

The Museum of Modern Art

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NO. 3
FOR RELEASE
JANUARY 11, 1971

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FOUR AMERICANS IN PARIS: THE COLLECTIONS OF GERTRUDE STEIN AND HER FAMILY. Essays by Douglas Cooper, Lucile M. Golson, Irene Gordon, Ellen B. Hirschland and Leon Katz. Foreword by John B. Hightower. Introduction by Margaret Potter. "More Adventures" excerpted from Appreciation by Leo Stein and "Portraits" by Gertrude Stein (of Matisse and Picasso) are reprinted. 176 pages; 109 illustrations (8 in color); bound in Lexotone (simulated leather), \$7.95, now available; cloth edition \$12.50, available in March. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Cloth edition distributed in the United States and Canada by New York Graphic Society, Ltd.; Lexotone edition distributed in the United Kingdom by Transatlantic Book Service, Ltd.; and internationally by Feffer & Simons, Inc.

FOUR AMERICANS IN PARIS: THE COLLECTIONS OF GERTRUDE STEIN AND HER FAMILY was published by The Museum of Modern Art on December 19 in conjunction with its major exhibition of the same title, on view at the Museum until March 1. Designed by Carl Laanes, the book is bound in simulated red leather resembling an album, with four oval openings framing photographs of Gertrude Stein, her brothers Leo and Michael, and the latter's wife Sarah. These four Americans came to Paris early in this century, and settled in two apartments on the Left Bank and were quickly attracted to some of the most advanced art then being produced. They became pioneering collectors, and not only patrons but also friends of many avant-garde artists, including Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, then an almost unknown young Spaniard who was also a newcomer to Paris. The Saturday evening salons of Gertrude and Leo on the Rue de Fleurus and of Michael and Sarah on the Rue Madame became the gathering place of artists, poets, critics and other intellectuals who came to see and discuss the daring works of art.

In spite of their relatively modest means -- they rarely spent more than a few hundred dollars for any of their purchases -- the Steins acquired a dazzling array of paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints. These have since found their way into leading museums and private collections throughout the world. The exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, sponsored by Alcoa Foundation, marks the first attempt to reassemble as many as possible of the works of art once owned by members of this famous expatriate family.

The five essays in the book characterize each of the Steins and discuss their artistic preferences and those of others in their immediate circle. The introductory article by the editor, Irene Gordon, presents the dramatis personae and deals particularly with Leo Stein,

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who as painter, art historian and critic first led his family into collecting adventures. Lucile M. Golson writes of Michael, sage business adviser of the family, and his wife Sara, devoted disciple of Matisse, who once declared "she knows more about my painting than I do." Leon Katz, besides discussing Gertrude Stein's personal relations with Matisse and Picasso, reveals how her analysis of Cézanne's composition and her interpretation of Cubism influenced her own attempts to forge a new writing style that would "kill the nineteenth century." Gertrude's discovery of the Spanish Cubist Juan Gris and her intimate friendship with him in the last years before his untimely death are recounted by Douglas Cooper. Finally, the story of how Dr. Claribel and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore became early converts to modernism through their friendship with the Steins, and eventually outdid them in collecting zeal, is told by their great-niece, Ellen B. Hirschland.

Besides numerous reproductions in black-and-white and color of works of art once owned by the Steins, the book is illustrated with many rare documentary photographs. Especially noteworthy are those showing the rooms in the Steins' apartments over the years, as the collections grew and the walls became increasingly covered with paintings by Picasso, Matisse, Gris and earlier modern masters such as Daumier, Delecroix, Manet, Cézanne, Gauguin, Renoir, and Bonnard. With the aid of photographs such as these, Margaret Potter, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture, who directed the exhibition and has written an introduction to the book, was able to identify and locate works of art long since dispersed from the Steins' possession to cities as far distant as Leningrad, Melbourne, Oslo and Mexico.

The reconstruction of the Steins' collecting activities, as John B. Hightower, Director of the Museum, points out in his foreword, "evokes a significant moment in the history of art and illuminates the personalities of four members of a noted family, whose daring led them to acquire works by masters of the modern movement before they had attained wide renown." An annotated catalogue of the exhibition is included in the book, which also contains "More Adventures" excerpted from Leo Stein's Appreciation and two word "Portraits" of Matisse and Picasso written by Gertrude Stein in 1909.

The publication is currently available in the Museum's bookstores or by mail at \$7.50.

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A cloth edition at \$12.50 will be issued in March and distributed by New York Graphic Society, Ltd.

Additional information, review copies and photographs available from Diana Goldin, Coordinator of Press Services, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019. Telephone: (212) 956-7297, 7501.
