

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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April 27, 1960 (Parke-Bernet Galleries)*

Fifty modern paintings and sculptures, including works by Cézanne, Braque and Picasso donated by well known private collectors, individual artists and American and European dealers, were offered this evening at a public auction at the Parke-Bernet Galleries for the benefit of the Museum of Modern Art's 30th Anniversary Fund. Prior to the auction the paintings were on public view at Parke-Bernet from April 23 through April 27.

Through a closed-circuit coast-to-coast TV network provided by Theatre Network Television, Inc. (TNT) buyers in Chicago, Dallas and Los Angeles participated in the bidding along with a capacity audience in New York City. This was the first art auction ever conducted on a closed-circuit TV network.

The outstanding painting in the auction was considered a Cézanne still-life, Apples (1879-82), donated by William A. M. Burden, United States Ambassador to Belgium. Other notable works included: Composition: The Violin, a 1913 cubist oil by Georges Braque donated by New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller; Deux Femmes, a classic period pastel by Picasso donated by the Thannhauser Foundation, Inc., and Femme au Chemise Bleu, a 1906 oil by Renoir donated by Hillman Periodicals, Inc. Birds, a still-life painted by Cézanne in 1873 was given for the auction by Wildenstein and Co., Inc. A 1930 composition by Braque, Profiles, was from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss. Grand Portrait: Profil de Femme, a 1949 oil by Picasso, was donated by Mrs. Albert D. Lasker.

Other highlights of the sale included a brilliant early Matisse given by Sam Salz, a Gris still-life from the collection of Larry Aldrich and a 1932 Léger which had never before been exhibited or reproduced.

Six European artists contributed works from their own collections. Miro donated an abstract oil, dated 1934, also never shown or reproduced which he had been keeping for himself. Henry Moore sent a bronze, 18 1/2 by 42 inches, called Three Motives Against a Wall. Dubuffet donated a large, richly surfaced collage of aluminum foil tinted with oil, on masonite, one of a series called "Matériologies" on which he is currently engaged.

Jean (Hans) Arp contributed a bronze sculpture, Self Absorbed, Marino Marini had donated a sculpture called Small Miracle. Giacometti sent an elongated bronze figure of a girl.

Among important postwar paintings from Paris were large impressive canvases by Mathieu, Hartung, Soulages and Tal Coat. The Chilean artist, Matta, who has been working in Europe, was represented by a 1955 oil, the Mexican artist Tamayo by

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a 1947 painting Constelacion. An important early Dubuffet, a large 1944 oil from his Jazz series, had been donated by Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Matisse.

Two works by Jawlensky, a 1930 Kandinsky, and a Klee watercolor, pen and ink were also included. A Maillol bronze, of which the Museum of Modern Art owns a cast, had been donated by Fine Arts Associates. David Rockefeller had given a Chagall, Acrobat on a White Horse.

Watercolors in the exhibition and sale included Une Horrible Douleur by Picabia, dated 1914, Red House, executed by Emile Nolde about 1920, and Bathers, St. Malo (1909) by the American artist Maurice Prendergast. Other American paintings were a figure study by Pascin, a romantic landscape by Eilshemius and a sensitive abstract composition by Arshile Gorky.

Admission to the sale, which started at 8:30 EDT, was by card only for the main salesroom and for the two TV rooms being set up at Parke-Bernet. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, President of the Museum, spoke over the closed-circuit network and welcomed an audience of about 3,500 people in Dallas, Los Angeles and Chicago as well as a capacity audience in New York.

In Los Angeles the sale was conducted at the Los Angeles County Museum, in Chicago at the Arts Club of Chicago, and in Dallas, where it was under the sponsorship of the Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts, it was held in the Preston Royal Theater.

Giant television screens, hundreds of feet square, permitted the audiences in each of these cities to bid. Assistant auctioneers sent from the Parke-Bernet Galleries called the bids in each salesroom. Buyers in all four cities heard all the auctioneers. Chief Auctioneer Louis J. Marion, who conducted the sale in Parke-Bernet's main salesroom in New York, cleared with each city before he dropped the hammer.

A special new audio transmission system was conceived and developed by TNT to permit a higher standard of inter-city voice clarity and to enable auctioneers in each city to be heard at all times without preliminary switching.

The Museum of Modern Art's 30th Anniversary Fund, which the sale benefits was announced last November. It aims at \$25,000,000 for endowment, program and new buildings. More than \$10,000,000 has been contributed so far.

The auction had been arranged by a special committee headed by Mrs. Louise R. Smith and Mrs. E. Powis Jones. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections, selected the works in the auction from those offered to the Museum for the sale.

Nathan L. Halpern, President of TNT, developed the plan for this first national closed-circuit art auction after providing local art auction closed-circuit overflow facilities at the Parke-Bernet Galleries on several occasions.

Additional material available from Mary Vandergrift, Parke-Bernet Galleries, 980 Madison Avenue, New York City, TR. 9-8300 and Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, CI. 5-8900.