

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
January 1992

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PUBLISHES FIRST ISSUE OF *STUDIES IN MODERN ART*

This month, The Museum of Modern Art publishes *American Art of the 1960s*, the first issue in *Studies in Modern Art*, an annual scholarly journal concentrating on works of art in the Museum's collection, on the Museum's program, and related topics. Edited by John Elderfield, director of the Department of Drawings and curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, *Studies in Modern Art* includes essays by both Museum of Modern Art curators and outside scholars. The first issue takes as its subject aspects of the Museum's collection of American art from the 1960s and its exhibition activities during the decade.

The Museum of Modern Art's collection bears vivid testimony to the richness and diversity of an era of great intellectual ferment, during which many important and enduring movements took seed and developed. The seven articles in *American Art of the 1960s* discuss painting, sculpture, printmaking, architecture, theater design, and film:

The Precursor John Elderfield

The development of American abstract painting in the 1960s and the artists' changing sense of their relation to earlier painting is investigated. The author takes as his touchstone the "precursor" exhibition of the work of J.M.W. Turner that the Museum mounted in 1966 and the accompanying catalogue essay by Lawrence Gowing.

-more-

Complexity and Contradiction 25 Years Later: An Interview with Robert Venturi

Stuart Wrede, Director, Department of Architecture and Design

Stuart Wrede interviews Robert Venturi about the genesis of his influential book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and its impact on the architectural thought of the late 1960s and 1970s. Published by the Museum in 1966, *Complexity and Contradiction* was a watershed in critical thinking, helping to usher in what became known as postmodernism.

Overcoming the Limits of Matter: On Revising Minimalism

Rosalind Krauss, Professor of Art History, Columbia University

This article closely examines the sharply differing attitudes toward the physicality of art in Minimalism and in California light-and-space art. The author argues forcefully against some recent attempts to subsume the two under a single aesthetic.

Ad Reinhardt and the Younger Artists of the 1960s

Lynn Zelevansky, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture

The author argues that the work of Ad Reinhardt is a crucial bridge between Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism. Reinhardt's suppression of the act of marking the surface of his paintings, and his reductive approach to composition and color, were the fruit of some thirty years of thinking and writing, yet they allied him with the group of younger artists who came of age around 1960 and first earned the epithet "Minimalist."

Jasper Johns: Ale Cans and Art

Wendy Weitman, Associate Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books

The five working proofs for Jasper Johns's 1964 lithograph *Ale Cans* are examined. The author deciphers the artist's transformation of the sculpture *Painted Bronze* into his first series of prints, which progress from an illusionistic representation of the sculpture to a flattened two-dimensional image.

Jim Dine and Performance

Joseph Ruzicka, Research Coordinator, *Studies in Modern Art*

Jim Dine's work in the performing arts is traced from his Happenings of 1960 through his 1967-68 adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* intended for the London stage. This body of work helped

form Dine's identity as an artist. Performance not only offered him the chance to become involved with the most innovative artists in New York, but, ironically, also provided the vehicle through which he eventually renounced associations with the avant-garde.

Elia Kazan's *Wild River*

Charles Silver, Supervisor, Film Study Center

Elia Kazan's neglected masterpiece, *Wild River* (1960), is reassessed. This lyrical romance, set in the Tennessee River Valley during the New Deal era, is seen as a rare example of a serious American film confronting issues of social and political change.

Studies in Modern Art is funded for three years by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Future issues will be supported in part by an endowment fund established by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with major additional gifts from the Edward John Noble Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities' Challenge Grant Program.

* * *

American Art of the 1960s. 184 pages. 114 black-and-white and 23 color illustrations. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Clothbound, \$40.00; paperbound, \$25.00. Available late December in The MoMA Book Store and through the Museum's mail-order department: 212/708-9888. (Mail orders must be prepaid including shipping charges; no institutional discount will be offered on orders to the Museum.) Clothbound edition distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Distributed elsewhere by Thames and Hudson, London. Available from bookstores and institutional suppliers mid-February.

No. 1

For additional information or review copies of *Studies in Modern Art*, call the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750