

The Museum of Modern Art

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"Dine is incapable of creating a dispassionate work of art."

-- Riva Castleman

JIM DINE'S ETCHINGS, a large retrospective exhibition of more than 100 prints, will be on view in the first-floor galleries of The Museum of Modern Art from June 6 through September 5, 1978. The exhibition spans a 17 year period from 1961 to 1978. Devoted to the history of Dine's work in drypoint, engraving and etching, the exhibition assembled by Riva Castleman, Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, is the fourth important survey of a major printmaker's work at the Museum in recent years (Picasso Master Printmaker, 1970; Jasper Johns' Lithographs, 1970; The Prints of Edvard Munch, 1973; A Jacques Villon Centennial, 1975).

Prints are a central element in the work of Jim Dine, the artist loosely associated with Pop Art who first came to public attention in the late 1950's and who continues in the 1970's to formulate a highly personal, autobiographical style. With his first drypoints of such familiar objects as ties, apples and zippers done in the early 1960's, he brought a fresh and imaginative attitude to printmaking. Bearing little resemblance to the sort of work being done by most printmakers of the time, these prints were more closely related to Dine's involvement with Happenings and to his construction/canvases.

After his few attempts at etching in New York, Dine devoted a considerable part of his creative energies to mastering the medium following his move to London in 1967. In the exhibition 18 etchings done after his return to America in 1973, particularly a series of portraits of the poet Arthur Rimbaud, demonstrate his progress in making the graven image a principal form in his art.

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Dine has for nearly two decades drawn, painted and etched a bathrobe which has been his surrogate self-portrait. It is only in his etchings of the 1970's that the artist has shown his own face to the world. Thirteen self-portraits in the exhibition present a haunting panorama of the personal image of this master printmaker.

Reflecting on Jim Dine's dramatic recent prints and upon his whole achievement as a printmaker, Riva Castleman notes in her essay: "Dine is incapable of creating a dispassionate work of art. Dine has, with his last robe (Spray-Painted Robe), moved far beyond the boundaries that once confined the art of the etcher. The bravura of his technique, stabilized and supported by his consummate draftsmanship, has endowed the once-exhausted medium of etching with a new and substantial life."

Following its New York showing, the exhibition will travel to the Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas; the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio; the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland; the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio; and other American museums.

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