

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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November 18, 1959

## THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND FRANCE

The Museum of Modern Art, which has just announced a campaign to raise 25 million dollars for additional building and program funds, has played an important role in worldwide cultural exchange since its founding in 1929. This activity has been increased in recent years with the establishment of the International Program, a special department in the Museum devoted to cultural exchange. The importance of this activity to men and women all over America is attested by the fact that the Museum's Program is now under the auspices of an International Council composed of community leaders and art patrons from many parts of the country.

The Museum has been America's most important institution in introducing the American public to modern French art. Its first exhibition in 1929 was devoted to Cezanne, Gauguin, Seurat and van Gogh. Since that time it has held some fifty major exhibitions devoted to such artists as: Henri Matisse, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Cezanne, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. In 1955 fifteen paintings by 19th Century French Masters from the Louvre and the Museum of France were sent to New York to honor the Museum of Modern Art on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary.

In addition to the Impressionists and Post Impressionists in the Museum's Collection, the Museum now has the finest collection of the School of Paris outside of France.

The first comprehensive survey of American art ever sent abroad, Trois Siecles d'Art aux Etats-Unis, was assembled by the Museum in 1938 at the special request of the French government. In 1955, under the International Program 50 Ans d'Art aux Etats-Unis, an exhibition of more than 500 works from the Museum's collections of painting, sculpture, prints, architecture, design, photographs and films was shown as part of the cultural festival "Salute to France". Also a part of that festival was the exhibition De David a Toulouse-Lautrec, comprised of 19th Century paintings and drawings from American collections. Requested by the French government, both of these exhibitions were under the auspices of the American Embassy in Paris. Other important exhibitions in France organized by the International Program have been Twelve Modern American Painters and Sculptors, shown in Paris in 1953, The New American Painting, devoted to avant-garde trends in the United States and Jackson Pollock: 1912-1956. The latter two exhibitions were shown jointly at the Musee National d'Art Moderne in 1958. An important selection of 224 drawings from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, French Drawings from American Collections: Clouet to Matisse, was shown at the Orangerie in Paris during 1958-59.

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Smaller shows circulated in France by the International Program were Recent American Watercolors, prepared especially for circulation in provincial centers by the Association Francaise d'Action Artistique in 1956 and 1957, and The Skyscraper, U. S. A., which visited 6 French cities in 1956.

The great photography exhibition The Family of Man, created by Edward Steichen, and first shown at The Museum of Modern Art, was shown in France under the auspices of the American Embassy.

Of the over 200 titles published by the Museum more than 30 are devoted to French art. Among these are "The History of Impressionism" and "Post-Impressionism from van Gogh to Gauguin", both by John Rewald; "Matisse: His Art and His Public," "Picasso: Forty Years of His Art," and "Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art," all by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Several Museum publications have also been translated into French.

Besides one-man shows devoted to French art, there have been many group shows in which French art has been represented. The Circulating Exhibition Program has had a great number of traveling shows containing French material, which have toured the United States and Canada.

Sixty Years of French Film, a cycle held at the Museum in 1957, was inaugurated by the French Ambassador, M. Herve Alphand, at a gala premiere.

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