

ADVANCE FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION: PRINTS FROM BLOCKS: GAUGUIN TO NOW

DATES: The Museum of Modern Art, New York
March 6 - May 15, 1983

DIRECTOR: Riva Castleman, Director of the Department of Prints
and Illustrated Books

CONTENTS: PRINTS FROM BLOCKS: GAUGUIN TO NOW will present a selection of some 190 woodcuts and linoleum cuts from the Museum's Collection, which together survey the major developments in those printmaking mediums during the past century. Numerous examples found in illustrated books will be included.

The art of the woodcut, dating back to the 5th century A.D., has attracted artists of all periods by its versatility and expressiveness. The medium experienced an important renaissance in the 19th century, as artists, such as Gauguin, prized the woodcut for its ability to evoke the spirit of native cultures and exotic places. Other artists, such as Munch, made the grain of the wood an intrinsic part of the woodcut's composition. This interest continued into the early 20th century, inspiring artists associated with a variety of movements to express themselves through woodcut. On view will be works by members of the German group Die Brücke (The Bridge), such as Nolde, Heckel, and Kirchner; prints by Fauve artists Derain, Vlaminck and Matisse, as well as works revealing Cubism's impact on the medium.

Although block prints were created during the early years of the Bauhaus, interest in the medium generally dwindled after World War I, except in Mexico, where the medium was effectively used as an expression of political and social protest during the 1930s and 1940s. After World War II, an important movement of woodcut production developed in the Western Hemisphere and Japan. U.S. artists, such as Leonard Baskin and Carol Summers, made large, wall-sized prints, while Koshiro Onchi, a Japanese artist, assimilated European forms into his works. Renewed interest in the lithographic print medium in the 1950s and 1960s encouraged more painters to make prints. Several of these artists, such as Helen Frankenthaler and Jim Dine, turned to the woodcut in the 1970s. The current renewed interest in figuration has further increased the popularity of the woodcut. The German artists A.R. Penck and Georg Baselitz are notable contemporary contributors to the medium.

PUBLICATION: Prints From Blocks: Gauguin to Now, by Riva Castleman, will be published and distributed by The Museum of Modern Art. The 84-page, paperbound volume contains 68 black and white and 4 color illustrations. \$8.95.

PUBLIC OPENING: Sunday, March 6, 1983