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RECENT ACQUISITIONS IN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE SHOWN AT
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Nine paintings--the work of Davis, van Doesburg, Grosz, Matisse, Picasso, Portocarrero, Shahn and Sutherland--and three sculptures--by Jespers, Laurent and Maria--recently acquired by the Museum of Modern Art have today (September 25) been put on exhibition on the first floor of the Museum, and will remain on view through November 10. The works were acquired through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, the Inter-American Fund and the Museum's Purchase Fund.

With this showing, the Department of Painting and Sculpture initiates a new policy of more frequent periodic displays of acquisitions of paintings, sculpture, and graphic work. Frequent showings will enable members of the Museum and the general public to keep more closely in touch with the growth of the Museum's Collection than was possible under the former practice of waiting to show new acquisitions until a large group exhibition was possible. James Johnson Sweeney, Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, feels that the new policy will permit the public to participate more intimately in this aspect of the Museum's activity.

Commenting upon the current new acquisitions Mr. Sweeney points out that none of the more recent work shown in this group--such as Graham Sutherland's Horned Forms, Maria's Impossible, and Portocarrero's Mythological Personage--could be described as simple naturalism. He says:

"There is a notable tendency in these recent works toward a free adaptation of natural forms in their organic character rather than in the geometric emphasis which marks the three earlier masterpieces in the group, Matisse's Piano Lesson (1916), Picasso's Card Player (1913-14), and the van Doesburg Rhythm of a Russian Dance (1918)--all roughly of the same period. None of these, however, could be described as simple naturalism. What is striking in them is evidence of a revived interest in fantasy and allusion which surrealism brought back to painting and which marks so much contemporary work which does not fit comfortably into any strict group.

"Matisse's large Piano Lesson is one of the most important examples of that group of Matisse's work, including the famous Moroccans of 1916 when he was closest to the geometrizing of the time. While there is nothing cubist in the painting, it has a severity of line and a structural calm which brings it closer in spirit to the cubists' aim than to the running calligraphy more familiar in the generality of Matisse's work.

"Picasso's 1915 Card Player is one of the most important examples of his earlier First World War period. It is an especially striking combination of two characteristic idioms developed by the cubists. In the lower half of the painting we have the compositional approach derived from papier collé experiments. In the upper half we have the stripping to structural line and the suggestion of transparent form which already point to later developments in constructivist sculpture and to Picasso's famous series of heads painted in 1929 and 1930.

"In Rhythm of a Russian Dance Théo van Doesburg is possibly closer in spirit to the work of his great colleague and member of the De Stijl Group, the late Piet Mondrian, through his suggestion of movement by contrasts of form, color and space intervals.

"George Grosz' 1917 Metropolis is an example of his oil painting at its most dynamic and savage. His palette here is ideally in keeping with his mood, and his 1920 Republican Automaton is equally representative of his post-Dada period of ironic calm when his apparent disillusionment led to a mechanistic view of mankind which brought him even to the extreme of signing his work with a rubber stamp.

"The early work of Davis and Shahn is represented by two paintings; Robert Laurent's sculpture by the alabaster figure American Beauty; Graham Sutherland, one of the leading younger painters of England by Horned Forms; Maria by her latest completed sculpture in bronze, a fantastic conception out of the subconscious, and titled Impossible.

"Portocarrero, the Cuban artist, strikes a fresher note in his recent gouache Mythological Personage without sacrificing any of the characteristic Afroantillean spirit and tropic barbarism which has colored his best work."

The entire list of new acquisitions is as follows:

- DAVIS, Stuart (American, Born 1894). The Front Page. 1912. Watercolor. Purchase Fund.
- DOESBURG, Théo van (Dutch, 1883-1931). Rhythm of a Russian Dance. 1918. Oil on canvas. Purchase Fund.
- GROSZ, George (American, born Germany 1893). Metropolis. 1917. Oil on cardboard. Purchase Fund.
- GROSZ, George. Republican Automaton. (1920.) Watercolor. Purchase Fund.
- JESPERS, Oscar (Belgian, born 1887). Temptation of St. Anthony. (1934.) Black granite. Purchase Fund. (Exhibited in garden)
- LAURENT, Robert (American, born France 1890). The American Beauty. (1933?) Alabaster. Purchase Fund.
- MARIA (Brazilian.) Impossible. 1946. Bronze. Inter-American Fund.
- MATISSE, Henri (French, born 1869). Piano Lesson. (1916.) Oil on canvas. Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund.
- PICASSO, Pablo (Spanish, born 1881). Card Player. (1913-14.) Oil on canvas. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.
- PORTOCARRERO, René (Cuban, born 1912). Mythological Personage. 1945. Gouache. Purchase Fund.
- SHAHN, Ben (American, born Russia 1898). Two Witnesses, Mellie Edeau and Sadie Edeau (from "The Mooney Case" series). (1932.) Gouache. Purchase Fund.
- SUTHERLAND, Graham (English, born 1903). Horned Forms. 1944. Oil on cardboard. Purchase Fund.