

# The Museum of Modern Art

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## BALTHUS PAINTINGS FROM THE COLLECTION ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Five paintings by the French artist Balthus will go on display in The Museum of Modern Art's Northeast Gallery on October 1, 1981. This small exhibition, the first time these paintings have been shown together, will remain on view through December 22, 1981.

While all five paintings were executed during the 1930s, each is a distinctly individual work. The paintings include three recent acquisitions: The Street (1933), which was part of the 1979 James Thrall Soby Bequest; The Guitar Lesson (1934), given in 1978 by Pierre Matisse in memory of Patricia Kane Matisse; and Girl With Green and Red Jacket (1939), Bequest of Helen Acheson, 1978. Also exhibited will be Balthus's portraits André Derain (1936) and Joan Miró and His Daughter Dolores (1937-38), which have been in the Museum's Collection for many years. Finally, several drawings will also be on view, including two drawing studies for The Street.

Born Balthus Klossowski de Rola in 1908 of Polish parents, the French painter spent his youth in Paris, England and Switzerland. His first one-man show, held at the Gallery Pierre in Paris in 1934, included The Street, one of his first mature works. The canvas exhibits a "stylized, monumental and...solid handling of color and form," writes James Thrall Soby in the publication Balthus, which accompanied the 1956 exhibition of the same name at The Museum of Modern Art. The painting presents "an imaginative transcription

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of a scene on the rue Bourbon-le-Chateau in Paris's sixth arrondissement," he wrote, and added that Balthus painted figures of "hypnotic intensity, as though seen in a dream or viewed on a moving-picture film which abruptly and inexplicably has stopped on its sprockets."

Balthus's portraits of Derain and Miró have quite distinctive approaches, no doubt reflecting the quality and character of his personal relationships with each of the subjects. As Soby noted, Balthus's "image of the vigorous, bullying Derain is acute in (its) psychological impact," imparting an impression of brutal power. On the other hand, Miró is subtly portrayed as a gentle, quizzical man and an adoring father.

Balthus is known particularly for his oils depicting the complexities and stresses of adolescence. Art historian George Heard Hamilton has written that no other painter "had the courage to adopt traditional realism to contemporary purposes on such a monumental scale."

This exhibition is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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