

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
October 1994

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PUBLISHES *LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON*: SPECIAL THIRD ISSUE OF *STUDIES IN MODERN ART*

This month, The Museum of Modern Art publishes *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, the third issue in *Studies in Modern Art*, an annual scholarly journal designed to foster and sustain study of the Museum's rich collection of works of art and archival material. This special issue is devoted to Pablo Picasso's 1907 painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, a towering masterpiece in the development of modern art, which formally entered the Museum's collection in 1939. In a monographic study, William Rubin, Director Emeritus of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, gives the most complete account to date of the painting's complex evolution. Edited by John Elderfield, the Museum's Chief Curator at Large, *Studies in Modern Art* is the publishing vehicle of the Museum's Research and Scholarly Publications Program, which was initiated in 1991 with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

In his text, Rubin first traces themes of sex and mortality in Picasso's oeuvre prior to 1907. He then examines the artist's distillation of these ideas from the personal to the universal and follows the changes in composition and style as Picasso worked and reworked the painting. Finally, Rubin analyzes the critical reception of the picture down to the present day.

Robert Rosenblum, Professor of Fine Arts at New York University, observes of the monograph, "Rubin's magisterial text is the single most

- more -

important study of the *Demoiselles*. It is nothing less than the fullest, most-up-to-date compendium of facts and new interpretations concerning the pivotal masterpiece of early twentieth-century art and immediately takes its place as a classic of art-historical scholarship, an indispensable introduction to the multiple complexities of the *Demoiselles*."

Accompanying documentation, by Hélène Seckel, Curator-in-Chief of the Musée Picasso, Paris, and Judith Cousins, Curator for Research in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, charts the history and influence of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and includes an anthology of statements about the work by the artist, his colleagues, critics, and the press. The 287 illustrations encompass many drawings, preparatory sketches, and comparative works. An earlier version of Rubin's text and the documentation originally appeared in a French exhibition catalogue published in 1988. This first English-language publication incorporates new textual and visual material, including a recently discovered oil sketch for *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, reproduced here in color. An updated bibliography and a list of exhibitions complete the volume.

Although focused on the Museum's own holdings, *Studies in Modern Art* serves a wider purpose, with each issue addressing a different topic of general interest to students of modern art. Including contributions by both Museum of Modern Art staff members and outside scholars, this publication is the only current academic journal specifically devoted to discussions of the art of this century. It is made possible by an endowment fund established by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Edward John Noble Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Perry R. Bass, and the National Endowment for the Humanities' Challenge Grant Program.

Previous issues of *Studies in Modern Art* are *American Art of the 1960s* (1991) and *Essays on Assemblage* (1992). The fourth issue, to be published in late 1994, will be *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century*.

* * *

- PUBLICATION *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, a special issue of *Studies of Modern Art*. Monograph by William Rubin, additional texts by Hélène Seckel and Judith Cousins, with an introduction by John Elderfield. 280 pages. 261 black-and-white and 26 color illustrations. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Clothbound, \$40.00. Available now in the MoMA Book Store and through the Museum's mail order department: 212/708-9888. (Mail orders must be prepaid including shipping charges; no institutional discount will be offered on orders to the Museum.) Available after March 1, 1995, from bookstores and institutional suppliers. Distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. and internationally by Thames & Hudson, London.

No. 54

For additional information or review copies, call the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.