

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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#237

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXHIBITS NEW ACQUISITIONS

Important recent paintings by two living masters of American art head the list of ten new acquisitions which the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, will put on view in its New Acquisitions Gallery Wednesday, July 28. These are Gas (ca. 1940.), an oil, by Edward Hopper purchased through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund and Marsden Hartley's Evening Storm, Schoodic, Maine, 1942, oil on composition board, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. These two paintings with the eight other acquisitions, which include two rugs, compose a group that show a wide variety of technique and approach and an international range in the artists represented: four native Americans and one native each of Italy, France, Chile, Holland, Germany and Mexico.

In announcing the acquisitions Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum, said:

"In his preface to the catalog of the Museum's collection of painting and sculpture John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum, wrote: 'There is one aspect of the Collection which seems to me to have a special meaning at the present time. This is its catholicity and tolerance. It is natural and proper that American artists should be included in greater numbers than those of any other country. But it is equally important in a period when Hitler has made a lurid fetish of nationalism that no fewer than twenty-four nations other than our own should also be represented in the Museum Collection.'

"The eight paintings and two rugs in the group of recent acquisitions well maintain the policies indicated by the Museum's President. Four of the works are by artists of the United States; one is a pre-fascist Italian painting; a second a pre-Nazi German; two are by Latin Americans, a Mexican and a Chilean; and the remaining two are by a Hollander and a Frenchman both living in New York.

"The paintings are as varied in character as they are in nationality, ranging from the romantic realism of Hopper and Hartley and the surrealist mystery of de Chirico, through Schlemmer's machine-like figures and Tamayo's "primitive" style, to the four very different abstract compositions of Davis, Ferren, Matta and Mondrian. Each is an important work by the painter and several, I believe, are of exceptional distinction."

The acquisitions, with comments by Mr. Barr, are as follows:

DAVIS, Stuart. American, born 1894

✓ Flying Carpet. (1942) Wool rug, woven by V'Soske, 7'1" x 10'. Edgar J. Kaufmann, Jr. Fund

"My design for a rug is called 'Flying Carpet,'" writes the artist Stuart Davis. "It is a pure invention but its shapes, color and composition are directly related to airplane views."

Flying Carpet was commissioned by the weaver V'Soske for a special exhibition of rugs designed by ten

American painters held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1942.

Stuart Davis, one of the best known American "abstract" painters, was born in Philadelphia in 1894. He studied with Robert Henri in New York where he now lives. The Museum also owns the painting, Summer Landscape (1930), an oil study, a gouache and several prints by Mr. Davis.

de CHIRICO, Giorgio. Italian, born Greece 1888.

- ✓ Delights of the Poet. (1913) Oil on canvas, 27 3/8 x 34". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

The atmosphere of mystery and suspense created by black, slow-stepping arcades, unpeopled emptiness and silence brightened by the splash of the fountain and the implied rumble of the distant train: these are all characteristic elements in de Chirico's early work which was to have so wide an influence upon the romantic and surrealist painting of the past twenty-five years.

Giorgio de Chirico was born in Volo, Greece, of Italian parents in 1888. He studied in Munich where he was influenced by Böcklin and German romanticism. He worked in Paris, 1911-15, and frequently thereafter. Lives in Florence.

FERREN, John. American, born 1905.

- ✓ Rug. (1942) Wool, woven by V'Soske, 6'7" x 9'. Purchase Fund.

Ferren's rug was also designed for the V'Soske exhibition at the Museum (see under Davis). More than any of the other nine designers Ferren explored the possibilities of obtaining different textures through varying the thickness and density of the pile.

John Ferren was born near Pendleton, Oregon, in 1905. He studied in San Francisco and later spent several years in Paris. He is now in the armed forces. The Museum collection already includes his etched plaster Composition, (1937).

HARTLEY, Marsden. American, born 1877.

- ✓ Evening Storm, Schoodic, Maine. 1942. Oil on composition board, 30 x 40". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

Thirty years ago Marsden Hartley was one of the pioneers of abstract painting in America. But today his rapidly increasing reputation rests upon his mastery of rich color and bold fluent brushing which he often applies to pictures of the sky and sea in the American romantic tradition of Albert Ryder. Evening Storm, Schoodic, Maine is possibly the finest of a series of wave compositions painted last summer along the Maine coast.

Marsden Hartley was born in Lewiston, Maine, 1877. He studied in Cleveland and New York and before World War I painted expressionist and abstract paintings in Germany. He lives in New York in the winter, Maine in the summer. The Museum owns two other paintings by Hartley, The Spent Wave (1937-38) and Boats (1941).

HOPPER, Edward. American, born 1882.

- ✓ Gas. (1940) Oil on canvas, 26 1/4 x 40 1/4" Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund.

Hopper is usually considered one of the greatest living American realists. But behind the commonplace reality which his pictures present with such factual objectivity one can feel an underlying spirit of romantic mystery. This is particularly true of his recent work, of which Gas is one of the most original and memorable examples. This is at first glance a picture of a routine moment in a routine American job, painted with a particularly skillful rendering of a conflicting artificial and natural light. But the longer you look at it the more haunting the scene



becomes: the lonely road in the cool dusk with the man tending his gasoline pumps, like an attentive priest before three scarlet idols.

Edward Hopper was born in Nyack, New York, in 1882. He is at present visiting Mexico. The Museum owns four other oils by Edward Hopper: Corner Saloon (1914), House by the Railroad (1925), Night Windows (1928), New York Movie (1939), shown on the third floor, two watercolors and all his etchings. These form together with the newly acquired Gas the largest group of works in any museum collection by this very distinguished American artist. In 1933 the Museum gave Hopper his first comprehensive one man show and the most complete review of his work is to be found in the Museum's publication, Edward Hopper.

MASSON, André. French, born 1896. Now in U.S.A.

✓ Leonardo da Vinci and Isabella d'Este. 1942. oil on canvas, 39 7/8 x 50". Given anonymously.

André Masson, French painter and graphic artist, was born in Balagny (Oise) in 1896. Influenced at first by Derain, then Juan Gris, he became the leading French painter among the Paris surrealists, 1925-28. Leonardo da Vinci and Isabella d'Este is perhaps his most important work since coming to this country in 1941.

The Museum also owns an earlier oil by Masson, Battle of Fishes (1927); a collage, Street Singer (1941); a large pastel, Animals Devouring Themselves (1928) and several drawings, prints and illustrated books.

MATTA ECHAURREN, Roberto. <sup>Sebastián Antonio</sup> Chilean, born 1911. Now in U.S.A.

✓ Hanging Man (1942) Oil on canvas, 38 1/4 x 51 1/4". Gift of Charles E. Merrill.

Matta's paintings are sometimes so abstract that their surrealist psychological character is apparent only in their semi-automatic technique and arbitrary titles. The title Hanging Man is taken from the name of a card in the Tarot pack, but the painting itself with its brilliant veils of color and vertiginous movement seems to belong to the tradition of abstract painting initiated by Kandinsky thirty years ago.

Roberto Matta Echaurren was born in Santiago, Chile, in 1911 and was graduated from the School of Architecture, Santiago, 1931. Worked with Le Corbusier in Paris, 1934-36. Turned to painting and joined Paris surrealists in 1934. To New York 1939. The Museum owns another oil by Matta: Listen to Living (1941) and a drawing.

MONDRIAN, Piet. Dutch, born 1872. Now in U.S.A.

✓ Broadway Boogie-Woogie. 1942-43. Oil on canvas, 50 x 50". Given anonymously.

For many years Mondrian confined himself with ascetic concentration to abstract compositions of sparse rectangles divided by rigid black bars. Since coming to this country his painting has grown less severe and more complicated. This change reached its culmination this year in Broadway Boogie-Woogie. Even in Europe Mondrian was enthusiastic about our American dance music. The subject and staccato rhythmic excitement of this most important of his recent works may be considered the 70 year old painter's tribute to the most remarkable and complex of recent developments in swing. The asymmetric rectangles of Broadway Boogie-Woogie correspond to the syncopated melody of boogie-woogie, the short broken lines to the rippling broken chords of the base.

Piet Mondrian was born in ~~Amers~~Amersfoort, Holland, in 1872. After studying at the Amsterdam Academy he went to Paris where in 1911 he was influenced by Picasso's cubism. During 1917-1920 he was the leading painter in the famous Stijl group of Leyden. After two decades in Paris he came to New York in 1941. A large charcoal composition of 1914, and paintings of 1925 and 1936

are also in the Museum Collection.

SCHLEMMER, Oskar. German, born 1888.

✓ Bauhaus Stairway. (ca. 1929) Oil on canvas, 63 3/4 x 44 3/4". Given anonymously.

Late in February 1933 an exhibition of Schlemmer's paintings opened in his native town of Stuttgart. Ten days later the Nazis took over the town and Schlemmer's show was closed on the charge of "art bolshevism," and Schlemmer was dismissed from his professorship in the Breslau Academy. Bauhaus Stairway, the principal painting in the exhibition, was bought almost immediately by an American collector in protest against Nazi intolerance of modern art.

Bauhaus Stairway was painted just before the artist left the Bauhaus at Dessau, where he had been instructor in theatre and ballet. It is important not only as one of the artist's best works but also as an expression of the Bauhaus, the pioneer art and technical school which was leading Germany during the late 1920s when Germany was leading the world in the field of modern design.

Oskar Schlemmer was born in Stuttgart in 1888. He taught at the Bauhaus from 1921 to 1929 and at the Breslau Academy, 1929-1933.

TAMAYO, Rufino. Mexican, born 1899. Now in U.S.A.

✓ Woman with Pineapple. 1941. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30"  
Gift of friends of the artist.

Of all the Mexican painters Rufino Tamayo is most admired for his rich, sombre color, but during recent years his style has developed greatly in scale and strength of form.

Rufino Tamayo was born at Oaxaca in 1899 and studied at the San Carlos Academy in Mexico City, where he later painted frescoes during the "Mexican Renaissance" of the 1920s. He was influenced by cubism as well as by Mexican popular arts. In the past few years he has lived in New York where he teaches at the Dalton School.