

PRESSED IN TIME

PRESSED IN TIME

American Prints 1905–1950

HANNAH S. KULLY'S AMERICAN PRINTS COLLECTION

*"Pressed in Time: American Prints 1905-1950" (on view Oct. 6, 2007–Jan. 7, 2008)
includes 116 works from the American print collection of Hannah S. Kully.*

The American print collection of Hannah S. Kully, recently promised to The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, consists of approximately 300 prints by nearly 100 different artists, and represents some of the finest examples of printmaking from the first half of the 20th century. As a collecting philosophy, Kully places prints of first-rate quality as the highest priority, so while her collection includes works by many widely recognized artists, such as Grant Wood, Edward Hopper, and Childe Hassam, it is also surprisingly rich in striking and exquisitely crafted prints by those less often shown, such as Harry Shokler, an important innovator in screen printing, and Kyra Markham, who had an extraordinary talent for capturing 1930s city life.

Hannah Kully began collecting more than four decades ago, when she gave her husband, Russel Kully, a European print as a wedding present. This gesture marked the beginning of a mutual interest in art that the Kullys have vigorously pursued, with Russel becoming enamored of British etchings from the late 19th and 20th centuries, and Hannah, after an initial interest in European genre prints, finding herself devoted to 20th-century American prints.

In 1999, after more than a decade of building her American prints collection in earnest, Hannah Kully curated a selection of them in a special exhibition, "The Pleasure of Prints: American Graphics 1914-1951," for the Gallery at 777 in downtown Los Angeles. At the time, she was earning her Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles, and became increasingly aware of how the subjects of the prints she was collecting related to her studies in cultural sociology. While she admits that she sometimes is driven to acquire a piece by her interest in its content, she particularly appreciates prints in which the medium and message come together to make a strong, unified statement, as in Paul Landacre's *Death of a Forest* (c. 1938), where solid dark forms evoke imposing mountains enveloped by smoke and fire. A beautiful impression in perfect condition, the print captures at once the power and vulnerability of the California landscape.

With their art-filled San Marino home just a few blocks away, the Kullys have supported The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens in many ways for several years.

###