

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

No. 43
FOR RELEASE:
Tuesday, May 11, 1965
PRESS PREVIEW:
Monday, May 10, 1965
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

AMERICAN COLLAGES, an exhibition from The Museum of Modern Art's special program of traveling exhibitions, will interrupt its current tour and be shown at the Museum from May 11 through July 25. Twice as many exhibitions are circulated in the United States and Canada by the Museum's Department of Circulating Exhibitions as are shown yearly at the Museum in New York. Last year the exhibitions were seen in 139 communities. The same department, in charge of the Museum's foreign program of Circulating Exhibitions sponsored by the International Council of the Museum, has prepared 75 exhibitions seen in 65 countries.

The works in the collage show, dating from 1950 to the present, deal with a medium which has grown in importance only during the last fifty years. The term "collage," from the French for pasting or paper-hanging, has been broadly interpreted as a technique of cutting and pasting various materials which are sometimes combined with drawing, watercolor or oil.

The exhibition includes the work of some of the foremost makers of collage in this country -- Robert Motherwell, Esteban Vicente, Conrad Marca-Relli and Joseph Cornell - as well as other artists who have broadened the medium.

Kynaston McShine, who directed the exhibition, writes, "[Collage] has been a means of creative liberation, leading us to recognize not only the beauty of ephemera but also that of texture and spatial effects different from those of painting and sculpture. It has added much to what we accept as art -- severe and formal juxtapositions of everyday scraps of paper as well as arrangements of pristine materials seemingly arrived at by accident or chance."

The freedom of their own painting styles is found in the collages of Motherwell and Alfred Leslie and in the sensuous abstract arrangements of Esteban Vicente. The informality of abstract expressionism is also felt in the work of Angelo Ippolito, who makes his pictures from torn pages of the airmail edition of the

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London Times, and Gene Hedge, whose highly textured compositions are made from insulating material. Restrained figurative compositions of cut and pasted colored paper, on the other hand, reflect Alex Katz' painting style, which is at once straightforward and witty.

The poetry of juxtaposed images is seen in the work of Joseph Cornell, whose two-dimensional works show the same magic as the unique three-dimensional boxes which have made him one of the most individual American artists working in assembled art. The collages of Conrad Marca-Relli show a unique movement of the edges rather than of surfaces, of cut-out, overlapping pieces of paper or plastic; his collages become intricate puzzles in compressed space.

Robert Goodnough, Jess, Nicholas Krushenick, Ann Ryan, and Charmion von Wiegand are also represented.

AMERICAN COLLAGES is one of 36 exhibitions now circulating in the United States and Canada. In 1931, just two years after its founding, the Museum sent out its first traveling show. Two years later, the Museum had organized the Department of Circulating Exhibitions concerned solely with the preparation of exhibitions for travel throughout this country.

The motivating force behind the program has been the Museum's desire to serve centers outside the New York area. As a major institution working exclusively in the field of modern art, the Museum has a special educational responsibility. The Circulating Exhibitions Department has, therefore, tried to provide material of high quality in all the media with which the Museum is concerned: painting and sculpture as well as architecture and design, drawings and prints, and photography.

Along with greater public demand for comprehensive exhibitions, the needs of smaller institutions, particularly colleges and universities has also grown over the years. To meet these needs the Circulating Exhibitions program has increasingly emphasized the preparation of exhibitions for smaller museums, colleges and universities and the communities they serve, making the shows available on a below-cost basis. In such cases, rental fees cover part, but not all, of the costs of assembling, preparing packing and insuring the exhibitions. The Museum assigns a subsidy (more)

to bridge the gap between the costs of exhibition and the income from rental fees.

During the past 32 years, the Museum has developed special techniques for packing and shipping, installation and presentation of traveling exhibitions, setting precedents for these procedures for other institutions all over the world. A staff of 20, headed by Waldo Rasmussen, Executive Director of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, is responsible for all domestic circulating shows as well as those distributed here and abroad under the auspices of the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Lynn Traiger, Assistant Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.