

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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MONET MURAL ON VIEW FOR FIRST TIME IN AMERICA

Water Lilies, a 42 foot mural by Claude Monet is on view for the first time in America in a special exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Characterized by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections as the most magnificent composition by the French master outside of Paris, the picture was acquired through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. It is included in a first floor exhibition called "Toward the New Museum of Modern Art" which coincides with the Museum's announcement of a 30th Anniversary Fund raising drive for \$25,000,000 for additional building and for program funds.

The exhibition includes a dozen major works of art either promised as future gifts or recently acquired. It is shown to demonstrate the continued growth of the Museum Collection and therefore need for space. A crowded exhibition of samplings from the Museum Collections is on view at the same time in the second floor galleries partly to show the difficulty of finding room for new acquisitions.

Other paintings in the ground floor show include four promised gifts: Mondrian's Trafalgar Square, and Picasso's Two Acrobats with a Dog, lent by the Honorable and Mrs. William A. M. Burden; Jackson Pollock, Number 12, 1952, lent by the Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller and Renoir's Judgment of Paris, lent by Mrs. Louis R. Smith.

Newly acquired works, in addition to the Monet, are: Boccioni The Laugh, Giacometti Dog, Léger Umbrella and Bowler, Marin Lower Manhattan, Picasso The She Goat, Medardo Rosso The Bookmaker and Rothko Red, Brown and Black. They will form part of a "Recent Acquisitions" exhibition opening December 4.

The Monet picture, which is in triptych form, was painted about 1920. Each canvas measures 6 1/2 feet by 14 feet. It is one of a series of murals inspired by the artist's garden. A similar triptych forms part of the enormous panorama of the same subject installed in the two great oval rooms in the Orangerie gallery in Paris.

The Museum's picture was slightly damaged during bombardment of Giverny in World War II. The minor loss of painting has been restored and the picture cleaned and reconditioned by Mrs. Caroline K. Keck, well-known conservationist who is a consultant to the Museum.

On the wall label, Mr. Barr says: "In the Museum's Water Lilies the reflections of sky, clouds and foliage mingle with flowers and mist. These floating ambiguous images and the flat, steeply rising perspective tend to give the scene an

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unreal and abstract effect. At the same time Monet has given emphatic reality to the painted surface by means of broad sweeping brush strokes combined with a many-layered, scraped and scumbled technique of extraordinary richness.

These qualities together with the large scale are among the factors which in recent years have made Monet's late work important to the abstract painters of our mid-century.

Yet in spite of the quasi-abstract effect of the Water Lilies mural, Monet always remained essentially an Impressionist in his dependence upon nature. The Water Lilies are indeed the culmination of Impressionism but they transcend the essentially intimate, casual and everyday spirit of Impressionism. The Water Lilies seem symphonic in their grandeur of scale, their breadth of vision and their glory of color.

For further information contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. CI 5-8900