

The Museum of Modern Art

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IMPORTANT NEWLY ACQUIRED PAINTING AND SCULPTURE AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.

"20th Century Pioneers" an exhibition of eight key acquisitions made by The Museum of Modern Art since the summer of 1970, will be on view in the Museum's first floor galleries from Saturday, March 13 through Monday, April 26. Made up of paintings and sculpture by artists whose roles in modern art were established by the time of World War II, the exhibition follows "Recent Acquisitions: Americans," which included artists of this country who came to maturity after 1945. The exhibition is directed by William S. Rubin, Chief Curator of the Painting and Sculpture Collection.

The eight works by Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Marcel Duchamp, Frederick Kiesler and Seraphine all represent extremely important additions to the Museum's collection. Foremost among them are three works by Picasso. Sleeping Woman, a proto-Cubist painting of the spring of 1908 (the last important work of that period to have remained in private hands), allows the Museum to illustrate Picasso's development between the final phases of Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (1907) and Houses with Trees (autumn 1908). It was acquired by exchange. Guitar (1912), a gift of the artist to the Museum, was the first construction-sculpture in the modernist tradition. It was also Picasso's first metal construction and is the only such work from his Cubist period in any public or private collection. The Charnel House, a large and iconographically unique work of 1945, was inspired by photographs of concentration camps, and might be considered a sequel to Guernica (1937), because of its affinities in style and imagery. When it was painted, it represented only the second occasion when pressures from the outside world diverted Picasso from the more personal paths of his art. This work was also acquired by exchange.

Matisse's Reading (1905-06), a promised gift of David Rockefeller, brings to the Museum's outstanding collection of this artist's work its first painting of his fauve period. Executed in the partially eclectic manner characteristic of Matisse's

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work of that period, the picture shows his daughter Marguerite reading at a table within a colorful, light-filled interior.

Duchamp's Network of Stoppages, (1914), and Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics), (1925), were at the time of their acquisition the two most important works by this artist still in private hands. Network is a large painting elaborating one element in the complex iconography of the "Large Glass" (The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even). In its composition, Duchamp rejected the syntax of even the most avant-garde styles of the day. It was much admired by Abstract Expressionist painters, although their own approach was basically at odds with Duchamp's. The Rotary Demisphere together with a related Rotary Glass Plate (1920) are the grandparents of all the kinetic variety of "machine art," and as such were featured three years ago in the Museum's exhibition The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age. The demisphere's center rotates to create an optical illusion, making it the first work of "op art"; its fabrication was related to Duchamp's passage from artist to "scientist". They were both acquired through the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund and a gift of Mrs. William W. Sisler.

Kiesler's wood and rope Totem for All Religions (1947) was the first construction made by that architect-sculptor and synthesizes many ideas then current in late Surrealism. It is a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Bartos. Finally, the exhibition includes the very handsome Tree of Paradise, painted in the mid-1920's by the primitive Séraphine Louis, known as Séraphine. A totally self-taught artist, Séraphine worked as a cleaning woman in the town of Senlis near Paris, where the German critic Wilhelm Uhde discovered her before World War I. Uhde, among the first to celebrate the work of the primitives, considered Séraphine's decorative style second in quality only to that of Henri Rousseau. Séraphine's works only rarely come on the market, and this

acquisition fills a major lacuna in the Museum's notable collection of primitives.

Photographs and notes on the individual works by William Rubin, Chief Curator of the Painting and Sculpture Collection, are available on request from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019
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