

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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SOBY COLLECTION ON VIEW IN BENEFIT EXHIBITION AT M. KNOEDLER AND COMPANY, INC., 14 EAST 57 STREET

Seventy paintings and sculpture from the collection of James Thrall Soby including important works by Picasso and Miró and the finest group of de Chirico's in any public or private collection in the world, will be on view in a benefit exhibition at M. Knoedler and Company, Inc., 14 East 57 Street, from February 1 through February 25.

All the works in the exhibition have been pledged or in some cases already given to the Museum of Modern Art and are being shown in the hope, Mr. Soby says, that they will find space on the walls of the "new" Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition will benefit the Museum Library whose resources Mr. Soby extensively used in writing more than two dozen books on art in the past 25 years. The exhibition is presented as a contribution to the Museum's 30th Anniversary Drive for funds for additional building, for program and endowment.

Most of the painters in Mr. Soby's collection have worked in the romantic or Surrealist spirit. In addition to eight de Chiricos, three Picassos and four Mirós, the exhibition includes two paintings by the Englishman Francis Bacon, a monumental Balthus canvas, a haunting double self portrait by Christian Bérard, paintings by the brothers Eugene Berman and Leonid, and two paintings each by Dali, Matta, Yves Tanguy, Tchelitchew, Lorin MacIver and Ben Shahn.

The sculptures include bronzes by Marini and works by Maillol, Lehmbruck, Reg Butler, Alexander Calder and Lyn Chadwick. Other artists represented in the exhibition are Peter Blume, Bonnard, Dubuffet, Charles Demuth, Max Ernst, Grace Hartigan, Gris, Jasper Johns, Klee, Morandi, Kay Sage, Graham Sutherland and Joseph Cornell.

In his introduction to the exhibition catalog,* Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections, characterizes Mr. Soby as a collector of excellent and highly personal taste. "These two Picasso's, [The Sigh and Seated Woman], acquired when the collector was not yet thirty, and never relinquished, suggest a taste bold enough to confront the formidable, yet broad enough to honor the gentle....

"Looking back twenty-five years later, Neo-Romanticism as a movement seems minor; but, as individuals, two of its major figures, Eugene Berman and his brother Leonid, are still active and honored; Tchelitchew and Bérard have both died since the Second

more....

*THE JAMES THRALL SOBY COLLECTION of works of art pledged or given to The Museum of Modern Art. Introduction by Alfred H. Barr, Jr.; notes by Mr. Soby. 69 pages; 70 plates, 4 in color. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, N. Y. Distributed by Doubleday & Co., Inc. \$1.50

War. All four are admirably represented in Mr. Soby's collection, chiefly by painting of the 1930's.

"By those artists closely associated with Surrealism, Mr. Soby owns excellent paintings by Miró, Tanguy, Dali and Matta, minor works by Ernst, Arp and Masson, a fine post-Surrealist figure by Giacometti, and the great Picasso Seated Woman, not to mention photographs by Man Ray and the most famous of Joseph Cornell's objects, now in the Museum of Modern Art...But I should like to call special attention^{here} to two works by Miró because of their unique character and extraordinary quality. To my mind, the Self Portrait and the Still Life with Old Shoe reveal more than anything else the special and courageous vision of James Soby as a collector.

"Perhaps I should qualify this superlative in the face of Mr. Soby's incomparable group of eight canvases by de Chirico, the master who so greatly influenced both the Neo-Romantics and the Surrealists, surpassing the former in his evocation of mystery and melancholy, and the latter by the intensity of his hallucinatory, anti-rational imagery. Two enviable paintings represent another great precursor of Surrealism, Paul Klee, to whom the collector has paid frequent homage in his writings."

Mr. Soby, who lives in New Canaan, has been a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art since 1942. He is Chairman of the Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions and of the Collections Committee which passes on all works acquired by the Museum either by gift or purchase. He has also directed 14 exhibitions for the Museum in the past 20 years.

Mr. Barr calls Soby a scholar of painstaking probity and says that his scholarship has been enriched by his broad experience as critic, editor and museum man, just as his criticism has been refined, strengthened and deepened by his collection.

Among the books by Mr. Soby which will be on view in the exhibition are After Picasso. Hartford, E. V. Mitchell [and] New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1935; Salvador Dali: Paintings, Drawings, Prints. New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1941 and 1946; Joan Miró. New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1959; Modern Art and the New Past. Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1957; Juan Gris. New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1958; Ben Shahn: His Graphic Art. New York, Braziller, 1957; Giorgio de Chirico. New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1955 and Yves Tanguy. New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1955.

A selection of books by other authors and from other publishers for which the Museum Library has prepared the bibliographies are also on view.

Admission to the exhibition is 75 cents, 25 cents for students. M. Knoedler and Company, Inc. is open from 9:30 to 5:30, Monday through Saturday.

Further information, photographs and catalogs are available from Jane Sabersky, M. Knoedler and Company, Inc., 14 East 57 St., New York City PL. 3-9742 or Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 St., New York City, CI 5-8900.