

The Museum of Modern Art

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

No. 99

FOR RELEASE:

Friday, September 17, 1965

PRESS PREVIEW:

Thursday, September 16, 1965

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

KAY SAGE TANGUY BEQUEST SHOWN AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Thirty-six works of art selected from a group of nearly 100 bequeathed in 1963 to The Museum of Modern Art at 11 West 53 Street, New York, by the American painter, Kay Sage Tanguy, will be on exhibition in the Museum's Recent Acquisitions Gallery from September 17 through November 28. In addition, several works previously given by Mrs. Tanguy will be shown, along with her own painting, "Hyphen," purchased by the Museum in 1955. The exhibition was directed by Miss Sara Mazo, Assistant Curator of the Museum Collections.

In addition to works of art from her own collection, Kay Sage Tanguy bequeathed a generous sum of money to the Museum for the purchase of contemporary art. This is the largest unrestricted purchase fund that the Museum has ever received.

Like many other artists, Kay Sage was an enthusiastic collector. She and her husband, Yves Tanguy, acquired the work of their friends and colleagues in Europe in the 1930s and they were chiefly of Surrealist persuasion. Later the work of friends in America was added. The present exhibition contains paintings by Paul Delvaux, Max Ernst, Jean Hélion, René Magritte, Wolfgang Paalen, as well as Yves Tanguy; collages and assemblages by André Breton, Joan Miró and Kay Sage; a sculpture by Alexander Calder; and drawings by Delvaux, Frederick Kiesler, André Masson and Tanguy.

One of Kay Sage Tanguy's favorite paintings was the Magritte "Portrait" of 1935, a famous work by the Belgian artist which she gave to the Museum in 1956. This painting had been lent by its previous owner to the Museum's exhibition Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism in 1936. Two other Belgian works are included, the Delvaux oil of 1938, "The Encounter," and his large, highly-finished drawing done in 1947.

(more)

Tanguy's "The Hunted Sky" of 1951 was first shown in the Museum's Tanguy exhibition held in the year of his death, 1955. Of this painting James Thrall Soby wrote: "Tanguy...saw parts of Arizona and, like his colleague, Max Ernst, was startled by the geological phenomena of the American West, which both visited soon after their arrival here in 1939... 'The Hunted Sky' assembles stony forms in mannequin-like piles, their relative uniformity of coloring relieved by stark white objects, like bits of paper blowing or settling in the arid, desert air."

André Breton's "Poem-Object" of 1941 was dedicated to Kay Sage Tanguy. The poem is an integral part of the object, which is an assemblage, and is inscribed in paint on the background: "ces terrains vagues/ où j'erre/ vaincu par l'ombre/ et la lune/ accrochée à la maison de mon coeur" ("these wastelands/ where I wander/ overcome by the darkness/ and the moon/ hanging in the house of my heart"). In a recent letter the artist explains that this object illustrates a dramatic episode in his own life, and that the "house of my heart" is to be understood as an astrological term.

In the untitled collage of 1933 by Miró, a charcoal drawing links three post-cards and various other pictures pasted on a large sheet of green paper. Calder's stabile-mobile sculpture of brightly painted aluminum is small but characteristic, as are the paintings by Ernst, Héliou and Paalen dating from the 1930s. Kay Sage's collage is one of a group of objects she made in her last years; it was included in the Museum's Art of Assemblage exhibition in 1961, as was the Breton "Poem-Object."

The Kay Sage Tanguy Bequest is rich in drawings, particularly those of Tanguy who is represented by 72 items, only 19 of which could be shown in the present exhibition. William S. Lieberman, Curator of Drawings and Prints at the Museum, says:

"The drawings in the Bequest are of special interest for two reasons. First, they include works by other artists which Kay and Yves Tanguy collected for their own enjoyment, drawings by Delvaux, Kiesler and Masson. Second, those by Tanguy himself offer as a group a unique opportunity to study in depth his own, remarkably

(more)

unhesitant draughtmanship, from the humorously collaborative 'cadavre exquis' of 1934 to delicately refined constructions drawn in 1949 and 1953.

"Most of the 19 drawings selected for exhibition belong to Tanguy's last years in the United States. None are preparatory studies for major works in oil or gouache. They articulate, sometimes tentatively and always in simple outline, the disquietly amorphic shapes which, modelled, contoured and grouped together, become the silent sculpture which fills the haunting vistas of his painting.

"Several of the drawings were conceived in series, and the Bequest includes a complete sequence of 22 such drawings, done in 1942, in different colored inks on different colored sheets of uniform size.

"The largest drawing by Tanguy is one of his last as well as perhaps his best known. Drawn in 1953, it was reproduced by James Thrall Soby in his monograph Yves Tanguy published by the Museum in 1955."

Katherine Linn Sage was born in 1898 in Albany, New York, daughter of Henry Manning Sage, a New York State senator. As a small child she was taken to Italy, where she lived, except for the years of World War I, until 1937. She lived in Paris from 1937 to 1939 and then returned to the United States. Yves Tanguy came here shortly after and they were married the following year, eventually settling in a 19th century farmhouse in Woodbury, Connecticut. Tanguy died there in 1955 and Kay Sage in 1963.

As a painter Kay Sage was self-taught. She first exhibited her paintings at the Surindépendants in Paris in 1938, although she had had a small show in 1936 in Milan. From 1940 to 1961 she held nine one-man shows in New York, as well as one-man exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Art and Hartford's Wadsworth Atheneum. She took part in many national and international exhibitions both here and abroad. Her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan and Whitney Museums and The Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco; Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

(more)

204

When Kay Sage returned to America in 1939 she had already planned with the approval of Yvon Delbos, French Minister of Education, a series of one-man shows in New York for artists working in Paris. Contributions and proceeds from sales were to be used to assist artists in France who were involved in the crisis of World War II. Yves Tanguy came to this country with the authorization of the French Government to inaugurate this series of exhibitions with his first one-man show in New York. Jean Héliou's was the second show of this series.

A memorial exhibition of Kay Sage's paintings and drawings will be held at the Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, Connecticut, this year. It will be shown thereafter at the Albany Institute of History and Art, the Lyman Allyn Museum, New London, and at Williams and Vassar Colleges.

James Thrall Soby, Chairman of the Museum's Committee on the Museum Collections, writes:

"In the house at Woodbury, Connecticut, which Yves and Kay Tanguy bought toward the end of World War II, there were many works of art. A few were by them but most were by friends and colleagues, chiefly of surrealist persuasion... It delighted both Tanguys to remember that the house had once been the village poorhouse. They had painted it white throughout the interior, yellow outside, and there were two handsome barns in back which they used as studios.... It was apparent that Kay Tanguy was the collector in the family. At the very end of her life she talked like an excited schoolgirl about some small pre-Columbian sculptures she had bought in New York. She constantly acquired rare books and had them elaborately bound.... Of all the works here shown Kay preferred the Magritte 'Portrait'.... She liked almost equally the Miró, the Ernst, Breton's 'Poem-Object,' the two works by Delvaux and - naturally - everything Yves had painted."

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

The Museum of Modern Art

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

RECENT ACQUISITIONS: The Kay Sage Tanguy Bequest

Exhibition: September 16 - November 28, 1965

C H E C K L I S T

Unless enclosed in parentheses dates appear on the works themselves. In dimensions height precedes width; a third dimension, depth, is given for sculpture.

André BRETON. French, born 1896.

Poem-Object. 1941. Assemblage mounted on drawing board: carved wood bust of man, oil lantern, framed photograph, toy boxing gloves, black paper, 18 x 21 x 4 3/8". Inscribed in gouache and oil, "ces terrains vagues, où j'erre, vaincu par l'ombre, et la lune, accrochée à la maison de mon coeur." 197.63.

"Cadavre Exquis" (composite drawing) by Victor Brauner, André Breton, Jacques Hérold and Yves Tanguy.

Figure. 1934. Pencil, 10 1/8 x 6 1/2". 410.63.

Alexander CALDER. American, born 1898.

Untitled. ^{early 1940s} 19. Stabile-mobile of painted aluminum, 14 5/8 x 9 x 10 7/8". 1122.64.

Paul DELVAUX. Belgian, born 1897.

The Encounter. 1938. Oil on canvas, 35 5/8 x 47 1/2". 326.63.

Composition. 1947. Watercolor, wash, pen and ink, 23 1/2 x 30 7/8". 342.63.

Max ERNST. French, born Germany 1891. To France 1922; in U.S.A. 1941-50.

Conch Shells. (c.1929) Ripolin enamel on paper, 9 7/8 x 14 1/4". 1124.64.

Jean HÉLION. French, born 1904.

Composition. (1938) Oil on canvas, 13 1/8 x 16". 1126.64.

(more)

Frederick KIESLER. American, born Vienna 1892. To U.S.A. 1926.

Hommage à Tanguy -- Trois-plan-plan(t). 1947. Gouache, wash, brush, pen and ink, 14 3/4 x 19 7/8". 57.65.

The Moon-Eye. 1947. Watercolor, pen and ink, 10 x 13 1/4". 58.65.

René MAGRITTE. Belgian, born 1898.

Portrait. (1935) Oil on canvas, 28 7/8 x 19 7/8". Gift of Kay Sage Tanguy, 1956. 574.56.

André MASSON. French, born 1896.

Caribbean Landscape. 1941. Pen and ink, 20 5/8 x 26 1/8". Gift of Kay Sage Tanguy, 1962. 147.62.

Joan MIRÓ. Spanish, born 1893. Worked in Paris.

Untitled. 1933. Collage and charcoal drawing on green paper with three postcards, sandpaper and halftone reproductions, 42 1/2 x 28 3/8". 328.63.

Wolfgang PAALEN. Austrian, 1905-1959. Worked in Paris and Mexico.

Study for Totem Landscape of My Childhood. 1937. Oil on canvas, 21 7/8 x 15 1/8". 1131.64.

Kay SAGE. American, 1898-1963.

Hyphen. 1954. Oil on canvas, 30 x 20". Purchase, 1955. 343.55.

The Great Impossible. 1961. Watercolor, ink and collage of cut paper and convex lenses, 12 5/8 x 9 3/8". 1132.64.

Yves TANGUY. American, born France. 1900-1955. To U.S.A. 1939.

La Grande Mue. (1942) Gouache and pasted paper, 11 1/2 x 8 3/4". 272.63.

The Hunted Sky. 1951. Oil on canvas, 39 1/8 x 32 3/8". 339.63.

DRAWINGS

Untitled. 1934. Pen and ink, 12 7/8 x 8 5/8". 422.63.

Untitled. 1935. Pen and ink, 12 1/2 x 9 1/2". 423.63.

Untitled. 1936. Pen and ink, 12 3/4 x 9 5/8". 424.63.

Untitled. (c.1938) Colored crayons and pencil, 12 x 9 1/8". 432.63.

(more)

- Untitled. 1939. Pen and ink, 12 3/8 x 9 1/8". 434.63.
- Untitled. 1939. Pen and ink, 12 3/8 x 9". 437.63.
- Untitled. 1942. Pen and black ink on green paper, 12 1/2 x 9 1/4". 278.63.4.
- Untitled. 1942. Pen and black ink on blue paper, 12 1/2 x 9 1/4". 278.63.6.
- Untitled. 1942. Pen and white ink on purple paper, 12 1/2 x 9 1/2". 278.63.8.
- Untitled. 1942. Pen and green and red ink on buff paper, 12 3/8 x 9 1/2". 278.63.9.
- Untitled. 1942. Pen and red ink on olive paper, 12 3/8 x 9 3/8". 278.63.21.

Note: the five drawings above are from a sequence of 22 done in 1942.

- Untitled. 1947. Pen and ink, 17 1/2 x 11 3/8". 453.63.
- Untitled. 1947. Pen and ink, 11 1/4 x 7 5/8". 454.63.
- Untitled. (c.1949) Pen and ink, 20 x 14 3/4". 456.63.
- Untitled. (c.1949) Pen and ink, 19 7/8 x 14 3/4". 457.63.
- Untitled. 1949. Watercolor, pencil, pen and ink, 19 7/8 x 14 3/4". 61.65.
- Untitled. n.d. Pen and ink, 17 x 14". 458.63.
- Untitled. n.d. Pencil, 8 1/4 x 10 5/8". 465.63.
- Untitled. 1953. Pen and ink, 22 1/4 x 28 1/8". Gift of Kay Sage Tanguy. 136.61.

* * * * *