



University of  
Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

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## Companion pieces by artist Joan Miró reunited after 60 years

In 1955, when two drawings by Spanish artist Joan Miró were up for sale at the Curt Valentin Gallery in New York, Roloff Beny (LLD'72), a Medicine Hat-born artist and internationally known photographer who frequently shopped at the gallery, contacted his good friend, Dr. Margaret (Marmie) Perkins Hess (DFA '04), with a proposition.

Beny wrote to Hess about “two small but superb Miró drawings” that he could get a better price on if he bought both. Hess took him up on the offer, buying her Miró drawing from the gallery via Beny the same year.

“The drawing titled *Composition* stayed with Beny and came to the University of Lethbridge in 1982 as a gift from Roloff,” says Juliet Graham, U of L Art Gallery registrar. “The drawing titled *Sun Moon & Man* stayed with Marmie and ended up here because of her bequest. This is the first time they’ve been together again in 60 years.”

The two drawings are currently being exhibited in the U of L’s Hess Gallery, along with a photo of Beny and Hess taken at the McIntyre Ranch in the winter of 1974 (courtesy of University of Calgary Special Collections). The exhibit, *Collected by Dr. Margaret (Marmie) Hess: Roloff Beny*, explores the relationship between Beny and Hess. The works on display illustrate the scope of Beny’s practice and his influence on the international art Hess collected.

“This show is all about the friendship of Roloff and Marmie,” says Graham. “Marmie followed Roloff’s career and kept a scrapbook of his achievements.”

Beny and Hess met at the Banff School of Fine Arts (now the Banff Centre) in the early 1940s, where Hess was teaching and Beny, 15 years old at the time, was studying with H.G. Glyde, a well-known Alberta artist. Even though Hess was eight years older than Beny, the two stayed in touch and became close friends. Beny advised Hess on many of her art purchases.

Beny passed away in 1984 at the age of 60 and Hess served on an advisory committee to his estate which unanimously determined that Beny’s collection of more than 1,000 artworks should come to the U of L.

When Hess passed away at the age of 100 in 2016, many pieces in her art collection, including her Miró drawing, were donated to the U of L. The drawing might have been lost forever if not for a keen-eyed executor who went through her personal papers and effects one by one.

The *Collected by Dr. Margaret (Marmie) Hess: Roloff Beny* exhibit is open until Thursday, August 29 in the Hess Gallery, located on the sixth floor of the University Centre for the Arts.

This news release can be found online at [Miró drawings](#).

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