

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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THE HISTORY OF IMPRESSIONISM by John Rewald. 662 pages, 635 plates (86 in color).
Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed by Doubleday and Co.,
Inc. \$20. December 1, 1961.

The History of Impressionism by the distinguished art historian, John Rewald, will be published by The Museum of Modern Art on December 1. The most complete and authoritative account of the movement ever written, this 662-page book, containing 549 black and white photographs and 86 full-page color plates, traces the exciting evolution of impressionism from 1855, when Pissarro arrived in Paris, to the disbandment of the group in 1886. The book will be for sale at the Museum, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, and distributed to bookstores throughout the country by Doubleday and Co., Inc.

Rather than a series of disconnected monographs, Mr. Rewald presents an integrated chronicle of the simultaneous development of the painters--Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Degas, Cézanne, Sisley and Berthe Morisot. He recreates their friendships, feuds, hopes and despair as they struggled together to break with the decadent classicism of the nineteenth century.

Quoting extensively from the artists' letters, eye-witness reports and contemporary reviews, Mr. Rewald relates the events of the 20 years preceding the first group exhibition in 1874. During this period the artists met in Paris where they studied at the École des Beaux Arts and in various studios. Refusing to follow their teachers, they began to assert their own revolutionary concepts. After repeated rejections by the reactionary Salon jury, the group decided to organize their own exhibitions. Manet, however, did not participate as he believed recognition could be gained only through acceptance by the Salon. Eventually the artists adopted the designation of "impressionists," a term coined in derision by a satirical journalist.

Mr. Rewald recounts the occasional successes and frequent failures of the painters during the following decade as they continued to struggle against the hostility and ridicule of the critics and the indifference of the general public. Works which were to become world famous brought very low prices at auctions or went unsold. Each year new attempts were made to gain public recognition through group exhibitions.

Although the French continued to reject the impressionists, American collectors reacted enthusiastically when the dealer Durand-Ruel for the first time brought a group of their paintings to this country in 1886. That year was also marked by the eighth and final exhibition in Paris, and the disbandment of the group. In the years that followed, the artists abandoned impressionism and worked in different directions, independently of each other.

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In the final chapters Mr. Rewald introduces the neo-impressionists and post-impressionists whom he discusses in detail in the sequel to this volume, "Post-Impressionism--From van Gogh to Gauguin," also published by the Museum of Modern Art.

Throughout the book the illustrations have been carefully arranged to accompany the text where the works are discussed. Paintings executed by different artists at the same time, and showing the same subject, are reproduced together. In addition to famous works, numerous lesser-known examples are included. Many have never before been illustrated in color.

Originally published in 1946, "The History of Impressionism" has been revised and greatly enlarged. The new edition, in an enlarged format measuring 10" x 9 1/2", contains 164 more black and white photographs and 64 more color plates than the first, as well as additional text, resulting from new research. Of particular use to students are the 14-page chronology, 36-page bibliography and a map showing the different places in which the artists worked.

The book has been in production for two years. Although printed in Holland, all phases of production were supervised by the Museum staff which prepared the layout and cover design and selected illustrations, paperstock and type face.

Mr. Rewald was born in Germany in 1912. He came to this country in 1941 and since 1943 has been associated with the Museum of Modern Art as author and guest director of exhibitions. In addition to his volumes on impressionism and post-impressionism he has written monographs on Cézanne, Bonnard, Renoir, Pissarro, Seurat and others. He is director of a major Redon, Moreau and Bresdin exhibition to open at the Museum of Modern Art on December 6.

For photographs and review copies contact Nancy Reed, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900.