

The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



NO. 44
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FACT SHEET

- EXHIBITION:** THE PAINTER AND THE PRINTER: ROBERT MOTHERWELL'S GRAPHICS
- DATES:** The Museum of Modern Art, October 30 through December 16, 1980
- SPONSOR:** The exhibition has been organized by The American Federation of Arts.
- DIRECTORS:** Guest-curated by Stephanie Terenzio, Assistant Director of The William Benton Museum at The University of Connecticut; coordinated for The Museum of Modern Art's Department of Prints and Illustrated Books by Deborah Wye.
- CONTENTS:** This exhibition will take a comprehensive look at the graphics of Robert Motherwell, the only original Abstract Expressionist to have worked extensively in this medium. Some 92 prints executed between 1961-1980 will be on view in the Sachs Galleries.

Motherwell, best known for his work in painting and collage, turned to printmaking, in part, to escape the solitude of the studio. His investigation of the medium soon led to a deeper involvement, as he developed an understanding of its complexities.

His respect for the printers, "who selflessly and sensitively become the artist's alter ego, seeing through the artist's own eyes," is limitless. And he delights as much in the materials themselves as in the challenges of "collaborative art." Printmaking has, for Motherwell, a certain freshness, directness and economy of means not to be found in most other mediums. Finally, Motherwell enjoys printmaking's dual personality. As he has said, "though prints, in being multiples (apart from monotypes), are potentially the most public of an artist's expression, in my case I had always regarded them as the most private -- not only because prints are generally intimate in scale and technique, but also making them tended to be more sportif than my work in collage and painting."

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Of course not all of Motherwell's prints can be described as intimate. Bastos, made in 1975, is 62 3/8 inches high and 40 inches wide -- the largest format the artist has used in the print medium -- and is anything but private. The collage-like Expressionist lithograph, with its flattened package of Bastos cigarettes on a splattering of black ink, required a man at each corner just to move it from the printing press.

BOOK:

The Painter and the Printer: Robert Motherwell's Graphics, 1943-1980, by Stephanie Terenzio with a complete catalogue raisonné by Dorothy C. Belknap. Published by The American Federation of Arts, it is available at The Museum of Modern Art Bookstore for \$14.95. Interviews with printers, publishers, and dealers with whom Motherwell has worked, on the collaborative aspect of printmaking.

September 1980

For further information, please contact Luisa Kreisberg, Director, (212) 956-2648, or Susan von Hoffmann, 956-7294, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019.
