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NEWS RELEASE

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AUTOGRAPHED WARHOL 'COW' PRINT HIGHLIGHTS UM ART SHOW

MISSOULA--

Among the many treasures in The University of Montana's permanent art collection is an Andy Warhol print autographed by the artist and dedicated to UM President George Dennison.

The print, from Warhol's famous "Cow Wallpaper" series, features a brown Jersey cow on a blue background. The legendary pop artist signed the print "To George Dennison, Andy." Warhol actually gave two identical prints to Dennison, who hung one in his home and donated the other to UM in 1991.

The Warhol print, along with other gems, is on display at UM's Montana Museum of Art and Culture in an exhibition titled "Contemporary Prints from the Permanent Collection: the 1970s."

The show runs through July 31 in the Paxson Gallery, located in the Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center. Gallery hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and admission is free.

Prints in the show represent two art movements spanning two decades -- abstract expressionism and pop art. The movements opposed each other in style, content and theory, yet are each considered a reaction to post-World War II culture. The show presents abstract

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expressionists such as Robert Motherwell and Theodoros Stamos, while Ed Ruscha, Larry Rivers, R.B. Kitaj, Patrick Caulfield and Peter Phillips join Warhol in the pop art camp.

Perhaps the image most associated with pop art is Andy Warhol's "Campbell's Soup Cans." Dennison remembers seeing those giant soup cans in the late 1970s at the dedication of a new art department facility at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, where he was an associate dean and Warhol was a visiting lecturer.

One of the 20th century's most important and prolific artists, Warhol presented several cow prints as gifts to people who helped organize his visit to CSU.

"I received two of the same print, while everyone else got only one," Dennison said. "I do not know why that happened. Perhaps because I have always admired Elsie the Borden Cow."

Warhol's "Cow Wallpaper" series debuted in 1966 at a New York gallery, where it covered an entire room, and over several years, was displayed on museum interiors and even an exterior. The repetitive cow image stretched the boundaries of pop art, which depicted ordinary objects -- cheap and popular foods, comic-book characters, movie stars -- to explore myths of abundance, sameness and consumption.

Pop art blossomed in the United States and Europe after World War II, when artists began co-opting the images, artifacts and style of American advertising, design and popular entertainment. Believing that art should be accessible, these artists rejected the mystery and difficulty of much previous modern art.

Conversely, abstract expressionism, also known as the New York School, was inspired in part by surrealists, such as Salvador Dali, and by the notion of the "collective unconscious,"

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popularized by psychoanalyst Carl Jung. The term abstract expressionism characterizes a variety of work produced between 1945 and 1970, primarily in New York.

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