

"PRIMITIVISM" IN 20TH CENTURY ART

Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
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"PRIMITIVISM" IN 20TH CENTURY ART: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern, a beautifully illustrated, intellectually provocative volume examining the crucial influence of the tribal arts of Africa, Oceania and North America on modern painters and sculptors, has been published by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name. Edited by William Rubin, Director of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture and principal organizer of the exhibition, the almost 700-page book contains 1,087 illustrations, including 378 in color, as well as 19 essays by eminent scholars in the fields of modern and tribal arts. It is also the first book ever to illustrate and discuss tribal works collected by seminal modernists such as Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Nolde, and Ernst. The publication has been made possible by grants from Philip Morris Incorporated, chief sponsor of the exhibition, and from The Eugene McDermott Foundation.

The roots of modernist "primitivism" can be followed back to the "discovery" of tribal sculptures and masks by vanguard artists in the first decades of this century. Heretofore viewed merely as curiosities, the objects had suddenly become aesthetically relevant due to changes in the nature of modern art itself, and it wasn't long before references to tribal objects became

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