

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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## LARGE EXHIBITION OF FRENCH PAINTINGS

### FROM FAUVE PERIOD TO GO ON VIEW

The first comprehensive exhibition in this country of work by painters of the fauve period (1898-1908) will be on view on the third floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from October 8 through January 4. After the New York showing the exhibition will travel to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Art Gallery of Toronto. This influential movement in modern art, which involved so many of the finest painters of the 20th century, will be represented in the show by 85 paintings, 30 watercolors and 45 drawings by such well-known artists as Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck, van Dongen, Dufy, Braque, Friesz and others. Their works have been gathered together from museums and private collections here and abroad, as well as from the artists themselves. Many have not previously been shown in this country.

The exhibition has been organized for the Museum by John Rewald, author of numerous books on French art of the 19th and 20th centuries. Mr. Rewald has also written the catalog to accompany the show. Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, Director of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture, is installing the exhibition.

The fauve movement heralded the art of the 20th century. It emerged from the efforts of various painters, most of them still alive, who worked in more or less close communion. Perhaps their most startling innovation was their arbitrary brilliant unrealistic color — pinks, vermilions, emerald greens, canary yellows — applied in flat areas often bounded by arabesques of heavy lines, a procedure which shocked their radical predecessors as much as it did the public. Derain compared their recklessly exuberant color to sticks of dynamite.

Their predecessors, Cézanne, Seurat and Gauguin — the men who influenced the fauves — had not yet achieved recognition at the turn of the century. The fauves at first had to struggle bitterly for survival. They admired Signac and Cross for their bright palette and rigorous design. But they were most deeply affected by van Gogh's emotional use of pure color and vivid brush stroke, and by Cézanne's expressions

of spatial relations through color alone. An introductory room in the exhibition shows examples of the work of these predecessors.

The exhibition of the fauves that became historic was the Salon d'Automne of 1905, after which they were dubbed Wild Beasts by the bewildered critics. Matisse, undoubted leader of the movement and active in enlisting new adherents, was joined in this by Derain and Vlaminck among others. The "eccentricity" of the fauve painters produced the adverse reactions that have become so familiar in all modern movements. Undismayed with the attack which they suffered, the fauves continued in their conviction. When their dealer was discouraged by the lack of sales of their work, Dufy wrote: "Be convinced that you have in Matisse, Vlaminck, Derain, Friesz and several others the men of tomorrow and even of thereafter....Compare the intensity of life, of thought in the paintings of these people with the quality of boredom, of uselessness displayed in most other things!"

Though by 1908, 3 years after its first public appearance, fauvism had ended, these men had proclaimed the all-embracing power of color, and had paved the way for an abstract art to follow.

Matisse summed up, in 1908, what he had derived from the fauvist movement: "An artist must recognize that when he uses his reason, his picture is an artifice, and that when he paints, he must feel that he is copying nature — and even when he consciously departs from nature, he must do it with the conviction that it is only the better to interpret her."

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AN ADDRESS on Les Fauves will be given in the Museum Auditorium by John Rewald who will accompany his lecture with slides.

October 15, 8:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at the Museum, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19.

Members \$1.80  
Non-members \$2.40