

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

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No. 115

For Release:

Saturday, Oct. 8, 1960

Press Preview:

Friday, Oct. 7, 1960

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A selection of Museum of Modern Art publications, including many famous books now out of print based on pioneering and often controversial exhibitions, best sellers published in many languages and sold around the world, and outstanding examples of fine book design, will be shown in a special exhibition in the Museum's Auditorium Gallery from October 8 through November 27.

In the center of the Gallery is a 6 foot glass kiosk piled with 250 books published by the Museum since its founding in 1929 and through which, under the direction of Monroe Wheeler, it has reached a wider audience than by any other part of its program. It would take a building 70 times as large as the Museum to house all the exhibitions recorded in these books.

Because so many Museum publications make a permanent record of exhibitions for which works of art are gathered from all over the world, the books on display are also a panorama of major Museum shows from the catalog of the first exhibition, Cezanne-Gauguin-Seurat-van Gogh, published in 1929, to Art Nouveau, published this summer.

Other shows recorded in books in the current display include the famous Modern Architecture show of 1932, which introduced this country to modern European architecture; the Machine Art show of 1934 in which ball bearings were shown along with other objects created entirely by machines; Walker Evans Photography show of 1938; African Negro Art published in 1935; Cubism and Abstract Art and Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism, both presented as exhibitions and books in 1936; and Arts of the South Seas, published in 1946 following a major Museum show.

The exhibition, which was installed by George Barrows of the Department of Architecture and Design, includes a sampling of all the types of books on the visual arts published by the Museum: surveys of schools and movements, monographs, introductory series, reference books on the Museum Collections, teaching portfolios and special editions illustrated by contemporary artists, including Alexander Calder, Ben Shahn, Antonio Frasconi and Leonard Baskin. The subjects cover as wide a field as the Museum itself: painting and sculpture, photography, drawing, prints, architecture and design and the film.

Museum books are designed and produced by the Museum's own production department under the management of Frances Pernas. Type is usually hand set and much of the color work is done abroad. Occasionally designers such as Leo Lionni, Alvin Lustig, and Herbert Matter have been commissioned to design particular books.

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Among well-known authors represented are Museum staff members Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Monroe Wheeler, William S. Lieberman, William Seitz, Peter Selz, Arthur Drexler, Dorothy Miller, Rene d'Harnoncourt, Victor D'Amico and Richard Griffith. Other well-known scholars, some of whom are former staff members, include James Johnson Sweeney, Philip C. Johnson, John Rewald, Lincoln Kirstein, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Beaumont Newhall, Henry R. Hope, John MacAndrew, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. and James Thrall Soby. T. S. Eliot, Herbert Read and Aldous Huxley are among those who have provided introductory statements for some of the books.

Changes in the art world are also reflected in the show. Thus the catalogue for the Museum's first Matisse show, presented when there were only six Matisse paintings in American public museums, was a slim paper-backed book. The definitive work, Matisse: His Art and His Public, by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., published in 1951, is a 592 page volume with 500 plates, and lists 110 paintings in American public museums.

About 8 new books are published by the Museum each year. All time best seller is What is Modern Painting? by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (published in 1943, reprinted 6 times) which has sold over 120,000 copies and been published in 4 languages. Other foreign editions published by the Museum include: Brazil Builds, by Philip Goodwin, Masters of Modern Art, edited by Alfred Barr, Jr., and Miro, by James Thrall Soby.

As an educational publisher the Museum's activities are analogous to a University Press. Many books have been important firsts in art research scholarship, and many are used as texts in schools and colleges.

Currently the Museum has a list of 83 books in print. They are distributed throughout the world by Doubleday and Company and sold in the Museum's lobby.

For many years Museum members have received from 2 to 8 books a year free as a membership privilege. This book club operation has enabled the Museum to print first editions of 30,000 to 40,000 for many books, thus lowering the unit costs. Prices range from 25 cents to \$16.50.

According to Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications, the demand for Museum publications on particular subjects within its competence is far greater than can be met with its present resources. For this reason, increased subsidy for the Publications Program is one of the goals of the Museum's 30th Anniversary Fund, for which contributions are earnestly solicited.

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

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK 19

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For Release
November 17, 1960

Monroe Wheeler, Director of the Museum of Modern Art Exhibitions and Publications, at the retrospective show of books published by the Museum during the past thirty years. The exhibition, on view in the Museum's auditorium gallery through November 27, includes many famous books based on pioneering and often controversial exhibitions, best sellers published in many languages and sold around the world and outstanding examples of fine book design. Among the monographs on view is James Thrall Soby's lavishly illustrated study of the Spanish painter, Joan Miro, which is currently offered as a bonus to all those who join the Museum before December 15.

For additional information please contact Nancy Reed, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 St., New York. CH 5-8900.

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