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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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EXHIBITION OF MOLYNEUX COLLECTION OF FRENCH PAINTINGS TO OPEN AT MUSEUM

Seventy-three paintings by outstanding French artists of the 19th and 20th centuries, brought from the Paris collection of Captain Molyneux, will be on view in the first floor galleries of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from June 25 through September 7. The exhibition, which has recently been seen at the National Gallery in Washington, is being prepared and installed by Andrew C. Ritchie, Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture. An illustrated catalog will accompany the show.

These small pictures of high quality have been collected with discerning taste by Captain Molyneux, well-known couturier, for his Paris apartment overlooking the Seine. Among the paintings of the French 19th and 20th centuries the largest representation is by Renoir, with 17 canvases including the Portrait of Mme. Monet and Her Son, one of the major canvases in the exhibition. The one Cézanne in the collection, The Small Bridge, is an outstanding work, as is the only Gauguin, a Still Life of 1891. A very fine early Corot is the River Scene with Bridge done in 1834. The van Gogh Farmhouse in Provence, is a late work and an unusually restrained canvas by this master.

Outstanding portraits include the Degas portrait of Mme. René de Gas, the Mme. Monet and Bazille of 1868 and an early Self-Portrait by Picasso. The Bon Bock Café by Edouard Manet shows, despite its miniature size, the full power of this master in his late years. Other important works are to be found in the group of 7 paintings by Edouard Vuillard and 4 by Pierre Bonnard. In addition, the collection includes works by Boudin, Berthe Morisot, Dufy, Matisse, Toulouse-Lautrec, Utrillo and Vlaminck.

The collection is unusual in that it is truly representative of the personality of the collector and his lifelong interest in this particular kind of gracious beauty. Captain Molyneux started his collecting in 1936. A captain in the British Army in the First World

War, he suffered an eye injury which has recently required him to retire from his activities as a couturier. He spends his spare time painting for his enjoyment.

Mr. Ritchie in his preface to the catalog states, "I hope this demonstration of fitness and delight in a collection may influence others to make acquisitions with equal pleasure and discrimination." Mr. Ritchie will instal the exhibition with the aim of reproducing the intimate, personal quality of a collection made for an apartment.

The essence of these French masters is to be seen in these works to an unusual degree, concentrated into a small compass. They prove that the quality of a painting is not dependent upon its size.

Mr. John Rewald, art historian and critic, has written of the collection in a preface to the catalog:

The charm and the specific character of the Molyneux Collection lie not only in the exceptional quality of the paintings assembled by this famous Parisian personality, but to an even greater extent in the unusual unity of his collection as a whole. This is not just a series of fine pictures assembled over a period of years, it is a group to which each individual canvas contributes a new note perfectly in key with the rest. While these paintings have been gathered with great patience and discernment, it is love above all which presided over their final rendezvous on the walls of Captain Molyneux's enchanting apartment overlooking Paris. Instead of selecting large and imposing masterpieces, Molyneux has concentrated his attention on small canvases in which spontaneity is unbridled and where the painter seems to abandon himself exclusively to his own pleasure. There is an intimacy in these paintings and a quiet loveliness seldom attained in more ambitious works. Even the bitter genius of a Lautrec is represented here by an exquisite little picture. Indeed, exquisiteness seems to be the leitmotiv of the entire collection. The impressionists are shown in their most subtle aspects (particularly Berthe Morisot), and Bonnard and Vuillard were never better than in the canvases here assembled. As to the living Rouault, Utrillo, Dufy and Matisse, each painter has contributed works of an exceptional mood and beauty.

If they are not large in size, the paintings of the Molyneux collection are nonetheless outstanding in quality, each one of them a happy expression of wonderful visual discoveries....