

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 3-8900

No. 75

FOR RELEASE

September 14, 1956

POST-IMPRESSIONISM From Van Gogh to Gauguin by John Rewald. 600 pages, 520 plates, 47 in color. To be published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York on September 14 and distributed by Simon and Schuster. Price: \$15.00.

POST-IMPRESSIONISM From Van Gogh to Gauguin by the well known art historian, John Rewald, will be published by the Museum of Modern Art on September 14. This major Museum publication will be on sale at the Museum, 11 West 53 Street, New York City and distributed by Simon and Schuster to bookstores throughout the country. In 600 pages, containing 520 plates including 47 in color, Mr. Rewald traces the exciting and turbulent period from 1886, when van Gogh arrived in Paris, until 1893, when Gauguin returned from his first trip to Tahiti. During these seven years, van Gogh and Gauguin, along with other painters as well as the Symbolist poets and writers, struggled to break with the Impressionist tradition and to establish the right of artists to express their inner feelings both in style and subject without regard for objective realism. Thus they helped prepare the way for the development of 20th century art.

Drawing extensively upon the artists' letters and contemporary reviews and accounts, Mr. Rewald recreates the struggles, the arguments, the high hopes and bitter despair as van Gogh, his friends Gauguin and Bernard and others worked in Paris, in Brittany and Provence, painting pictures that were to become world famous but which went unshown, unsold, unrecognized.

Van Gogh is a central figure in the book because, as Mr. Rewald notes in his introduction, although he hardly rated obituary notices following his tragic suicide in 1890, the life of this great artist has since been surrounded by fiction, confusion and misinterpretation so that the record needs to be straightened and clarified. His intense relationship with Gauguin at Arles which ended in tragedy, his days at St. Remy, the asylum to which he voluntarily committed himself and where he painted the Starry Night, his brief return to Paris and the last weeks in Auvers, where, afraid that he would never be freed from recurring attacks, he killed himself--- these events are recounted by Mr. Rewald as they actually happened according to the artist's voluminous correspondence with his brother, Theo, his lifelong friend and supporter, and other first hand accounts and documents.

Seurat and his friends and theories are treated thoroughly with accounts of the incredible abuse heaped on them by the press and the public. The literary Symbolist movement from Mallarmé to Redon, the Académie Julian, crowded with students

more.....

from many lands, the Synthesists and the offshoots and eddies that contributed to the complex development of Post-Impressionist painting are all vividly and lucidly described.

The book concludes with a moving account of Gauguin's first trip, financed by auctioning his paintings, to Tahiti where he found peace but also bitterness, new vigour but also sickness.

As Mr. Rewald points out in his introduction, the word post-impressionism is not a very precise term, though it is certainly a convenient one. In a broad sense it covers the period from about 1886, when the impressionists held their last and incomplete exhibition at which the neo-impressionists appeared for the first time, until some twenty years later, when cubism was born and with it a completely new era which ushered in what we may call contemporary art. A second volume devoted to the post-impressionist period, now in preparation, will therefore cover not only those men or movements which, though contemporary with van Gogh and Seurat, were neglected in the present study, but also those who emerged after their death, such as the Fauves and the young Picasso, as well as Gauguin during his second and last trip to Tahiti.

In addition to reproductions of hundreds of works of art created during this period which were later to become world famous, Mr. Rewald has also reproduced many less familiar works. In many cases he has included comments by the artists on their paintings.

A selected bibliography of more than 1,200 references, a chronological chart relating important events in the lives of nine artists and a map of France locating the places in which they worked, lived and painted are also included.

John Rewald, author of the widely acclaimed HISTORY OF IMPRESSIONISM (Museum of Modern Art, 1946) has been associated with the Museum of Modern Art since 1943. He is the author of definitive works on Gauguin, Maillol, Seurat, Cézanne and Bonnard. Born in Germany in 1912 and educated at the Universities of Hamburg and Frankfurt, he received his doctorate from the Sorbonne in 1936. He came to this country in 1941 and now lives in New York. In 1954 he was awarded the Legion of Honor by the French government.