

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM'S RECENT ACQUISITIONS COMPRISE WORKS BY ARTISTS OF MANY NATIONALITIES

Fifty works of art by 36 artists of 11 different nationalities will be shown as recent acquisitions to the Museum Collections in a special exhibition from May 7 through June 8, arranged by Dorothy C. Miller, Curator of the Museum Collections.

The earliest work in the show is the painting "Masks Confronting Death" by the famous Belgian artist Baron James Ensor. This is one of his best and most characteristic pictures, painted in 1888, the same year as his great "Entry of Christ into Brussels." The Carnival was still elaborately celebrated in Ostend during Ensor's youth, and the artist lived surrounded by the masks which his mother sold in the family souvenir shop. In this painting, as in the "Entry," Ensor dissociates the mask from its literal setting in the carnival to make use of its "intensified expression" in symbolic compositions which are an extraordinary anticipation of 20th-century expressionism and surrealism.

Fauve painting is represented in the show by a small, brilliant landscape by Derain, probably painted in 1905 when Derain was working with Matisse at Collioure. Of special interest in relation to the Derain are 3 sparkling watercolors by Paul Signac, 2 done in Italy about 1896 and one at Arles in 1904. These were acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

Picasso's "Sleeping Peasants" of 1919, acquired through the Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Purchase Fund, is one of the best of the series of small "classical" gouaches or tempera paintings not hitherto represented in the Museum Collection. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., has called the "Sleeping Peasants" "one of the earliest and most memorable of Picasso's compositions in the 'colossal' style. The figures are ingeniously forced into a kind of oblong, free-standing relief. The drawing, especially the head and upper part of the woman's figure, is directly inspired by the late style of Ingres...."

From the same period in Picasso's art comes the portrait of the Italian poet and writer on esthetics, Ricciotto Canudo, a pencil drawing of extreme delicacy and refinement, done in 1918, and acquired for the Museum through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. An unusual early drawing, the "Flower Girl" by Picasso, the gift of Mrs. Stanley B. Resor, is a study for the painting "Composition, Peasants and Oxen" of about 1906, now in the Barnes Foundation, a work which seems more or less inspired by El Greco.

The "Man's Head" in ink and watercolor, 1907, by Picasso, also in the present show, is a study for the great "Demoiselles d'Avignon" which has been in the Museum Collection since 1939. Early composition studies for the painting show the figure at the left as a man, but in the final painting this figure was transformed into a woman.

The Collection's first, and excellent, example of the work of Frank Kupka is the "Red and Blue Discs," painted in 1911-12. Kupka, born in Czechoslovakia in 1871, was one of the least known but earliest pioneers of pure abstract painting. With Delaunay in Paris he studied the use of prismatic colors in an art to which Apollinaire gave the name Orphism.

Bearing an obvious relationship to Orphism are 2 small canvases in the show by Morgan Russell, painted in 1913 in Paris where Russell and his fellow American, Stanton Macdonald-Wright, worked out theories in painting which they called Synchronism.

An important early work by Stuart Davis, "Lucky Strike," painted in 1921 when the artist was only 27 years old, is the gift to the Collection of the American Tobacco Company, Inc. A canvas in the cubist tradition, it is of special value in rounding out within the Collection the various facets of Davis' career. Another early work by a distinguished American artist is Max Weber's "Two Brooding Figures," 1911, given by Nelson A. Rockefeller, a study for the Museum's well-known "Geranium" painted in the same year.

Two works of 1915, a cubist "Man with Guitar" carved in stone by Lipchitz and the "Circus Trainer," a gouache by Rouault, are included, the latter the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Rubel, who have also given a fine small oil, "The Wedding," by the French primitive, Louis Vivin.

Other early works in the exhibition are a powerfully realistic small bronze nude of 1911 by Jacob Epstein, given by Mrs. Frank Altschul in memory of her father Philip J. Goodhart; a portrait drawing by Kokoschka of the famous Dresden photographer Hugo Erfurth, probably done around 1920 when Kokoschka was in Dresden; and a highly entertaining small oil called "My Mother Was Reading the Newspaper," 1919, by the Italian Ivo Pannaggi, born in 1901, who with Prampolini published a series of manifestoes in 1922-23 on the esthetics of the machine. The Pannaggi painting was given to the Museum by Mario da Silva.

A remarkably fine group of 8 works by Paul Klee is included: 3 water-colors dating from 1915, 1922 and 1923; and 5 ink drawings ranging from 1916 to 1940, purchased through the A. Conger Goodyear Fund.

The other works of art in the show were produced within the past 20 years, most of them in the past 10 years. Outstanding among the sculptures is Giacometti's "Chariot," 1950, one of the most extraordinary of his recent bronzes. Two German sculptures, the late Max Beckmann's monumental self-portrait done in 1936 just before he left Berlin, and the 1949-50 bronze "Amazon" by Gerhard Marcks, interesting in its relation to German Gothic art, are the gift of Curt Valentin. Among the American works, Calder's sheet-metal stabile, the "Whale," 1937, long familiar in the Museum garden where it has been on loan, has been given to the Collection by the artist. David Hare's witty "Crab" made in welded bronze in 1951 is the latest work in the show.

The well-known Belgian surrealists, Paul Delvaux and René Magritte, are represented by outstanding examples: Delvaux by the "Phases of the Moon," 1939, and Magritte by the "Empire of Light, II," 1950, the latter the gift of Mr. and Mrs. John de Menil. A surrealist painting by the young American, Alton Pickens, "Carnival," 1949, was given by Lincoln Kirstein. Drawings by the American, Leon Kelly, and by Tchelitchev complete this group.

British art is represented by 2 works of John Piper, a gouache and an oil, both landscapes painted in 1950. Israel's best-known artist, Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein, is shown in a striking landscape, "Tents of Judea," 1950, gift of Miss Belle Kogan. Ardon-Bronstein was born in Poland in 1896, worked at the Bauhaus in Weimar with Kandinsky,, Feininger and Klee, went to Palestine in 1933 and heads the New Bezalel School in Jerusalem.

Among other American paintings in the exhibition is Milton Avery's skilful composition "The Dessert," 1939, which shows the artists Wallace Putnam and David Burliuk with others sitting around a table. This painting is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger. Jeanne Reynal's "A Good Circular God" is fashioned in her highly individual mosaic technique. Franz Kline's bold black and white painting, "Chief," is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. David M. Solinger; and Knud Merrild's "flux" painting, "Chain Reaction," which won a prize at the Chicago Art Institute's 1947 exhibition of Abstract and Surrealist American Art, was given by Alexander M. Bing. Ben Shahn's large, satirical painting of two well-known political figures, done in 1948 and entitled "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," is the gift of the artist, who has selected a quotation from Shakespeare as subtitle: "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"

A Bulletin published this month by the Museum, the third supplement to the Painting and Sculpture catalog of 1948, lists and illustrates many of the items in the exhibition.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Exhibited May 7 - June 8, 1952

ARDON-BRONSTEIN, Mordecai. Israeli, born Poland 1896.

The Tents of Judah. 1950. Oil on composition board, 31 7/8 x 39 3/8".
Gift of Miss Belle Kogan

AVERY, Milton. American, born 1893.

The Dessert. (1939.) Oil on canvas, 28 1/8 x 36 1/8". Gift of
Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger

BECKMANN, Max. German, 1884-1950.

Self Portrait. (1936.) Bronze, 14 1/2" high. Gift of Curt Valentin

BIGAUD, Wilson. Haitian, born 1931.

Murder in the Jungle. (1950.) Oil on composition board, 23 7/8 x 29 3/4".
Inter-American Fund

BUFFET, Bernard. French, born 1928.

Self Portrait. 1948. Oil on canvas, 82 1/4 x 40 5/8". Purchase Fund

CALDER, Alexander. American, born 1898.

Whale. (1937.) Stabile, sheet metal, 6'6" high. Gift of the artist

DAVIS, Stuart. American, born 1894.

Lucky Strike. (1921.) Oil on canvas, 33 1/4 x 18". Gift of The American
Tobacco Company, Inc.

DELVAUX, Paul. Belgian, born 1897.

Phases of the Moon. 1939. Oil on canvas, 55 x 63". Purchase Fund

DERAIN, André. French, born 1880.

Landscape in Southern France. (c. 1905.) Oil on canvas, 13 7/8 x 17 3/4".
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

DIX, Otto. German, born 1891.

The Artist's Mother. 1932. Silverpoint, 22 5/8 x 18 1/2". Purchase Fund

ENSOR, Baron James. Belgian, 1860-1949.

Masks Confronting Death. 1888. Oil on canvas, 31 5/8 x 39 3/8".
Purchase Fund

EPSTEIN, Jacob. American, born 1880.

Seated Woman. 1911. Bronze, 18 1/2" high. Gift of Mrs. Frank Altschul,
in memory of her father, Philip J. Goodhart

GIACOLETTI, Alberto. Swiss, born 1901

Chariot. (1950.) Bronze, 57" high. Purchase Fund

GOURGUE, Enguérand. Haitian, born 1930.

Magic Table. (1947.) Oil on cardboard, 17 x 20 3/4".
Inter-American Fund

HARE, David. American, born 1917.

Crab. (1951.) Welded bronze, 23 1/4" high. Purchase Fund

KELLY, Leon. American, born 1901.

The Prince Visits the Bird Seller. 1949. Pencil, 25 5/8 x 19 5/8".
Katharine Cornell Fund

KLEE, Paul. Swiss, 1879-1940.

Laughing Gothic (Lachende Gotik). 1915. Watercolor, 10 1/4 x 5 3/8".
Purchase Fund

Houses Drawn by Oxen, Ox Speared by a Lantern, Viaduct (Häuser von Ochsen gezogen, Ochse laternengespiessst, Strassenüberführung). 1916. Pen and india ink, 6 x 8 1/2". A. Conger Goodyear Fund

Scherzo with Thirteen (Das Scherzo mit der Dreizehn). 1922. Watercolor, 8 3/4 x 11 7/8". Purchase Fund

Girl with Doll Carriage (Mädchen mit Puppenwagen). 1923. Watercolor, 15 3/8 x 8 3/8". Purchase Fund

A Balance-Capriccio (Ein Gleichgewicht-Capriccio). 1923. Pen and india ink, 9 x 12 1/8". A. Conger Goodyear Fund

The Crooked Mouth and the Light Green Eyes of Mrs. B. 1925. Pen, brush and india ink, 6 1/2 x 4 1/4". A. Conger Goodyear Fund

Three Fruits. (Drei Früchte). 1927. Pen and india ink, 10 1/8 x 7 1/2".
A. Conger Goodyear Fund

Lady Apart (Dame abseits). 1940. Brush and india ink, 16 3/8 x 11 5/8".
A. Conger Goodyear Fund

KLINE, Franz. American, born 1910

Chief. 1950. Oil on canvas, 58 3/8 x 73 1/2". Gift of Mr. and Mrs.
David M. Solinger

KOKOSCHKA, Oscar. Austrian-Czech, born 1886.

Hugo Erfurth. (c. 1920?) Crayon, 22 1/8 x 19 3/8". Purchase Fund

KUPKA, Frank. French, born Czechoslovakia 1871.

Red and Blue Disks. 1911-12. Oil on canvas, 39 3/8 x 28 3/4". Purchase Fund

LIPCHITZ, Jacques. French, born Lithuania 1891.

Man with a Guitar. 1915. Stone, 38 1/4" high. Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund
(by exchange)

MAGRITTE, René. Belgian, born 1898.

Empire of Light, II. 1950. Oil on canvas, 31 x 39". Gift of
Mr. and Mrs. John de Menil

MARCKS, Gerhard. German, born 1889.

Amazon. (1949-50.) Bronze, 26" high. Gift of Curt Valentin

MERRILD, Knud. American, born Denmark 1894.

Chain Reaction. 1947. Oil on canvas, 17 1/2 x 13 1/2". Gift of
Alexander M. Bing

PANNAGGI, Ivo. Italian, born 1901.

My Mother Was Reading the Newspaper. 1919. Oil on canvas, 11 1/8 x 10 1/4".
Gift of Mario da Silva

PICASSO, Pablo. Spanish, born 1881.

Flower Girl. Study for "Composition, Peasants and Oxen" in the Barnes
Foundation, Merion, Pa. (1906.) Pen and ink, 24 7/8 x 19". Gift of
Mrs. Stanley B. Resor

Man's Head. Study for "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon." (1907.) Watercolor,
23 3/4 x 18 1/2". Purchase Fund

Portrait of Ricciotto Canudo. 1918. Pencil, 14 x 10 3/8". Acquired
through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

Sleeping Peasants. 1919. Gouache, 12 1/4 x 19 1/4". Mrs. John D.
Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund

PICKENS, Alton. American, born 1917.

Carnival. 1949. Oil on canvas, 54 5/8 x 40 3/8". Gift of Lincoln Kirstein

PIPER, John. British, born 1903.

Cwn Tryfan Rock. (1950.) Oil on canvas, 25 1/8 x 30". Purchase Fund

End of the Glyder Mountain. (1950.) Gouache, 22 5/8 x 27 5/8". Gift of
Curt Valentin

REYNAL, Jeanne. American, born 1903.

A Good Circular God. (1950.) Mosaic, 37 x 24 3/8". Katharine Cornell
Fund

ROUAULT, Georges. French, born 1871.

Circus Trainer. 1915. Gouache and crayon, 15 5/8 x 10 3/8". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Rübel

RUSSELL, Morgan. American, born 1886.

Synchromy. (1913?) Oil on canvas, 14 1/2 x 10 5/8". Mrs. Wendell T. Bush Fund

Synchromy No. 3: Color Counterpoint. (1913.) Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, 10 1/4 x 11 7/8". Given anonymously

SHAHN, Ben. American, born 1898.

"A Good Man Is Hard to Find". (1948.) Gouache, 96 x 62". Gift of the artist

SIGNAC, Paul. French, 1863-1935.

Italian Landscape (Albenga). (c. 1896.) Watercolor, 4 3/8 x 7 1/2". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

Italian Landscape. (c. 1896.) Watercolor, 5 3/8 x 6 1/2". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

Arles. (1904.) Watercolor, 16 x 10 1/2". Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

TCHELITCHEW, Pavel. American, born Russia 1898.

Head. 1950. Colored pencil, 18 7/8 x 12 1/2". Purchase Fund

VIVIN, Louis. French, 1861-1936.

The Wedding. (c. 1925.) Oil on canvas, 18 1/4 x 21 5/8". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Rübel

WEBER, Max. American, born Russia 1881.

Two Brooding Figures. 1911. Oil on cardboard, 12 1/8 x 17 1/8". Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller. *Study for the Museum's the Geranium*