

The Museum of Modern Art

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20 GIFTS IN HONOR OF MYRON ORLOFSKY

A group of 19 drawings and one print recently acquired in memory of art collector Myron Orlofsky (1928-1976), is now on view at The Museum of Modern Art through January 9. As a memorial tribute, Mr. Orlofsky's friends created a fund at the Museum, for the purpose of purchasing drawings. These recent acquisitions were chosen with the Museum's Collection specifically in mind: in the case of a number of the Symbolist artists, these are the only examples of their work in the collection; other works significantly compliment and extend the Museum's present holdings. 20 GIFTS IN HONOR OF MYRON ORLOFSKY, on view in the first-floor Northeast Gallery, has been directed by Lisa M. Messinger, Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Drawings.

Several drawings in the exhibition represent the turn-of-the-century Symbolist movement. Works by the Belgian artists Xavier Mellery and George Minne, and by the Italian sculptor Adolfo Wildt are expressive of the Symbolist quest for the "soul of things" and spiritual harmony. Georges Lacombe, the French artist of the Nabis group, and English artist Byam Shaw are two other representatives of this period and its sensibility.

The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed the birth of modernism. Included in the exhibition is an unpublished postcard design Oskar Kokoschka did (ca. 1908) for the Vienna Workshop, marking a transition between Symbolism and Expressionism. František Kupka's 1909 illustrations for Aeschylus' Prometheus are a link to the artist's later abstract style.

At this time, too, there were a number of American modernists, active in this country and in Europe. Among them Arthur B. Davies, Elie Nadelman, and Synchronist painter Morgan Russell are represented in this exhibition. Cubist elements are present in German Expressionist Otto Dix's 1916 war-time drawings A Soldier Writing and A Riddled Wall as well as in Vladimir Stenberg's Cityscape.

20 GIFTS IN HONOR OF MYRON ORLOFSKY also includes a selection of figural works. There are masterly caricatures by William Nicholson and Max Beerbohm (John Singer Sargent), William Roberts' imaginary portrait of the Vorticist group gathering at Stulik's Restaurant de la Tour, a study by Horace Brodzky, and a charcoal and pencil portrait of writer Graham Robertson by Vernon Hill. In a contemporary vein, James Rosenquist's lithograph of Marilyn Monroe is also seen here. Jim Dine's Third Baby Drawing, influenced by Van Gogh, was a gift to the Museum by the artist, in memory of his close friend Myron Orlofsky.

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