

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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## EUROPEAN DRAWINGS FROM NETHERLANDS ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The first opportunity in America to survey in depth the richness and variety of the outstanding collection of drawings owned by the "Kroller-Muller National Museum in The Netherlands will be offered by The Museum of Modern from May 24 through August 19. More than 120 works on paper, including 35 watercolors and drawings by van Gogh, have been selected by William S. Lieberman, Curator of Drawings at The Museum of Modern Art, for the exhibition which will subsequently tour this country and Canada.

While Drawings from the "Kroller-Muller National Museum is naturally dominated by van Gogh, whose work forms the core of the collection, symbolism, synthetism and art nouveau are introduced by charcoals by Redon followed by drawings by other symbolists, French, Belgian, Dutch and Italian. Cubism in France is represented by Picasso, Gris and Léger (drawings are composition studies for the Museum's large 1921 painting Le Grand Déjeuner); de Stijl in The Netherlands by van der Leek and Mondrian. Drawings by contemporary European sculptors include work by Butler, Giacometti, Gonzalez, Marini and Moore, acquired in recent years.

"The "Kroller-Muller National Museum in Otterlo, one of the most beautiful museums in the world, is idyllically situated in one of the few forested landscapes of The Netherlands," Mr. Lieberman says in the introduction to the exhibition catalog.\* "It is known chiefly for its extensive holdings of paintings by Vincent van Gogh and for a handsome sculpture park of twenty-seven acres. The museum, however, has many other treasures of which perhaps the least known is a collection of 19th- and 20th-century European drawings."

Mrs. Hélène Kroller's collection was essentially complete by the late twenties.

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\*Drawings from the Kroller-Muller National Museum, Otterlo by William S. Lieberman. 8 x 7-1/2 inches; 96 pages; 65 illustrations. Paperbound \$3.95.

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The nucleus of paintings had been formed between 1907 and 1920 with the prewar years comprising the most important period. From 1913 onward, and especially after 1920, architectural plans became the central preoccupation of this unusual woman's cultural activities. Around the series of paintings and drawings by van Gogh she arranged a survey of modern art as she saw it in reference to her own time and opinions. "She aimed at objectivity, but with the help of her lifelong advisor, the art critic and pedagogue H. P. Bremmer, she found a happy balance between art-historical considerations and personal preferences," says Dr. R. W. D. Oxenaar, Director of the Kröller-Müller National Museum.

The drawings by van Gogh assembled by Mrs. Kröller date, for the most part, from between 1881 and 1885, when van Gogh had returned to The Netherlands from Belgium and before he left for France. Since Mrs. Kröller's death, however, a few additions have expanded the range of this representation -- some childhood sketches of 1862 and three drawings from his final years in France. The collection at Otterlo, and the exhibition in New York, also offer the opportunity to see van Gogh's work in relationship to that of his Dutch contemporaries.

The achievement of van Gogh, Mr. Lieberman suggests, like Ensor, Munch, Gauguin and Redon, should be studied within the broad context of the symbolist movement. "Today a revived interest in symbolism explores the achievement of lesser artists who have, to a great extent, been either forgotten or ignored. Jan Toorop, a Dutch contemporary of van Gogh, represented by Fatality and The Three Brides, which offer extraordinary hallucinations, was largely responsible for the interest in Redon's work in the Netherlands. Mrs. Kröller collected many of Redon's drawings in addition to several of his paintings.

In an exchange of collections between the two museums, an exhibition of 100 European Drawings from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art is currently on

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view at the Kröller-Müller National Museum. Both exhibitions were selected by Mr. Lieberman. Both exhibitions are presented under the auspices of The Netherlands Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare and the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art and sponsored by Heineken Breweries, Van Munching & Co., Inc., The Algemene Bank Nederland N.V., with the assistance of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. The New York State Council on the Arts supports part of The Museum of Modern Art program.

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Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public  
Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019. Phone:  
(212) 956-7501, 956-7504.  
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