

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

157
FOR RELEASE:

Sunday, June 24, 1956

No. 66

IMPORTANT PAINTING BY RENOIR GIVEN TO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The first major painting by Auguste Renoir to enter the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art has been placed on exhibition on the second floor of the Museum on June 24. The Renoir, a magnificent Reclining Nude, is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rosenberg and is one of the most valuable works of art ever offered to the Museum.

This Renoir Reclining Nude is a renowned painting which has been reproduced many times in books and catalogues. It was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg from Renoir's dealer, Ambroise Vollard, in 1918 (the year before Renoir died) and has remained in their private collection since that time. During the Second World War, however, it was confiscated in Paris by the Nazis and selected for the collection of Hermann Goering. Later, in 1946, it was shown at the Orangerie Museum in Paris in an exhibition featuring masterpieces from private collections in France which had been recovered from Germany after the war.

This Renoir is in the great tradition of the classical nude at ease in a landscape or interior, as seen in the work of Raphael, Giorgione, Titian, Goya, Ingres and other masters. Painted in 1902, about a year before Renoir was crippled by arthritis, the Nude is a transitional work between the canvases of the 1890's and his more robust late style. There is great vigor in the contour of the figure as opposed to the looser and bolder tonal control of the late paintings. In this canvas Renoir seems to have carried over some of the discipline in drawing which he acquired in the 1880's, yet he is interested again in color for its own sake. The color is subtle, the flesh tones pearly, almost translucent, and there is exceptional grandeur in the relaxed pose of the figure.

A later version of this Reclining Nude, believed to date from about 1910, exists in the collection of the Barnes Foundation. The pose is similar, the canvases are of the same dimensions, but the Barnes painting is less generalized and the color more saturated.

The Museum's Renoir is on view in Gallery 1 on the second floor, along with works by Degas, Cézanne, van Gogh, Seurat and Gauguin. Renoir's great sculpture, the Washerwoman, is exhibited in the Museum's Sculpture Garden.

For further information or photographs contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. Circle 5-8900