

# The Museum of Modern Art

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No. 9  
Wednesday, January 25, 1978  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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William S. Lieberman, Director of The Museum of Modern Art's Department of Drawings, today announced the acquisition of The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection of 20th-century drawings, the largest and one of the most important bequests ever received by the Museum. Consisting of 180 drawings by 100 American and European artists, the Avnet Collection spans the seven decades of this century. The collection was formed between 1960 and the death of Mr. Avnet in 1970.

Mr. Lieberman explained that The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection was formed with The Museum of Modern Art specifically in mind: "For instance, the Museum owned no work in any medium by the Belgian Symbolists, and its representations of Kandinsky and Hannah Höch are also weak. The drawing by Delville and the two watercolors by Kandinsky and Höch were acquired with the thought that they would eventually help fill the lacunae in the Museum's holdings. Similarly, Mr. and Mrs. Avnet chose drawings by British painters working in the decade 1909-1919: Lawrence Atkinson, Vanessa Bell, David Bomberg, Roger Fry, Spencer Gore, Duncan Grant, Wyndham Lewis, John Nash, Walter Sickert, and Matthew Smith. Only two of these artists have been previously represented in the Museum's collections of drawings and paintings. Also, many of the images in the Avnet Collection relate to works in other media already owned by the Museum."

(more)

Artists of the School of Paris account for more than one-third of the sheets in the Avnet Collection. They include Balthus, Chagall, Derain, Dubuffet, Matisse, Modigliani, Rouault, and Valadon. Cubism, from 1909 to 1919, is illustrated by Braque, Léger, and Gris. Picasso is represented by five drawings. A score of sheets by German artists begins with portraits by Corinth, Kirchner, and Klee; later drawings by Expressionist artists include examples by Beckmann, Feininger, and Kokoschka. Selections of younger British and Australian artists are by Peter Blake, Hamilton, Procktor, Whiteley, and Fred Williams; and Americans include Pollock, Rothko, Rivers, and Johns, among others. Works by many sculptors, among them Barlach, Bourdelle, Brancusi, Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska, Giacometti, Gonzalez, Moore, Nadelman, and Paolozzi, are also represented, as are stage designs by Bakst, Bellmer, Grosz, Schlemmer, and Dine.

The Avnet Collection will be the subject of the Museum's major spring exhibition. A Treasury of Modern Drawing: The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection will be on view from April 28 through July 4, and will be accompanied by a publication describing this important acquisition.