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EXHIBITION SURVEYING FOUR DECADES OF WORK BY NANCY SPERO ON VIEW AT THE NEW MUSEUM

"Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950," a survey of four decades of art by this major American artist, will open to the public on May 19, 1989 at The New Museum of Contemporary Art. The exhibition will be hung in two four-week parts, allowing for the full-range of Spero's work to be shown. The first part will be on view May 19 through June 11, 1989. Part II will be shown from June 14 through July 9, 1989.

"Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950" is the first comprehensive exhibition in the United States of Spero's art, and it offers insights into this activist-artist's explorations of self-identification, the role of gender and aggression and the representation of feminine sexuality.

Since her first paintings of the early 1950s, Spero has consistently stood outside of the main currents of the art world. Her passionate Vietnam work of the 1960s confronted the dominant, cerebral art of Minimalism; her current paper works, in their fragility and delicacy, contrast with the explosive, large-scale paintings of the Neo-Expressionists.

An early combination of text with imagery became a standard device in Spero's work up until the late 1970s. Quotations from diverse sources were scrawled, typed and stamped onto her compositions. In the "Codex Artaud," a major series from 1971-2, Spero used poet Antonin Artaud's ragings against society as a projection of her own dehumanized feelings as a woman artist. In Torture of Women of 1976, Spero analyzed the condition of political persecution of women throughout the world. Using a variety of textural sources, from ancient quotes of repression to Amnesty

International reports, the artist combined works with contrasting images of victimized, resistant and ultimately victorious women.

Since 1969, Spero's work has taken the form of extended scrolls that are wrapped around a room in tiers. On these scrolls, the artist collages typed words and stamped images. This format has enabled Spero to work on a large-scale both horizontally and vertically, surrounding the viewer with fast-flowing currents of imagery suggesting formal devices as disparate as Egyptian hieroglyphs, cave paintings and cinematic techniques. Spero's scrolls after 1981 are devoid of words, but continue to contain stamped and printed images of women derived from modern and ancient myths.

Both Part I and Part II of "Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950" will include some of the artist's earliest mature paintings from the early fifties, as well as selections from the "Paris Black" paintings (1962-5), "The Codex Artaud" (1971-2), Torture of Women (1974-6) and Notes in Time on Women (1976-9). A sampling of her most recent scrolls will also be on view, along with works created especially for the walls and columns of The New Museum lobby and main gallery. Part II of the exhibition will also include the "War Series" (1966-70), "The Artaud Paintings" (1969-70); and Sky Goddess II (1986).

The accompanying fully-illustrated catalogue contains essays by critic Robert Storr; artist Leon Golub; art critic and historian Jo-Anna Isaak and an introduction by Dominique Nahas. This travelling exhibition was organized by Dominique Nahas, Curator at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York, and is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts.

The New Museum of Contemporary Art is located at 583 Broadway between Prince and Houston Streets in Soho. Hours are Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday: noon to 6:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday: noon to 8 p.m.; Monday and Tuesday: closed. Admission is by suggested contribution: \$2.50 general; \$1.50 artists, students, seniors; members and children under 12 admitted free.

Recorded information concerning exhibitions and programs at The New Museum may be obtained by calling 212/219-1355.