

The Museum of Modern Art

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NO. 77

FOR RELEASE:

August 23, 1974

MYTHS AT MOMA

AN EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTED BY READINGS

Gods, Heroes, and Shepherds, an exhibition of 20 prints, 18 illustrated books, and 2 sculptures opens at The Museum of Modern Art on August 23. It will be on view through November 10 in the third floor Sachs Galleries. In conjunction with the exhibition the Museum is sponsoring a special program of daily readings entitled, "Myths Understood."

The prints and illustrated books represent a selection from the Museum's collection of modern works whose themes are drawn from classical Greek and Roman tales and myths, illustrating such works as Homer's L'Odyssée, Virgil's Les Eglogues, and Ovid's Les Metamorphoses. Included are works by Braque, Matisse, Picasso, Maillol and others. Alexandra Schwartz, Curatorial Assistant of Prints and Illustrated Books and director of the exhibition, points out: "Because of the prominence in France of two great traditions-- classicism and book illustration-- the majority of these works were created by artists who lived in France. Their prints reflect a break with academicism and the emergence of a new classical idiom."

There are other works in addition to the illustrations of classical texts. Redon, for example, under the influence of Gustave Moreau and the symbolist writer Mallarmé, used Greek mythology solely as a point of departure. Redon chose neither gods nor heroes to portray, but beasts like the chimera and cyclops which he transformed into haunting and evocative symbols.

Bonnard, in his illustrations for the love story Daphnis et Chloé, closely followed the text with delicate lithographs, while Segonzac in his illustrations to Virgil's Les Géorgiques was inspired by the French countryside where he spent 15 years etching scenes from nature directly on copper. Picasso's prints in the 1930's became highly subjective and full of connotations

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of personal meaning. "Influenced by the ritual of the Spanish bullfight, Picasso transforms the hero into a mythological beast, the minotaur: half man, half bull," notes Alexandra Schwartz. "In the modern tradition, Picasso did not rely on a strict interpretation of this Cretan legend but transformed the myth into a combination of contemporary life and private fantasy."

To enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the exhibition the Museum is featuring a special program, "Myths Understood," consisting of readings and explanations of ancient Greek and Roman tales and legends. The exhibition can be viewed during the readings, to be given daily at 1:00 beginning September 1 in the Sachs Galleries. "Myths Understood" has been made possible by a special grant to the Museum's Education office.

The Museum of Modern Art gratefully acknowledges the support of its exhibition program by the New York State Council on the Arts.

Additional material available from Michael Boodro, Assistant, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St., New York, NY 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7504; 956-7501.
