

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
October 1992

SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION

Through February 21, 1993

A thought-provoking installation of highlights from The Museum of Modern Art's collection of painting and sculpture examines formal and iconographic relationships among works of art separated by time and medium. Organized by Kirk Varnedoe, director, Department of Painting and Sculpture, **SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION** represents a departure from the Museum's normally chronological presentation of its painting and sculpture collection, juxtaposing older and more recent art and including photographs and drawings. It remains on view through February 21, 1993, during the course of **HENRI MATISSE: A RETROSPECTIVE**, which presently occupies the Museum's second and third-floor painting and sculpture galleries.

SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION presents approximately 240 works, which are arranged on the Museum's ground and lower levels. Figurative works are grouped into five thematic sections -- *Body/Sexuality/Gender*, *The City*, *The Object*, *The Machine*, and *More and Less Than Human* -- followed by galleries devoted to abstraction.

The first section of figurative work comprises art that is concerned with representing the body and with matters of sexuality and gender. Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (1911-12) is shown near a series of photographs of prostitutes in New Orleans (ca. 1912) by Ernest J. Bellocq; Ana Mendieta's *Nile Born* (1984) is adjacent to Louise Bourgeois's *Sleeping Figure* (1950); an assemblage of small photographs of body parts by Annette Messager, *My Vows*

(1988-91), is on a wall adjacent to Tom Wesselmann's monumental *Smoker, I (Mouth, 12)*, of 1967.

The following section of the installation explores the city as subject in modern art. Garry Winogrand's photographs *American Legion Convention, Dallas, Texas* (1964) and *New York City* (1969) hang next to Robert Colescott's large, boisterous painting *Emergency Room* (1989). Giorgio de Chirico's *Enigma of a Day* (1914) and Ludwig Kirchner's *Street, Dresden* (1908) are differing expressions of urban alienation.

The installation moves on to examine the wide variety of ways in which the objects of everyday life have been incorporated into art. Among the objects that constitute Salvador Dali's *Retrospective Bust of a Woman* (1933) are corn, bread, feathers, and an ink stand. Joseph Beuys's *The Sled* (1969), Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* (1951, after an original of 1913), and Christo's *Package on Wheelbarrow* (1963) are shown side by side.

The ways in which modern art has taken the machine as its subject, or has drawn inspiration from mechanical forms, is the subject of the following section. Here Charles Sheeler's photograph *Wheels* (1939) and Winston Link's *Last Steam Locomotive Run on Norfolk and Western Radford Division* (1957) hang next to de Chirico's painted portrayal of train travel, *The Anxious Journey* (1913). Other works in this room are Claes Oldenburg's *Giant Soft Fan* (1966-67) and Duchamp's *Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics)* (1925).

The final room of the figurative installation, *More and Less than Human*, explores the overlap and syntheses of the body, the object, and the machine. In this room, the empty-minded puppets of George Grosz's *Republican Automats* (1920) confront the machine-like figures of Fernand Léger's *Exit the Ballets Russes* (1914). Other works include Kasimir Malevich's *Woman with Water Pails*:

Dynamic Arrangement (1912), Hans Bellmer's *The Machine Gunneress in a State of Grace* (1937), and Jacob Epstein's *The Rock Drill* (1913-14).

In the final galleries, abstract paintings, sculptures, and drawings from widely different dates are juxtaposed in order to suggest both the broad variety and the lines of continuity within modernism. Jackson Pollock's *One (Number 31, 1950)*, Mark de Suvero's *Ladderpiece* (1961-62), and Franz Kline's *Painting Number 2* (c. 1954), for example, demonstrate the ways in which works of art can recall each other yet nevertheless retain considerable differences. Other suggestive groupings of works include: Donald Judd's untitled sculpture of 1968 and Frank Stella's *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor* (1959) confronting John Chamberlain's colorful *Essex* (1960); Mondrian's *Painting, 1* (1926) and *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* (1942-43) adjacent to Agnes Martin's *The Tree* (1964); and Eva Hesse's *Study for Repetition 19* (1967) next to Allan McCollum's *40 Plaster Surrogates* (1982-84).

A freshly considered, comprehensive presentation of the painting and sculpture collection will be installed in the spring of 1993.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.