

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXHIBITS ACQUISITIONS IN FANTASTIC ART,
DADA AND SURREALISM

A fantastic painting of great importance by Belgium's foremost living artist has been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art and with other recent acquisitions will be put on public exhibition Wednesday, July 30. It is Tribulation of St. Anthony painted in 1887 by Baron James Ensor. Although more than fifty years old, the painting was too "modern" for the Nazis, who forced its withdrawal from the Cologne Museum, where for many years it had hung in a place of honor as a loan from its owner, Herbert von Garvens-Garvensburg of Hanover. The Museum of Modern Art acquired the canvas through the Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund.

Among the other acquisitions to be shown with the Ensor St. Anthony are oils, watercolors, collages, ink drawings, rayographs and a sculpture in plaster by noted Surrealist and Dada artists such as Klee, Ernst, Miro, Roy, Arp, Duchamp, Tanguy, Masson, Picasso and Thurber. The exhibition of these works will be held in the new acquisitions gallery on the first floor of the Museum and in the graphic arts gallery on the third floor, and will remain on view until after Labor Day. There is probably only one other important painting by Ensor in America, Intrigue, 1890, owned by the Royal Museum of Antwerp and now in the safekeeping of the Museum of Modern Art, which has planned since 1932 to give Ensor a one-man show, now indefinitely postponed because of the war.

Tribulation of St. Anthony is a large oil, 3 5/6 feet x 5 1/2 feet, with the Saint seated at the left surrounded by his immediate temptations, one of which is a beautiful woman. To the right the fiery mouth of hell belches a swarm of evil phantoms which fill air, land and sea with their monstrous shapes.

Except for the figures immediately surrounding the Saint, many of the horrible shapes which fill land and sea and air have a

nightmarish obscurity, sometimes so intangible that their forms become discernible only after intent study. One of the fascinations of the painting is the slow imperceptible way in which ethereal hobgoblins, little men with the faces of insects, tiny bodies with animal heads, or dissociated parts of beings and objects float into the perception of the onlooker.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum, has written of the Tribulation of St. Anthony:

"Ensor's picture was obviously inspired by St. Anthony pictures which Bosch, Huys and Bruegel painted in Ensor's own country three or four hundred years before. The composition and subject matter are similar and so are the astonishing ingenuity and variety with which the hallucinations are contrived.

"But there the resemblance ends for Ensor was painting in the late 1880's and was fully aware of the most advanced art of his time since in Brussels each year the Society of the Twenty exhibited the work of the Paris vanguard, the Neo-Impressionists, Seurat and Signac and the somewhat older Impressionists, Monet and Pissarro. Ensor, who was half English, also knew the work of Turner, the influence of whose luminous reds and yellows and bold handling of light is evident.

"Actually Ensor in this astonishing picture went far beyond Impressionism and flatly rejected the scientifically rational theory and technique of Neo-Impressionism which was the last word in Paris. He uses any color he pleases and his brush swirls and slashes over his canvas with a freedom which matches the audacity of his imagination.

"In fact, at this moment in his career, Ensor was possibly the boldest pioneer in the art of the period. Gauguin was still painting his gentle pictures of Brittany and only in the following year, 1888, was van Gogh under the burning sun of Arles, able to free himself from Impressionism.

"But Ensor's St. Anthony of 1887 surpasses even the late works of van Gogh and Gauguin in pointing the way to the spontaneous abstract expressionism of Kandinsky of 25 years later and the unfettered humor and fantasy of Klee and the surrealists Miro, Ernst and Masson of our own day."

Baron James Ensor, painter, etcher, writer, composer, was born in 1860 in Ostend of an English father and a Flemish mother. He was thus seven years younger than van Gogh and one year younger than Seurat but four years older than Toulouse-Lautrec. He has lived in Ostend all his life but took an active part in organizing in Brussels Les XX (The Twenty) which was in the 1880's the most progressive art society in the world. Ensor is not only an historic figure of European importance but remains today the greatest modern Belgian artist, having recently celebrated his 80th birthday.

For several centuries the painters of the Low Countries were the leading specialists in diabolic fantasy. The great Dutch artist, Gerome Bosch (c.1460-1516) stands at the head of a rich tradition which includes his followers the Flemings, Peter Bruegel and family and

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Peter Huys in the 16th century and David Teniers and son in the 17th. During this period Flemish pictures of hell, the fantastic tortures of the damned and the temptations of St. Anthony were in great demand over Europe, particularly in Spain. Originally this medieval tradition of fantastic art was in theory at least religious, a challenge to the devout and a warning to sinners. But even as early as Bosch and Bruegel it is obvious that it was not piety or morality but love of the grotesque and marvelous, whether humorous, satirical or horrific, which moved the painters and their enthusiastic patrons.

In modern times a similar interest has continued to flourish in the private and personal fantasies of such artists as Goya, Redon, Ensor, and the Surrealists Ernst and Dali.

Many of the artists whose works are to be shown with the Ensor painting have recently come to New York as refugees, among them Tanguy, Masson, Ernst and others; the titles of many of the acquisitions indicate the fantastic quality of the works. Among these are: The Human Eye and a Fish, The Latter Petrified, collage and ink, 1920 by J. T. Baargeld; Farewell My Beautiful Land of Marie Laurencin, altered technical engraving, c.1919; The Gramineous Bicycle garnished with bells the pilfered greybeards and the echinoderms bending the spine to look for caresses, botanical chart altered with gouache, c.1920; and Lunar Asparagus, plaster, 1936, by Max Ernst; Letter Ghost, gouache, 1937, and Twittering Machine, watercolor and ink, 1922, by Paul Klee; Just Some of My Husband's Kickshaws, ink, by James Thurber; and Landscape, crayon on black paper, c.1933, "Cadavre exquis" by Valentine Hugo, André Breton, Tristan Tzara, Greta Knutson.

ACQUISITIONS: FANTASTIC ART, DADA, SURREALISM

Opening July 30, 1941
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
New York City

1st Floor Gallery:

- ENSOR, Baron James. Belgian, born 1860.
Tribulation of St. Anthony, 1887. Oil on canvas,
46 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 66".
Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund.
- ERNST, Max. German, born 1891. Lives at present in U.S.A.
The gramineous bicycle garnished with bells and pilfered
greybeards and the echinoderms bending the spine to look
for caresses. c.1920. Botanical chart altered with
gouache, 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Purchase Fund.
- Lunar Asparagus, 1936. Plaster, 65 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high.
Purchase Fund.
- KLEE, Paul. Swiss, 1879-1940.
Twittering Machine, 1922. Watercolor and ink, 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 12".
Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund.
- Mixed Weather, 1929. Mixed medium on canvas, 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Gift of Cary Ross.
- The Mocker Mocked, 1930. Oil on canvas, 17 x 20 $\frac{5}{8}$ ".
Gift of J. B. Neumann.
- Letter Ghost, 1937. Gouache, 13 x 19".
Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund.
- MIRO, Joan. Spanish, born 1893.
Portrait of a Lady of 1820, 1929. Oil on canvas,
45 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 $\frac{1}{8}$ ".
Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund.
- ROY, Pierre. French, born 1880.
Agricultural Conference. c.1930. Oil on canvas,
16 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 13".
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
- SELIGMANN, Kurt. Swiss, born 1900. Lives in New York.
Sabbath Phantoms, 1939. Oil on glass, 21 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 27 $\frac{5}{8}$ ".
Gift of Stamo Papadaki.

3rd Floor Gallery:

- ARP, Hans. French, born Strassburg, 1888.
Automatic Drawing, 1916. Ink, 16 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ ".
Given anonymously.
- Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Law of
Chance, 1916-17. Collage, 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{5}{8}$ ".
Purchase Fund.
- Bird in an Aquarium. c.1920. Painted wood relief,
9 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8". Purchase Fund.
- Leaves, 1929. Oil and string on canvas, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Purchase Fund.
- BAADER, Johannes. German.
The Author in His Home. c.1920. Collage, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Purchase Fund.
- BAARGELD, J. T. German, died 1927.
Beetles, 1920. Ink on tissue, 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".
Purchase Fund.
- The Human Eye and a Fish, the Latter Petrified, 1920.
Collage and ink, 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Purchase Fund.

BELLMER, Hans. German.

Drawing, 1936. White ink on black paper, $13\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$ ".
Purchase Fund.

COMPOSITE WORKS.

The Red King, 1920. Ink on wallpaper, $19\frac{5}{8} \times 15\frac{1}{4}$ ".
By J. T. Baargeld and Max Ernst. Purchase Fund.

Figure, 1928? Collage, $11\frac{3}{8} \times 9$ ".

"Cadavre exquis" by André Breton, Max Morise, Pierre Naville, Benjamin Péret, Jacques Prévert, Jeannette Tanguy, Yves Tanguy.
Van Gogh Purchase Fund.

Landscape, c.1933. Crayon on black paper, $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ ".
"Cadavre exquis" by Valentine Hugo, André Breton, Tristan Tzara, Greta Knutson, Purchase Fund.

DOMINGUEZ, Oscar. Spanish.

Decalcomania, 1936. Ink, $14\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Purchase Fund.

DUCHAMP, Marcel. French, born 1887.

Monte Carlo Share, 1925. Collage, colored, $12\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Gift of the artist.

ERNST, Max. German, born 1891. Lives at present in U.S.A.

Here Everything is Floating. c.1919. Collage,
 $4\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$ ". Purchase Fund.

Farewell My Beautiful Land of Marie Laurencin. c.1919.
Altered technical engraving, $15\frac{3}{4} \times 11$ ".
Purchase Fund.

Stratified Rocks, nature's gift of gneiss lava Iceland moss 2 kinds of ruptures of the perinaeum growths of the heart b) the same thing in a well-polished box somewhat more expensive. c.1920. Altered anatomical engraving with gouache, $8\frac{1}{8} \times 6$ ". Purchase Fund.

MASSON, André. French, born 1896. Lives at present in U.S.A.
Birth of Birds. c.1925. Ink, $16\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{3}{8}$ ". Purchase Fund.

MERRILD, Knud. American, born Denmark. 1894.

Herma, 1935. Wax and watercolor on gesso on paper,
 $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ ". Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund.

Archaic Form, 1936. Wax and watercolor on gesso on paper, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ ". Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
Purchase Fund.

Synthesis, c. 1936. Wax and watercolor on gesso on paper, $10 \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ ". Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
Purchase Fund.

PICABIA, Francis. French, born 1878.

Dada Movement, 1919. Ink chart, $20\frac{1}{8} \times 14\frac{3}{8}$ ".
Purchase Fund.

PICASSO, Pablo. Spanish, born 1881.

Two Figures on the Beach, 1933. Ink, $15\frac{3}{4} \times 19\frac{5}{8}$ ".
Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund.

RAY, Man. American, born 1890.

3 Rayographs, 1923 and 1927.
Gifts of James Thrall Soby.

TANGUY, Yves. French, born 1900. Lives at present in U.S.A.

Drawing, 1926. Ink, 13×10 ". Purchase Fund.

THURBER, James. American, born 1894.

Just Some of My Husband's Kickshaws. Ink, $8\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Gift of John McAndrew.