

The Museum of Modern Art

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

75
No. 97
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 1, 1966

TWENTY DRAWINGS: NEW ACQUISITIONS, a selection of drawings by twenty artists from Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, Switzerland and the United States, acquired by The Museum of Modern Art during the first months of 1966, will be on view from August 2 through October 2. The exhibition is one in the series of small shows, intended to supplement the larger report of acquisitions presented by the Museum each year, which concentrates on limited aspects of the collections.

William S. Lieberman, Director of Drawings and Prints, who directed the exhibition, says, "The selection is small and in no way attempts to define the varieties of modern draftsmanship; but some of the acquisitions -- the eleven portraits, for instance -- suggest a wide diversity of contemporary styles."

Commenting on two self-portraits Mr. Lieberman points out that, "In its economy of line Matisse's unflinching analysis of himself at the age of seventy-six distills a lifetime's experience as a draftsman. It is a brief yet penetrating personal statement, so spontaneous that Matisse's masterful and essential distortions must be studied to be realized. Those familiar with the paintings of Magritte may glimpse through the quotations of wood grain, lonely house, clouds and crashing waves, a portrait of the artist in his derby hat, twice silhouetted in night and day."

Among the other portraits in the exhibition, Walt Kuhn's model, dated 1928, the earliest drawing in the exhibition, was obviously studied from life. The latest portrait in the show is a heraldic tribute by Richard Lindner to Marcel Duchamp, the father of Dada and the chief proselytizer for the American Chess Foundation. Lindner's Checkmate ("The King is Dead") is pasted, drawn and painted; Duchamp's portrait, along with that of an Ottoman sultan by Bellini,

MORE

appears twice in miniature; two larger figures set against the field of a chessboard dominate the composition.

Several artists represented continue the traditions of surrealism; their fantasies made real by the illustration of detail and space which realistically alludes to traditional perspective. The two Belgian painters, Magritte and Paul Delvaux, have worked in this tradition. Two drawings by American painters of the same generation -- Graham and Lindner -- also acknowledge a surrealist heritage but their visions are less photographically rendered. In the hands of two younger painters -- Lucas Samaras and Jan Menses -- the reverie of dreams becomes the incantation of nightmare.

The four abstract drawings in the exhibition are completely different in style and technique. Hans Hartung, a prominent exponent of abstract expressionism in France, boldly covers a sheet of paper with quick, flat strokes of charcoal. Henry Pearson molds a globe of papier mache and on it traces currents of line which hypnotize the eye. Leon Polk Smith has torn paper of various textures and colors, learning to control their weakness and strength. He is intrigued by the graphic quality of the torn edge which he uses as line. The Spaniard, Eusebio Sempere, with infinite attention to detail, builds parallel horizontal lines into a shimmering wall.

Among the other artists represented are Arakawa, an artist whose paintings will be shown next October in the Museum's survey THE NEW JAPANESE PAINTING AND SCULPTURE; two Americans -- Paul Georges and Robert Andrew Parker -- who are represented by self-portraits; as well as Otto Dix, Alberto Giacometti, Joseph Stella, Jeremy Anderson and Walter Murch.

Photographs, checklist and additional information available from Lynn Traiger, Assistant Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York, 10019. Circle 5-8900