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1970

A special exhibition in honor of the late Mrs. Simon Guggenheim for "the unequalled generosity, devotion and modesty of spirit with which, over 30 years, she supported the Museum Collection" is on view in the Main Hall of The Museum of Modern Art through March 15.

Seven of the 69 works purchased with the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund since <sup>1938</sup>~~1963~~ are on view in the Main Hall: Picasso's Girl Before a Mirror and Three Musicians; Leger's Three Women; Miro's Mural Painting, Dubuffet's Business Prospers; Matisse's Memory of Oceania and Calder's Black Widow. In an adjoining gallery are photographs of all 69 works with labels indicating the location of the actual works in the Museum's second and third floor galleries.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum when Mrs. Guggenheim initiated the annual fund and Director of Museum Collections until his retirement in 1968, has written an appreciative label for the unusual exhibition.

Late in 1937, without the Museum's slightest anticipation, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim visited the Director to ask whether the Museum would accept an important painting to be selected by the Museum for its collection. The astonished Director said yes, and with extraordinary joy, since the Museum's funds for buying works of art during its first eight years had been limited to about \$8500 -- such was the effect of the Depression.

Picasso's Girl Before a Mirror was brought from Paris. Mrs. Guggenheim saw it, purchased it, presented it to the Museum and wrote the following note just before the painting was exhibited, January 24, 1938:

(more)

"As a member of The Museum of Modern Art since its early years, and thus being acquainted with its work and in sympathy with its aims, I have long had the desire to make a contribution to its permanent collection of paintings which would be entirely worthy of what the Museum stands for. Lately, therefore, after considering a number of interesting possibilities, I have purchased the Girl Before a Mirror, by Picasso which I should like to present to the Museum, trusting it will prove an acceptable addition to the present gallery."

At first Mrs. Guggenheim confessed she did not like the Girl Before a Mirror but she studied it often until several years later she candidly changed her mind. No other Trustee spent nearly as much time in the Museum's galleries.

Rousseau's wonderful Sleeping Gypsy was the second painting donated by Mrs. Guggenheim but after 1939 she gave annual funds directly to the Museum; altogether a little more than \$1,500,000.

The Museum will always be indebted to Mrs. Guggenheim not only for her frequently recurring gifts but for her request that the fund in her name be spent only for works of excellence and permanent value.

The Museum of Modern Art owes profound gratitude to Mrs. Guggenheim for the unequalled generosity, devotion and modesty of spirit with which, over thirty years, she supported the Museum Collection. We shall miss her deeply.

Mrs. Guggenheim died February 14. She had been a Trustee of the Museum since 1940 and an Honorary Trustee for life since 1954.

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Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, New York, 10019. (212) 956-7501.