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**“One of the Greatest Living American Artists” Jasper Johns’ Works
on Display at the Museum of TTU**

The Museum of Texas Tech University is delighted to announce the opening of the exhibition *Jasper Johns: Prints from the John and Maxine Belger Family Foundation*, on April 23, in Galleries 2 and 3 of the Museum, located at 3301 4th Street (SE corner of 4th and Indiana Avenue) where there is ample free parking in the north and south lots. The exhibition runs through July 2.

Jasper Johns (born 1930) is often applauded as the greatest living American artist. A significant portion of this praise has been directed toward his artistic explorations in printmaking. From his earliest printing efforts, Johns demonstrated an acute ability to convert the sometimes uneasy relationship between professional printer and artist into a situation that inspired exceptional works of art.

The prints in this exhibition range from 1960 to 2001. The variety of print media, include embossed lead, etching, lithography and screen printing. The variety of techniques exemplify the artist’s propensity to explore and push at the boundaries of available fine art printing techniques.

A renaissance of American printmaking in the second half of the 20th century included extraordinary achievements in the accessibility, quality and quantity of fine art prints. This exuberance of printmaking also generated undesired consequences: an abundance of mediocre and easily forgettable printed images. Many artists sought in prints an inexpensive mechanism to distribute and reproduce existing works of art. Johns, however, exploited the artistic possibilities unique to print media, eagerly cross-pollinating his prints, paintings and sculpture.

From his earliest adventures in printmaking Johns recognized substantive differences between making a print and making a painting. Printmaking in a professional shop is enveloped by a social, collaborative working environment; painting is private, solitary. Marks on a painting are immediately, economically and often easily changed or covered up; to change marks on a print is often time consuming, expensive, and laborious. In printmaking one often organizes the world in reverse, a mirror image; in painting the point of view is direct.

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MUSEUM OF TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY: Open 10 AM -5 PM Tue-Sat, open until 8:30 PM on Thu, 1-5 PM Sun. Closed Monday. **ADMISSION FREE**
MOODY PLANETARIUM - STAR SHOWS: \$1 adults, \$.50 students, 5 or younger and 60+ Free; LASER SHOWS: \$1 students, \$1.50 adults.
LUBBOCK LAKE LANDMARK: Open 9 AM -5 PM Tuesday-Saturday, 1-5 PM Sunday. Closed Monday • At N. Loop 289 & Clovis Hwy. **ADMISSION FREE.**

Johns acknowledged the profound differences between painting and printmaking. His understanding of print media had a significant impact on his painting methods but there is also no mistaking the manner in which he probes his aesthetic ideas in each media. While his art works reflect a finite range of subject matter, the means by which he explores his ideas in each media stand as witnesses to his versatility.

This exhibition has been curated for the Museum of Texas Tech University from the collection of the John and Maxine Belger Family Foundation at the Belger Arts Center in Kansas City, Missouri.

For more information or to request special assistance, call the Museum Education office at 806.742.2432, or email to museum.education@ttu.edu. Stay current on Museum of TTU exhibitions and events at www.museum.ttu.edu.

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—Additional Information—

Jasper Johns has expanded our understanding of the fine art print. This collection of works produced from 1960 through the present, explores this seminal artist's commitment to the Dadaist ideas proposed in his first mature paintings, as well as what could be described as a strained humanism evident in more recent works. *Jasper Johns: Prints from the John and Maxine Belger Family Foundation* gathers works in a variety of print media and techniques, examining Johns' working relationships with the master printers with whom he has collaborated in producing one of the most significant bodies of printed fine art of the 21st century so far.

Johns has always pushed beyond the technical givens of print-based technique. In *Decoy* (1971) and *Decoy II* (1971-73), he exploited commercial processes like offset printing. In early reliefs like *High School Days* (1969) he replaced paper with lead sheeting, which he then passed through the press. These multiple embossings restyled traditional definitions of prints and printmaking by confounding our anticipated relationship with the delicacies of a luminous paper surface, proposing instead the actual and aesthetic weight of dull, gray metal.

Technical accomplishments in printmaking during the last half of the 20th century have made it possible for many contemporary artist to produce prints of exceptional quality. These successes are due in large part to the master printers and print publishers, such as Tatyana Grosman, who have helped artists achieve their visions. This collaborative printmaking process can be an exciting one that affords artist and printer an opportunity to experiment and to learn form one another. In the catalog essay by Melissa Rountree in the 1993 publication *Jasper Johns: Collecting Prints*, eight master printers who have worked with Johns over the years speak about their collaborations with him. They each comment on Johns' incredible drive to entice from the printing surface every nuance of tone and image.

This exhibition explores in depth what has captivated many about Johns' prints: his exactness of line and the characteristic resonance, of clarity and elegance, of his simplest drawn forms. As compelling are his examinations of shades of gray in many varieties of print mediums, examining all the visual and tactile qualities that he can extract from one color. The exploration continues and the possibilities are unlimited.

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“There’s something for everyone at the Museum.”