

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Exh #409

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NEW PAINTINGS, SCULPTURE AND DRAWINGS ADDED TO MUSEUM COLLECTION

Works of art added to the Museum Collection will be exhibited on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from May 4 to July 17. These recently acquired works will include paintings and sculpture by ten American and European artists. In addition, the 20th-century French masterpieces, acquired and announced earlier this month, will remain on view as part of the exhibition. These are the magnificent late work by Maillol, "The River," a sculpture of heroic size never previously seen in this country, and Matisse's great canvas of 1911, "The ^{Red} Studio," the most important work by this master to enter the Museum Collection.

The most striking new acquisition is the dynamic striding figure done in 1913 by the futurist sculptor Umberto Boccioni. Called "Unique Forms of Continuity in Space," it anticipates the streamlined forms of modern design. It is the most important piece of modern Italian sculpture and will be included in the exhibition of 20th-century Italian art to open at the Museum June 29.

The paintings by Mondrian, van Doesburg and Glarner are all three in the tradition of the Dutch Stijl group founded in Holland in 1917. The principles of Stijl design are demonstrated by the van Doesburg "Composition" which with its accompanying studies shows how the artist has step by step transformed a drawing of a cow into an abstract composition of rectangles.

Other acquisitions include works by Adler, Borès, Ferber, Pollock, Vlaminck and Zadkine.

CHECK LIST AND NOTES

ADLER, Jankel. Polish, 1895-1949. Worked in Germany and England.

1.49 TWO RABBIS. 1942. Oil on canvas, 33 7/8 x 44 1/8". Gift of Sam Salz.

Born in Lodz, Poland in 1895, Adler studied at the Düsseldorf Academy and during the 1920s took a leading position among younger expressionists working in Germany. About 1930, along with Paul Klee, he returned to the Düsseldorf Academy as a teacher. When Hitler came to power he left Germany and ultimately settled in the south of France. At the outbreak of the war he joined the Polish forces fighting in France and was evacuated from Dunkerque and demobilized in Scotland. He began to paint again, exhibited regularly in London galleries and had

a considerable influence on younger painters, notably the two Scots, Robert MacBryde and Robert Colquhoun. His first American show was at Knoedler's in 1948. Word came of his sudden death on April 26 just as these notes were being written. The "Two Rabbis," painted in 1942, refers to the fate of the Polish Jews.

BOCCIONI, Umberto. Italian, 1882-1916.

231.48 UNIQUE FORMS OF CONTINUITY IN SPACE. (1913.) Bronze, 43 1/2" high. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

Boccioni, chief of the Italian futurist artists, was born at Reggio di Calabria in 1882. He studied painting in Rome with Balla and later in Milan where, in 1910, he joined the futurist movement. He led the futurist expedition to Paris, London and a dozen other European cities in 1912 and 1913. Early in 1913 he held his first one-man show of sculpture in Paris. He wrote the fundamental work on futurist art, Futurist Painting and Sculpture, as well as the remarkable manifesto on futurist sculpture in 1912, in which he foretold cubist sculpture, constructivism and mobiles.

The sculpture, "Unique Forms of Continuity in Space," is the culmination of two years' work on the striding or running figure, studies for which include two or three paintings, a score of drawings and three earlier versions in sculpture titled successively: "Synthesis of Human Dynamism," "Muscles at High Speed" and "Spiral Expression of Muscles in Motion." The earlier versions have been destroyed so that the Museum's figure remains not only Boccioni's principle work in sculpture but probably the most important sculpture done in 20th-century Italy. Perhaps more than any other work it embodies the passion for the abstract expression of speed and power which so preoccupied the futurists.

The Museum also owns three large drawings by Boccioni for the "States of Mind," 1911, the gift of Vico Baer.

BORÈS, Francisco. Spanish, born 1898. Lives in France.

2.49 THE FITTING. 1934. Oil on canvas, 72 3/4 x 86 3/4". Purchase Fund.

Borès was born in Madrid in 1898 and studied at the Academy there. He has lived in Paris since 1925 and has had several one-man shows there, in London and in New York. "The Fitting (L'Essayage)," Borès' most important canvas, is, according to a recent letter from the artist, a fantasy based on childhood memories.

van DOESBURG, Theo (C.E.M. Küpper). Dutch, 1883-1931.

225.48 COMPOSITION (THE COW). (1917?) Oil on canvas, 14 3/4 x 25". Purchase Fund.

227.48 Three studies for COMPOSITION (THE COW). (1916?) Pencil, 1, 3, 6 each 4 5/8 x 6 1/4". Purchase Fund.

226.48 Study for COMPOSITION (THE COW). 1916. Gouache, 15 5/8 x 22 3/4". Purchase Fund.

Van Doesburg, poet, theorist, architect, editor and painter, was born at Utrecht in The Netherlands in 1883. He organized the group called De Stijl at Leyden in 1917 with a membership including the painter Piet Mondrian, the architect J. J. P. Oud and the sculptor Vantongerloo. During the succeeding five years De Stijl constituted the most important laboratory of design in the world. Its discoveries ultimately influenced typography, layout, the decorative arts and architecture. In the early 1920s, van Doesburg lived in Germany where he brought the ideas of De Stijl to designers and architects such as Mies van der Rohe, Gropius and the Bauhaus School.

After early academic training, van Doesburg's painting was influenced by the expressionists and the cubists. About 1916 he came to know Mondrian and van der Leek and with them developed the characteristic painting of De Stijl.

The "Composition," called "The Cow," together with its preliminary studies, constitutes a lucid and valuable documentation of De Stijl methods during the formative period of 1916-17. The three drawings exhibited show the process of geometrical abstraction proceeding from a naturalistic sketch of a cow to a construction of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines. A large gouache translates the last drawing into color. A fifth stage, a gouache shown only in reproduction, shows the elimination of diagonal and triangular shapes, leaving a compact composition of rectangles divided by heavy lines. In the final canvas, the lines are eliminated, leaving free-standing, colored rectangles asymmetrically composed against a white background. After 1920, the paintings of van Doesburg and Mondrian were no longer based directly upon specific forms in nature.

FERBER, Herbert. American, born 1906.

57.49 PORTRAIT OF J. P. 1949. Lead, 30" long. Purchase Fund.

Ferber was born in New York City in 1906 and studied in New York. He had his first one-man show at the Midtown Galleries in 1937. He was included in the exhibition Three Centuries of American Art organized by the Museum in Paris in 1938, and won a thousand-dollar prize in the Artists for Victory exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in 1942.

Like Pollock, Ferber works within the large group of younger artists who employ free, often highly abstract forms to embody psychological and symbolic content.

GLARNER, Fritz. American, born Switzerland 1899.

52.49 RELATIONAL PAINTING 1947-48. Oil on canvas, 43 1/8 x 42 1/2". Purchase Fund.

Glarner was born in Zurich, Switzerland, of Swiss and Neapolitan parents. He studied in Naples and in Paris where, during the early 1930s, he was an active member of the Abstraction-Création group. He came to the United States in 1936 and has been one of the leading American painters in the tradition of Mondrian and De Stijl. He has worked especially on the problem of the division of the circle and in 1946 began to modulate the orthodox Stijl rectangles by using an acute diagonal.

In the Museum's "Relational Painting 1947-48," he leaves his studies of the circle to achieve a direct and courageous challenge to Mondrian's last finished work, "Broadway Boogie Woogie." Though he is not so much preoccupied with American popular music as was Mondrian, Glarner believes his current work has some analogies with bebop.

MONDRIAN, Piet. Dutch, 1872-1944.

257.48 COMPOSITION C. 1920. Oil on canvas, 23 3/4 x 24". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

Mondrian, the leading painter of De Stijl (see van Doesburg above), was born in Amersfoort, The Netherlands in 1872. Influenced at first by a variety of Dutch romantic and fin-de-siècle movements, he went to Paris in 1910 where he quickly absorbed the lessons of analytical cubism. Returning to Holland in 1914, he gradually simplified cubism into compositions of short vertical and horizontal lines. In 1916 the example of van der Leek led him to add rectangles of pure flat color. In 1916 he joined van Doesburg's Stijl group, and during the next three years his and van Doesburg's paintings were often quite similar, passing through a number of experimental stages. In 1918-19, apparently on van Doesburg's initiative, they at times painted compositions of various tones of gray arranged against a systematic grid of squares. "Composition C" of 1920 is a transitional work marking a gradual return to color and a departure from a regular module or system of rectangles. Within a few years, Mondrian was to greatly simplify his style until he had reduced it to a few straight black lines bounding white rectangles with an occasional area of pure red, blue or yellow.

POLLOCK, Jackson. American, born 1912.

56.49 NO. 4. 1948. Oil on paper, 22 5/8 x 30 7/8". Purchase Fund.

Pollock was born in Cody, Wyoming in 1912. He studied at the Art Students' League in New York with Thomas Benton and in 1944 had a one-man show of his mature work at the Art of This Century Gallery in New York. The painting "No. 4" is virtually a drawing in oil which clearly illustrates Pollock's procedure before it reaches the excessive complexity and density of most of his other recent works, or of the Museum's large early painting, "The She-Wolf."

VLAMINCK, Maurice de. French, born 1876.

275.48 MONT VALÉRIEN. (1903.) Oil on canvas, 22 x 30 1/4". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

Vlaminck, one of the two leaders of the French fauve (wild beast) movement, was born in Paris in 1876. In 1898 he formed, with the younger Derain, the so-called School of Chatou. In 1901, at the great van Gogh exhibition, Derain introduced him to Matisse. These painters exhibited together and by 1904 had been recognized as the most advanced group in Paris. In 1905 Vlaminck, together with Matisse, Rouault, Derain and Friesz, showed at the Autumn Salon. In the center of their gallery, or "cage" was shown a small academic statue of a baby in the Italian Renaissance style. A critic passing through remarked "Ah, Donatello in the midst of the wild beasts!" thereby giving a name to the most important movement in painting of that period.

"Mont Valérien," painted near Paris in 1903, is characteristic of fauve painting in its brilliant color and spontaneous, excited drawing. Fundamentally the composition is impressionist by way of van Gogh, but the colors are more arbitrary - that is, unnatural - than those van Gogh used. The weakness of fauve painting, its sketchiness and inconsistency of style, is also apparent. But at the moment not even Matisse had carried the new freedom of color so far.

ZADKINE, Ossip. French, born Russia 1890.

17.49 TORSO. (ca. 1920-23.) Ebony, 36" high. Gift of Mrs. Maurice J. Speiser in memory of her husband.

Zadkine, internationally one of the best known sculptors of his generation, was born in Smolensk, Russia, in 1890. He studied in London and Paris where he took part as a sculptor in the cubist movement. He lived in New York between 1941 and 1945. The "Torso" was bought by Mr. Speiser from the artist in the early 1920s.

Maurice J. Speiser was a well-known lawyer, collector and patron of the arts, long active in Philadelphia and, at the end of his life, in New York. In 1928 he gave his services as a counsel for the plaintiff in the case of Constantin Brancusi versus the United States regarding the entry into the country of the artist's sculpture "Bird in Space." In December 1946 Mr. Speiser gave the Museum Library a photostatic copy of the stenographic minutes of the trial.

Note: Dates given appear on the works themselves unless enclosed in parentheses.