

The Museum of Modern Art

100 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

No. 133

FOR RELEASE:

Saturday, December 11, 1965

PRESS PREVIEWS:

Thursday, December 9 and

Friday, December 10, 1965

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Around the Automobile, an exhibition of 21 works of art, all from the Museum's own collections, will be on view from December 11 through February in gallery 19 on the second floor of The Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition which includes paintings, assemblages, sculpture and prints, was installed by Dorothy C. Miller, Curator of Collections. It is one of a series of special small shows drawn from the Museum's holdings and devoted to a particular theme, style or artist.

Around the Automobile illustrates the wide variety of attitudes toward the motor-car expressed by artists from the mid-1890s to the present. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Collections, comments in the introductory wall label that "artists at first saw the automobile as a picturesque cult of the well-to-do with its own costume -- goggles, cap, long white duster, and veils for the ladies." The elegant Automobilist drawn by Toulouse-Lautrec in 1896 is an example.

"By 1909," Mr. Barr continues, "the Futurist poet, Marinetti, was shouting 'A roaring racing car ... is more beautiful than the Winged Victory,' and in 1912 the Futurist painter, Balla, offered his Speeding Automobile to the cult of the machine.

"Curiously, for decades after Futurism, artists ignored the automobile or showed it scant esteem. In Atherton's ironic Christmas Eve (1941), the car is conspicuous but dead; in Hopper's nocturne, Gas (1940), a pump and its attendant wait beside a lonesome road -- in vain.

"Picasso loves costly automobiles but never paints them, though once he did magically transform two toy cars into the head of an ape (Baboon and Young, 1951).

"In the 1960s the automobile is once more important to artists yet none celebrates its power, and its specious beauty is left to the advertisers.

"Hirsch's Daybreak reveals an automobile graveyard haunted by human derelicts. Cars scuttle like frantic beetles through Dubuffet's satirical Business Prospers.

(more)

Warrington COLESCOTT. American, born 1921.

Triumph of St. Valentine. 1963. Color intaglio, 17 7/8 x 23 3/4" (plate).
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. 7.64.

Jean DUBUFFET. French, born 1901.

Business Prospers. 1961. Oil on canvas, 65 x 86 5/8". Mrs. Simon
Guggenheim Fund. 115.62.

James F. GILL. American, born 1934.

Woman in Striped Dress. 1962. Color crayon on gesso on composition board,
40 x 30". Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. 2.63.

Joseph HIRSCH. American, born 1910.

Daybreak. (1962) Oil on canvas, 57 1/4 x 72 1/4". Anonymous gift
and Purchase. 1261.64.

Edward HOPPER. American, born 1882.

Gas. (1940) Oil on canvas, 26 1/4 x 40 1/4". Mrs. Simon Guggenheim
Fund. 577.43.

Marie LAURENCIN. French, 1885-1956.

The First Renault Car, 1898. Color lithograph, 14 x 10 7/8" (composition).
Purchase. 137.49.

Pablo PICASSO. Spanish, born 1881. In France since 1904.

Baboon and Young. 1951. Bronze, 21" high, at base, 13 1/4 x 6 7/8 x 1".
Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. 196.56.

Larry RIVERS. American, born 1923.

Ford Chassis II. 1961. Lithograph, 13 11/16 x 19 11/16" (composition).
Gift of the Celeste and Armand Bartos Foundation. 366.63.

Jason SELEY. American, born 1919.

Masculine Presence. (1961) Welded chromium-plated steel automobile
bumpers and grill, 86 7/8 x 48". Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Kornblee. 302.61.

(more)

Henri de TOULOUSE-LAUTREC. French, 1864-1901.

The Automobilist. (1896) Lithograph, 14 11/16 x 10 1/2" (composition).
Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. 155.46.

Ernest TROVA. American, born 1927.

Study for Falling Man. (1964) Chromium figure, miniature automobile wheels, etc. in a case, 6 3/8 x 15 3/4 x 6 1/8"; figure, 3 3/8 x 14 x 5 3/4".
Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. 10.65.a-b.

Renzo VESPIGNANI. Italian, born 1924.

Accident. 1958. Etching and aquatint, 12 3/16 x 12 3/4" (plate).
Purchase. 222.65.

On view on Floor III, Galleries 8 and 10, and represented in the exhibition by photographs only:

Robert RAUSCHENBERG. American, born 1925.

First Landing Jump. (1961) Combine-painting on composition board, 88 5/8 x 71 3/4 x 8 1/8". Promised gift of Philip C. Johnson.

George SEGAL. American, born 1924.

The Bus Driver. (1962) Plaster, wood, metal, rubber, bus parts, etc. Figure, 53 1/2 x 26 7/8 x 45"; wooden platform, 5 1/8 x 51 5/8 x 75 5/8"; overall height, 75". Philip C. Johnson Fund. 337.63a-k.

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The Museum of Modern Art

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AROUND THE AUTOMOBILE

Paintings, Sculpture, Assemblages, Prints

One of a series of special exhibitions from the Museum Collections.
In gallery 19 on floor II, opening December 9, 1965.

CHECKLIST

Unless enclosed in parentheses dates appear on the works themselves. In dimensions height precedes width; a third dimension, depth, is given for sculpture and assemblages.

ARMAN (Armand Fernandez). French, born 1928.

Collection. (1964) Assemblage: toy automobiles and boxes in a case, 16 7/8 x 27 3/4 x 2 7/8". Promised gift and extended loan from Mr. and Mrs. William N. Copley. E.L.65.391.

John ATHERTON. American, 1900-1952.

Christmas Eve. 1941. Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 35". Purchase. 136.42.

Giacomo BALLA. Italian, 1871-1958.

Speeding Automobile. 1912. Oil on wood, 21 7/8 x 27 1/8". Purchase. 271.49.

Vern BLOSUM. American, born 1936.

Time Expired. 1962. Oil on canvas, 37 1/2 x 27 7/8". Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. 71.63.

Derek BOSHIER. British, born 1937.

Untitled. 1964. Serigraph, 21 x 29 1/4 (composition). Purchase. 616.65.

CÉSAR (César Baldaccini). French, born 1921.

The Yellow Buick. (1961) Compressed automobile, 59 1/2 x 30 3/4 x 24 7/8". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Rewald. 294.61.

John CHAMBERLAIN. American, born 1927.

Essex. (1960) Automobile body parts and other metal, relief, 9' x 80 x 43". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Scull and Purchase. 282.61.

(more)

Arman crowds dozens of tiny cars with their matchbox garages into a joke on mass production. The joyless face of Gill's Woman dismounting from her driver's seat rebukes the advertising smile.

"Far, far from Lautrec's automobilist of the gay nineties, Segal's Bus Driver is an eerie, dead-white, life-size plaster cast of a real busman handling real equipment. Nearby, Rauschenberg's First Landing Jump rests insecurely on a heavy tire." (These two works, on view on the third floor, galleries 8 and 10, have not been moved to the second floor for this special show, but are represented there by photographs.)

"Three large works in the exhibition are composed entirely of automobiles: for his heroic Masculine Presence, Seley assembled chrome-bright bumpers; with battered body parts Chamberlain constructed his magnificent relief called Essex; César used a scrap-metal compressing machine to force into a tall rectangular form the body of a yellow Buick (with fragments from other cars added for esthetic reasons). The owners commissioned the artist to transform the old family car into its own monument.

"Shiny as a new car, Trova's Falling Man becomes a chassis. With wry humor Blossum paints the motorist's minor nemesis, Time Expired."

Besides the Lautrec lithograph, prints by Derek Boshier, Warrington Colescott, Marie Laurencin, Larry Rivers and Renzo Vespignani are included.

Earlier exhibitions in this series, which began in 1960, have been Fernand Léger, America Seen - Between the Wars, Modern Allegories, André Derain, and Family Portraits.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.