

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LARGEST INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF MODERN DRAWINGS

OPENS AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Unique in size and international scope, an exhibition of Modern Drawings will open at the Museum of Modern Art Wednesday, February 16, to remain on view through April 16. It will be composed of approximately three hundred drawings in all media--pencil, pen, crayon, conté crayon, sanguine, pastel, silverpoint, charcoal, and so forth--and will embrace the three main types of draftsmanship: the occasional sketch, the preparatory study, and the definitive drawing of finished artistry. A special section of the exhibition will show prints of preparatory studies for specific works by Matisse, Picasso and Lipchitz.

Earliest among the one hundred and twenty artists represented are Degas, Cézanne, Renoir, Gauguin and Rodin; latest among them are Matta, Cadmus, Portinari, Levine, Shahn, Thurber, Blume, Graves. As the greatest draftsmen have always been painters or sculptors, the exhibition presents, through their drawings, a galaxy of the great in modern art: van Gogh, Redon, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse, Picasso, Klee, Barlach, Bellows, Bonnard, Brancusi, Calder, Chagall, Chirico, Grosz, John, Lachaise, Maillol, Marin, Lipchitz, Masson, Moore, Orozco, Rivera, Sheeler, Tchelitchev and Dali.

The exhibition has been assembled by Monroe Wheeler, the Museum's Director of Exhibitions and Publications, assisted by Margaret Miller of the Museum staff, and John Rewald, noted writer on modern art and author of works on Seurat, Pissarro, Maillol and others. Mr. Wheeler has installed the exhibition in the major second floor galleries of the Museum and has devised a new system of shelf installation to facilitate close examination of individual drawings. He has also edited the catalog and, with Mr. Rewald, has written its introduction.

In his foreword to the catalog Mr. Wheeler writes:

"It is especially appropriate that the Museum of Modern Art should attempt the first general international survey to be undertaken in America of the particular aspects of modern art revealed by draftsmanship. Drawings have often figured prominently in the Museum's exhibitions and as early in its career as 1933 it held an exhibition of drawings by sculptors. The Museum is fortunate in the possession of a permanent collection of more than three hundred drawings, including many presented by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Miss Lillie P. Bliss, Mr. Edward M. M. Warburg and many other donors.

"The drawings of sculptors may seem to deserve separate classification and consideration. Naturally, good sculptors make

good draftsmen; for to the eye of the beholder, the solid bronze and marble appear as an innumerable succession of linear profiles against surrounding space, boundaries of the voluminous form; and these contours from a given standpoint can be shown on paper as well. But upon second thought one finds that all the categories appropriate to the draftsmanship of painters will serve as well for what the sculptors have done; there is no essential difference between them. Sculpture and painting in our period are closely interlocked; whether abstract or not, they seem to be facets of the same artistic thought.

"The purpose of the present selection of drawings is not a final or even an altogether just presentation of the work of modern artists, man for man, according to the amount, or beauty, or originality, of the work each has done. It is rather intended to offer a general view of the draftsmanship of our time, with its background in the previous century; the outlines or, at least, the salients of the common accomplishment in this medium; and perhaps clues of new styles ahead.

"Drawings provide the best training ground for the new collector. Work by the artists who will be the important figures of the next decade can often be acquired for modest sums. And, since the investment is not a large one, it is an activity which may be constantly renewed. The purchase of original drawings may require more courage and understanding than any other form of collecting, but it can be wonderfully rewarding.

"It is true that for the last fifty years Paris has been the capital of world art. The next fifty years may see New York in that dominant position. The School of Paris was only half French. If Picasso, Brancusi, Modigliani, Pascin, Soutine, Chirico, Chagall, Lipchitz, Miro, Dali were Frenchmen in those days, then Léger, Masson, Tanguy, Mondrian, Lipchitz, Ozenfant, Tchelitchew, Berman, Dali and Matta are Americans at the moment; and some of them will not leave us when peace is declared. The New York School of tomorrow may not be very idiosyncratically American but this is an international era, for better or worse; and for art it should be better."

Among the New York lenders to the exhibition are Mr. and Mrs. R. Kirk Askew, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. George Balanchine, The British Ministry of Information, Henry Church, Stephen C. Clark, Mrs. W. Murray Crane, Frank Crowninshield, A. Conger Goodyear, Mrs. George Helm, Dr. and Mrs. David M. Levy, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel A. Lewisohn, Walter Pach, Erich Maria Remarque, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Mme. Helena Rubinstein, Alfred Stieglitz, James Johnson Sweeney, Mr. and Mrs. Justin K. Thannhauser, Mr. and Mrs. Edward M. M. Warburg and Miss Edith Wetmore.

Other lenders to the exhibition include Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Arensberg, Hollywood; Miss Etta Cone, Baltimore; Philip Hofer, Cambridge, Mass.; Henry P. McIlhenny, Philadelphia; John S. Newberry, Jr., Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich.; Pablo Picasso, Paris; and Edward Steichen, Ridgefield, Conn.

(NOTE: The Art Institute of Chicago is not jointly sponsoring the exhibition Modern Drawings as originally announced.)