

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

48928-38

FOR FRIDAY RELEASE

TWO IMPORTANT GIFTS OF MODERN EUROPEAN PRINTS GO ON VIEW AT MUSEUM

Ninety modern European prints just purchased abroad have been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, through the generosity of Mr. Victor S. Riesenfeld of New York and will be on view in the first floor galleries from October 1 to 24. In addition the album of 20 plates done by Henri Matisse for Jazz, published in 1947, has been presented to the Museum by the artist and will also be on view.

The Victor S. Riesenfeld Collection consists of engravings, etchings, woodcuts and lithographs, many in color, by 30 artists, most of them French, German, Spanish and Swiss. The establishment of a fund by Mr. Riesenfeld made possible the acquisition of these prints, a large number of them to be seen for the first time in America, which were assembled by William S. Lieberman of the Museum staff.

Mr. Lieberman comments on the exhibition as follows:

"The exhibition of Mr. Riesenfeld's gift suggests the variety of modern graphic techniques and shows the recent developments of color lithography in France. The collection begins in the 1890s, the decade of post impressionism, with Bonnard, Maurice Denis, Renoir, Vallotton and Signac. The cubist tradition is represented by Braque, Picasso, Marcoussis and Villon, surrealism in the 1930s by Miro, Dali and Giacometti. Chagall, Dufy, Derain and Rouault complete the selection of the masters of the School of Paris.

"A group of 15 German expressionist prints includes graphic work by Beckmann, Barlach, Heckel and Dix. Nine Klees, eight of which are now publicly exhibited for the first time, constitute an important addition to the Museum's already unique collection of Klee's etchings and lithographs. The Riesenfeld gift also offers an opportunity to study the work of two prominent painter-engravers neither of whom is well known in America, the Frenchman Jacques Villon and the Swiss Felix Edouard Vallotton.

"The collection gives special emphasis to work of the post-war years in France. The color lithographs by Picasso, Léger and Braque, shown for the first time in this country, are exhibited with works by some younger members of today's School of Paris: Adam, Desnoyer, Fougerson, Pignon, Prassinis, Wols.

"In Matisse's Jazz, most of the scenes are taken from circus life: sword swallowers, cowboys, elephants. Two of the plates represent actual performers: Monsieur Loyal, a famous clown, and the Codomas, a pair of trapeze artists. Interspersed among these scenes are a few poetic and personal reflections on subjects such as the fall of Icarus, Destiny, the beauty of water enclosed in lagoons.

"Matisse devoted over a year to the composition of the album, supervised its entire production and wrote a text to accompany the plates. His text refers specifically to only three of the plates, a short rhapsody on lagoons.

"The designs were worked out with scissors and paste and pins into collages of painted pieces of paper. These were reproduced by the mechanical pochoir screen process using the same colors and inks used by Matisse himself."

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