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FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION: THE SYMBOLIST AESTHETIC

DATES: The Museum of Modern Art, New York
December 23, 1980 -- March 10, 1981

DIRECTOR: Magdalena Dabrowski, Assistant Curator of the
Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art

CONTENTS: THE SYMBOLIST AESTHETIC, an exhibition of some 90
drawings, prints, paintings, sculptures and examples
of decorative art drawn from the Museum's Collection,
establishes the link between the Symbolist move­
ment and modernism.

Symbolism, in its attempt to represent the inner
states of emotion through composition and synthesized
form, resulted in art which demanded the viewer's
participation. It required the spectator to relive
the emotions experienced by the artist. The purpose
was to reach what Gauguin termed "the mysterious
centers of thought." In order to infuse painting with
meaning, Symbolists strove to rid it of its anecdotal
quality. They aimed instead at the portrayal of
various states of feeling. This mode of expression
extended to the image itself as well as to the use of
formal means: line and color. Themes common to the
Symbolist expression included isolation, the artist's
position in society, jealousy, destiny, death: themes
of internal drama rather than external reality.

Artists to be represented in THE SYMBOLIST AESTHETIC
include Delville, Denis, Ensor, Gauguin, Hodler,
Khnopff, Klimt, Munch, Redon, Seurat and Vuillard.

PUBLIC OPENING: Tuesday, December 23, 1980

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