

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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No. 107

For Release December 3, 1959

RECENT ACQUISITIONS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Fifty-two paintings and sculptures recently acquired by the Museum of Modern Art will be on view in a special exhibition in the first floor galleries from December 3 through January 31. The exhibition, which constitutes one of the Museum's periodic reports to the public on works purchased or acquired by gift, was selected and installed by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections.

Like most acquisition shows, the exhibition demonstrates again the policies of the Museum Collection in the range and diversity of dates, styles and place of origin of the paintings and sculptures. Work by artists of 12 nationalities dating from the 1890's (2 pieces) to the 1950's (31 pieces) are included. Many of the important movements of modern art -- impressionism, fauvism, futurism, surrealism, cubism of various kinds, abstract expressionism, geometric abstraction are all represented not by deliberate intention, but in the ordinary course of a year or so's acquisition.

Six of the major works shown now were also included along with some promised gifts in the special exhibition "Toward the New Museum of Modern Art" which opened the Museum's 30th Anniversary Fund Raising Drive on November 17. These are: Claude Monet's Water Lilies in triptych form, each section 6 1/2 feet high and 14 feet long (see separate release no. 104R); Umberto Boccioni's The Laugh, Alberto Giacometti's bronze Dog, Fernand Léger's Umbrella and Bowler, Medardo Rosso's wax over plaster The Bookmaker and Mark Rothko's very large Red, Brown and Black.

In the current show a 1950 oil by Jackson Pollock hangs just outside the Monet gallery and Boccioni's Laugh of 1911 is flanked by the equally futurist Battle of Lights of about 1913 by the American, Joseph Stella, who returned to New York in 1912 after 3 years visit to his native Italy. Giacometti is joined by three other Swiss sculptors, Zoltan Kemeny, Robert Müller and Jean Tinguely, all new to the Museum Collection. The Léger is supplemented by two later canvases by the famous French artist.

Painting and sculpture from the current decade, which comprise more than half of the acquisitions, include paintings by the Americans Robert Goodenough, Milton Resnick, Manoucher Yektai and George McNeil. Another artist whose work has been acquired for the first time is Salvatore Scarpitta, who calls his Composition Number I an "Extra mural." It is painted on canvas strips which are held in

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tension over irregular forms stretched flat on a single plane. Other newcomers are the Italians Franco Assetto and Renato Cristiano, three Frenchmen, Roger Bissière, Emile Gilioli and Czechoslovakian-born Iaroslav Serpan. Two Japanese artists, Seiji Chokai who lives in Tokyo and Kumi Sugai who lives in Paris are also represented for the first time. Frans Krajcberg, born in Poland in 1921, now a Brazilian living in Paris is represented by a 1957 painting. Ger Lataster, Dutch painter and friend of Appel who stayed in Amsterdam rather than leaving for Paris, Luis Martinez Pedro, a Cuban living in Havana, and Takis, a young Greek who lives in Paris, are also new to the Collection.

Among the works of particular historical interest is The Pitcher (1895-1900) by Maurice Denis which anticipates cubist textures and the clear contours of Ozenfant's Purist still lifes of 1920. A polychromed plaster sculpture, Air-Light-Shadow by the American Max Weber, one of several he did in 1915, represents an extraordinarily early date for this degree of abstraction.

The Weber sculpture is shown with three other relatively small pieces which reflect an unusual range of style and subject matter in this medium: Dorothy Dehner's 1957 bronze group of tiny but evocative figures, Decision at Knossos; David Hare's 1953 Sunset I in which stone and a few pieces of painted wire evoke weather and firmament; Rock Drawing, one of many similar studies made by Reuben Nakian for the huge construction The Rape of Lucrece now on extended loan to the Museum and on view in the stair tower, and Sky and Sea (1956) a subtly cut Baccarat crystal by the French artist Emile Gilioli.

Other recently acquired sculpture includes: a monumental wrought iron construction by a 39 year old Swiss artist Robert Mueller; a laminated wood construction by Gabriel Kohn whose smooth, simple forms are precariously balanced; a flexible wire and iron rod construction by the young Parisian Greek, Takis; a motorized construction by a Swiss, Jean Tinguely; an abstract relief by Zoltan Kemeny made of hundreds of small brass T-sections and two small and intensely vital bronze nudes by the famous American-born British sculptor Sir Jacob Epstein who died earlier this year.

The earliest sculpture in the show is Rosso's The Bookmaker, the first work by this once famous and highly original Italian to enter the Collection. Rosso was a friend of Rodin in Paris in the 1880's and the pose of this 18" piece is said to have influenced Rodin's great 9' 7" Monument to Balzac (1897) which stands in the Museum Garden.

A small gallery in the exhibition devoted to geometric abstraction includes a 1938 construction and a 1942 oil by Burgoyne Diller, a founding member of the American Abstract Artists in 1936, and a painted wood relief (1943-44) by Gertrude Greene, who served as secretary to the group and whose husband, Balcomb Greene, was

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its first president. Recent painting of a similar style includes a red and blue picture by Nassos Daphnis, an American born in Greece, whose work has not previously been acquired by the Museum and the mysterious black and dark brown abstraction by Barnett Newman who was represented in the "New American Painting" show which returned this summer from a European tour.

The most famous early painting in the exhibition is by the leading Futurist, Boccioni. When The Laugh, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert M. Rothschild, was first shown in Milan in 1911 it was slashed by an outraged visitor. Boccioni repainted it in time for the sensational Futurist exhibition first shown in Paris in February 1912 and thereafter in London, Berlin (when the painting was sold), Brussels, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Munich, Vienna, Budapest and six other cities.

The Monet Water Lilies and the Rothko were acquired through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. The Léger Umbrella and Bowler, the Giacometti Dog and a portrait by Gwen John were acquired through the A. Conger Goodyear Fund. Other Purchase Funds which made these acquisitions possible were: J. David Thompson Fund, Blanchette Rockefeller Fund, Philip C. Johnson Fund, Inter-American Fund, Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Fund, Mr. and Mrs. John de Menil Fund. Donors of works of art were: Friends of the artist (Milton Avery), Mr. and Mrs. Werner E. Josten, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert M. Rothschild, Judge and Mrs. Henry Epstein, A. M. Adler and Norman Hirschl, Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Bartos, Miss Silvia Pizitz, Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Lejwa, Louis Carré, Balcomb Greene, G. David Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Peters, Mr. and Mrs. David M. Solinger, Mr. and Mrs. John de Menil, Mrs. Reginald Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cantor, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Bunschaft, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss, William S. Rubin, Mr. and Mrs. E. Powis Jones, Erwin Burghard Steiner, Mr. and Mrs. Henry F. Fischbach, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis,

Like all works to enter the Museum Collection these paintings and sculptures were accepted by the Collection Committee after viewing and discussion. The Committee under the chairmanship of James Thrall Soby, is composed of trustees, and a few other private collectors.

"Recent Acquisitions" will be on view concurrently with a second floor exhibition called "A Bid for Space", a sampling from the Museum Collections designed to point out one of the goals of the Museum's 30th Anniversary Drive. This is to obtain enough space to make all of the collections/easily accessible than is now possible in the present building. Part of the \$25,000,000 fund being sought will be used to construct a new wing for this purpose.

For further information and photographs contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. CI 5-8900