

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ACQUIRES IMPORTANT VAN GOGH

The first canvas by van Gogh to enter the collection of a New York museum has just been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, where it will be put on public view Tuesday, September 30. The canvas is The Starry Night, an oil (29" x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ ") painted by van Gogh in San Rémy in June 1889. Although it is outstanding among van Gogh's major works, it is comparatively little known because until recently it has been in a private collection* in Holland. It has been acquired by the Museum through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

The Starry Night was not a part of the Museum's large van Gogh exhibition shown here from November 5, 1935 to January 5, 1936. When that exhibition returned for a final two-weeks' showing in New York in January 1937, after having been seen by nearly 900,000 persons in ten cities throughout the country, The Starry Night, arrived from Holland too late to be included in the original exhibition, was added to it.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum of Modern Art, comments on the new acquisition as follows:

"Not only is van Gogh one of the greatest masters of modern painting but through his art and the tragic story of his life he has captured the hearts of people everywhere to a degree unapproached by any other painter of modern times. ~~Yet~~ in spite of these facts and although the artist has been dead for over fifty years no representative work by van Gogh has until now found a place in the public collections of New York City.

"Van Gogh's Starry Night is one of the most important paintings ever acquired by the Museum of Modern Art. Painted in the early summer of 1889, shortly after van Gogh's arrival at St. Rémy, it is a magnificent example of the artist's late style in all its vehemence and passion.

"The composition is essentially linear with flame like cypresses in the foreground and above the village and hills in the distance an astounding sky with explosive stars and a swirling milky way. Through the rhythmic pattern and magnificent deep blue tone of the painting there seems to

*In the Collection of Miss G. P. van Stolk of Rotterdam until three years ago.

move a spirit of mystical intensity and exaltation.

"At the time the Starry Night was painted even van Gogh's most devoted admirer, his brother Theo, found it too imaginative, too far removed from reality. But van Gogh himself gave us a key to the picture when he wrote, several months before the Starry Night was completed, of 'Having a terrible need of - shall I say the word - religion. Then I go out to paint the stars----.'"

The Starry Night will be on view indefinitely in a gallery of the Museum Collection along with other paintings from the Collection by Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, Pissarro, Redon and Ensor, all of whom were van Gogh's contemporaries and some of whom were his friends.