

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
August 1995

## FACT SHEET

- EXHIBITION**            **PIET MONDRIAN: 1872-1944**
- DATES**                October 1, 1995 - January 23, 1996
- ORGANIZATION**        This exhibition was organized jointly by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The international curatorial team led by Angelica Zander Rudenstine, Guest Curator, National Gallery of Art, includes Yve-Alain Bois, Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., Professor of Modern Art, Harvard University; Joop Joosten, author of the forthcoming *catalogue raisonné* of Mondrian's Cubist and Neo-Plastic work; Hans Janssen, Curator of the Modern Collection, Haags Gemeentemuseum; and John Elderfield, Chief Curator at Large, The Museum of Modern Art.
- SPONSORSHIP**         The New York showing is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
- CONTENT**              Few artists occupy as crucial a place in the history of twentieth-century art as the Dutch artist Piet Mondrian (1872-1944). This landmark exhibition, which is the first comprehensive presentation of Mondrian's work in more than twenty years, differs from previous retrospectives by emphasizing Mondrian's identity as a modern, abstract artist. It traces the major steps in his artistic evolution and provides an unprecedented opportunity to reevaluate his legacy as a painter.
- The exhibition comprises some 160 paintings and drawings from museums and private collections in Europe, Japan, and North America. Opening with selected examples of Mondrian's early work, made in the Netherlands, the exhibition goes on to examine his exposure to French modernism -- which led to his first experiments with Cubism and pure abstraction during World War I -- and surveys the time the artist spent in Paris (1919-38), London (1938-40), and New York (1940-44). This exhibition thus focuses on the artist's achievement in abstraction, the steps leading to it, and the evolution of his abstract style (which he called "Neo-Plasticism") until the time of his death.

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A significant aspect of the exhibition lies in its presentation of nearly half of Mondrian's canvases from the 1930s and 1940s, which have not been previously seen in this depth and shed light on the continuity of his entire development. The section devoted to unfinished works illuminates the artist's working process and reveals that his art is not mathematical in its origins or its expression. Rather, it is the product of a highly intuitive mind and hand, gradually working toward carefully modulated compositional solutions. Mondrian's last two paintings, perhaps his most daring -- *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942-43) and *Victory Boogie Woogie* (1942-44) -- are on view exclusively at this final venue of the exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art.

**MONDRIAN'S  
NEW YORK STUDIO**

A reconstruction of Mondrian's New York studio, which was located at 15 East 59 Street during the years 1943-44, accompanies the exhibition. Mondrian designed this studio to reflect his Neo-Plastic ideals in its form, line, and color. Curves and diagonals were eliminated. All that he permitted here were the primary colors along with black, gray, and white. He constructed furniture from fruit crates which he reconfigured and painted white. He tacked rectangles of painted cardboard to the off-white walls, adjusting them at will, creating a radiant, abstract architectural environment and a laboratory for his pictorial concerns.

**PUBLICATION**

*Piet Mondrian: 1872-1944*, edited by Angelica Zander Rudenstine. Essays by Yve-Alain Bois and Hans Janssen. Chronology and catalogue by Joop Joosten and Mrs. Rudenstine. Published by Leonardo Arte, Milan. Hardbound, \$75.00, distributed in the United States and Canada by Little, Brown and Company, Inc., Boston; paperbound, \$32.00; both available in The MoMA Book Store.

**TRAVEL**

This exhibition concludes its international tour in New York. It opened at Haags Gemeentemuseum (December 1994 - April 1995) and is currently on view at the National Gallery of Art (through September 4, 1995).

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