

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

14 WEST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK

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The Museum of Modern Art, 14 West 49 Street, opens to the public today Masters of Popular Painting, an Exhibition of Modern primitives of Europe and America, which will remain on view through June 27. The exhibition will fill all the Museum's galleries and will include about one hundred and seventy paintings by European and American artists. The European section of the exhibition has been organized under the direction of M. Andry-Farcy, Director of the Museum of Grenoble, France. Many of these paintings were shown in the very successful exhibition, Maîtres Populaires de la Réalité, which the Grenoble Museum held in Paris during the World's Fair last summer.

The American section has been assembled by Dorothy C. Miller, Assistant Curator of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art, with Holger Cahill, Director of the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration, and Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum, acting in an advisory capacity. The exhibition is not composed of paintings by anonymous early folk artists. It is, except in two cases, the work of contemporary painters of marked talent, whose freshness and originality have been uninfluenced by schools or teachers. A comprehensive catalog of 172 pages will be published simultaneously with the opening of the exhibition and will contain two reproductions in color and 80 in black and white.

M. Jean Cassou, Associate Curator of the Luxembourg Museum, has written the preface to the section of the catalog relating to the self-taught French painters. The following excerpt from his essay is, however, applicable to all the painters in the exhibition:

"The painters who concern us in this exhibition... never lived like artists; they rarely thought or spoke in terms of art.... They show us how the act of painting can be as simple as breathing...."

Maximilien Gauthier has not only written for the catalog an introduction to the work of these "popular masters of reality" but has contributed biographical essays on each of the French painters shown. In his introduction he writes:

"Like so many of the major artists of the Renaissance... most of these painters, in order to make a living, had to begin

"by working at jobs which, most of the time, had nothing to do with their vocation. But this did not make them mere 'Sunday painters.'

"As Anatole France says, the Universe is only a reflection of our soul. Vivin's dream is his reality. Bombois' realism is a dream of a world more luminous, sharper and stronger than the world we ordinarily see. And Rousseau's America has nothing to do with geography. The Universe is only a reflection. True reality exists within the soul. And the reality which exists in certain simple and miraculous souls is Poetry. That is the whole secret."

The European painters shown are as follows:

- ANDRE BAUCHANT, b. at Châteaurenault, 1873.
CAMILLE BOMBOIS, b. at Venarey-les-Laumes, on the Côte d'Or, 1883.
ADOLF DIETRICH, b. at Berlingen, on the Swiss side of Lake Constance, 1877.
JEAN EVE, b. at Somain in the north of France, 1900.
DOMINIQUE-PAUL PEYRONNET, b. at Talence, near Bordeaux, 1872.
RENE RIMBERT, b. in Paris, 1896.
HENRI ROUSSEAU, b. at Laval, in 1844; d. 1910.
SERAPHINE LOUIS, called Seraphine de Senlis, b. at Assy in the Oise district, 1864; d. 1934.
LOUIS VIVIN, b. in Hadol, a small village near Epinal, 1861; d. 1936.

Holger Cahill has written the introduction to the American section of the catalog. He writes in part:

"It would be a mistake to apply naturalistic and academic standards to the work of these masters of popular art. And yet these artists may be called, as they have been called, 'masters of reality.' So far as realistic effect is concerned they are in harmony with the best contemporary practice. They are devoted to fact as a thing to be known and respected, not necessarily as a thing to be imitated. Surface realism means nothing to these artists. With them realism becomes passion and not mere technique. They have set down what they saw, but, much more, they have set down what they knew and what they felt....

"Folk and popular art is significant for us because, in our fear that contemporary civilization has almost abandoned its form-creating function in favor of the sterile mathematics of machine-form, we are startled and reassured to find this rich creativeness still alive in the unpretentious activities and avocations of the common man. It is significant, too, because in this art we find qualities sadly lacking in the internationalized academicism bequeathed to us by the nineteenth century--an academicism which raised the banner of its anaemic and philistine conception of form as the standard and ideal of universal art."

Most of the biographies of the American artists that appear in the catalog have been written by Dorothy C. Miller. The American artists in the exhibition are:

- EMILE BRANCHARD, b. in New York, of French parents, 1881; d. Feb. 1938.
VINCENT CANADE, b. at Cosenza, Italy, 1879
ROBERT CAUCHON, b. 1915. Lives at La Malbaie, Murray Bay, in the Province of Quebec.

PEDRO CERVANTEZ, b. in Arizona, 1915

CHESTER DALSON, b. in Canada, probably about 1906.

EDWARD HICKS, b. at Attleborough, Bucks County, Penna., 1780;
d. 1849.

THORVALD ARENST HOYER, b. in Copenhagen, 1872.

"PA" HUNT, b. in New York in 1870; d. 1934, Provincetown, Mass.

JOHN KANE, b. in West Calder, near Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1860;
d. 1934 in Pittsburgh, Penna.

LAWRENCE LEBDUSKA, b. in Baltimore, of Bohemian parents, 1894.

JOSEPH PICKETT, b. in New Hope, Penna., 1848; d. 1918.

HORACE PIPPIN, b. in West Chester, Pa., in 1888.

PATRICK J. SULLIVAN, b. at Braddock, Penna., 1894.

Lenders to the Exhibition of Masters of Popular Painting

include the following:

In France:

Grenoble: The Grenoble Museum

Paris: Mme. Jeanne Bucher, Maximilien Gauthier,
Mme. Cécile Gregory, Mme. E. Hostettler,
Wilhelm Uhde.

In the United States:

Chicago: Thorvald Arenst Hoyer

Detroit: Robert H. Tannahill

Newark: The Newark Museum

Newtown, Pa.: Edward N. Barnsley, Miss Cornelia Carle Hicks

New York: Mrs. Emile Branchard, Dr. and Mrs. André
Cournand, Mr. and Mrs. Wendell Davis,
Mrs. Rose Gershwin, Miss Adelaide Milton
de Groot, Mrs. Edith G. Halpert, Mr. and
Mrs. William Averell Harriman, Sidney Janis,
T. Catesby Jones, The Adolph Lewisohn Collec-
tion, Henry R. Luce, Patrick Morgan, Mr. and
Mrs. William S. Paley, Mrs. Charles S. Payson,
Mrs. C. K. Post, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.,
H. Leonard Simmons, E. Weyhe, The American
Folk Art Gallery, Contemporary Arts, Marie
Harriman Gallery, The Valentine Gallery,
The Walker Galleries, The Weyhe Gallery.

Brooklyn: Walter Abell

Great Neck: Max Weber

Penlynn, Pa.: R. Sturgis Ingersoll

Provincetown, Mass.: Peter Hunt

Taos, N. Mex.: Andrew Dasburg

Washington, D. C.: The Federal Art Project of the
Works Progress Administration,
Phillips Memorial Gallery.

West Chester, Pa.: Horace Pippin