

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

M/4 203

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NEW VAN GOGH FILM AVAILABLE FROM MUSEUM

The Museum of Modern Art announces that a new 18-minute black and white film on the work of the famous painter van Gogh is now available, for rental or sale, in 16 or 35 mm., from the Museum's Film Library. Produced by Gaston Diehl and Robert Hessens in France late in 1948, this is the film now being shown regularly in connection with the exhibition of van Gogh's works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Music was written for the film by the modern French composer, Jacques Besse, a pupil of Debussy.

The approach in the film is unusual in that the life of the artist is seen entirely through the paintings themselves. The camera unobtrusively becomes the artist's own eye. Wandering through Paris, the fields of France, the institution where van Gogh lived, the camera panning onto the canvases makes the observer see these scenes and people as van Gogh must have seen them. The brief poetic commentary accompanying the film, written by Martin Gabel and here translated into English, points up events and migrations in the artist's life and mental crises, but at the same time permits the beautifully reproduced paintings to speak for themselves in many silences. The isolation of details and the concentration fostered by the screen's enlargement of them brings out aspects of the artist's work often overlooked, even by art scholars, in the actual paintings. Thus the film makes for a greater appreciation and understanding of both the man and his canvases, of "his love of his fellow men" and his longing "to reveal on canvas ... the hard-working people and their humble belongings," of his "recklessly touching fire - and even sunflowers burst into flame," of the "fever that burns within him, devouring his whole being" until he "stands before his easel in a ploughed field and puts a bullet through his heart."