre Soulages paintings, thanks to a donation of over 30 of his works from Colette and Pierre Soulages in 2005. It is thus a natural venue for *The Subjects of Abstraction*, placing Soulages within the context of the other major painters of his time. The exhibition is on show from December 8, 2011, until March 25, 2012.

Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida, USA

The first international exhibition of the Foundation's extensive antiquities collection opens on December 17, 2011, at the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida, under the title *Ancient Egypt - Art and Magic: Treasures from the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art*.

The exhibition will show one hundred of the most emblematic objects from the Egyptian section of the Foundation's antiquities collection. They have been carefully selected by guest curator and respected international Egyptologist Dr. Robert Steven Bianchi, former curator of the Department of Egyptian, Classical and Middle-Eastern Art at the Brooklyn Museum in New York.

Part of the antiquities collection was originally revealed to the public in Switzerland in 2001 at Geneva's Art and History Museum under the title *Reflections of the Divine*. Geneva's Museum is the owner of the most important collection of Egyptian archeology in Switzerland.

“The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, is proud to bring these distinguished Egyptian antiquities to America,” said the Museum’s Director, Kent Lydecker. “The quality of the objects will be a revelation to both scholars and the general public.”

A magnificent red granite torso of Ramses the Great stands not far from the monumental mummy case of Hor-Em-Akhet – an impressive object that was previously part of the collection of French fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent. A similarly impressive limestone sphinx with the head of a pharaoh and the body of a lion reflects the profound interrelationship between humans and nature in ancient Egypt. The exhibition will be on show from December 17, 2011, until April 29, 2012.

- For more information on the exhibition of European post-war paintings from the collection of the Fondation Gandur pour l’Art at the Fabre Museum, Montpellier, France: [http://museefabre-en.montpellier-agglo.com/index.php/visiter/les_expositions/\(type_expo\)/2](http://museefabre-en.montpellier-agglo.com/index.php/visiter/les_expositions/(type_expo)/2)
- For more information on the exhibition of Egyptian objects from the antiquities collection of the Fondation Gandur pour l’Art at the Museum of Fine Art, Florida, US: <http://www.fine-arts.org>

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About the Fondation Gandur pour l’Art:

The Fondation Gandur pour l’Art was founded by Swiss art collector and entrepreneur Jean Claude Gandur in 2010 with the aim of encouraging education through art. It is a non-profit organization that works to conserve and enrich the collections he and his family have developed over the years. Its mission includes making the collections available to the public and scholars, in collaboration with the Art and History Museum in Geneva, Switzerland, and through loan exhibitions to high caliber institutions worldwide. The Foundation’s collections include an antiquities collection with over 800 works of exceptional quality from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome; a collection of approximately 400 works from the European post-war period, considered second only to that of the Pompidou Center in Paris; a collection of high quality art pieces and examples of the decorative arts, ranging from medieval sculptures to French furniture of the 18th century. Reflecting its founder’s conviction that culture opens the mind and contributes to social integration from the youngest age, the Foundation encourages access for school children through the organization of visits to museums, private collections and foundations. The Foundation adheres to the ethical and legal standards established by the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

About Jean Claude Gandur:

Swiss art collector, philanthropist and entrepreneur, Jean Claude Gandur was born in Grasse, France, and spent his childhood years in Alexandria, Egypt, and near Château-d’Oex, Switzerland. Sensitive to beauty from an early age, he has spent his life building on a core family collection to develop one of the largest private collections of antiquities, post-war European paintings, and decorative objects from medieval times to the 18th century. He formed the Fondation Gandur pour l’Art in 2010 and naturally included a mission to make the collections publicly available and encourage access by school children, driven by his deep conviction that culture is an important vehicle of social integration. He created a partnership with the Art and History Museum in Geneva in 2010, offering to finance part of the Museum’s much-needed extension. Shortly after, he accepted the Museum’s proposal to house the Foundation’s collections, ensuring long-term public access through a recognized cultural institution. Jean Claude Gandur is also a successful businessman; he founded the Addax and Oryx Group in 1987, developed it into a diversified energy group of companies and is currently transforming it into a diversified investment group.

Jean Claude Gandur has also followed his family’s tradition of philanthropy – conscious and grateful of everything that life, good fortune and professional success bring, founding the Addax and Oryx Foundation in 1996 on the initiative of a group of employees and transforming it into an independent foundation with a professional Board of Trustees in 2007. Over the years, this Foundation has funded around 140 projects in Africa and the Middle East, in the areas of education, health, the environment and community development with the aim of helping to alleviate the root causes of poverty.