

0-36

314

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

48910-35

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WORKS BY SEURAT AND VAN GOGH, BEQUESTS OF MRS. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.,

TO BE SHOWN AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Two outstanding works by van Gogh and two by Seurat, bequeathed to the Museum by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., will be on view on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art from September 15 to October 24. The works are: Hospital Corridor at Saint-Rémy, gouache and water color, and Street in Saintes-Maries, drawing, by Vincent van Gogh; Seated Woman and Lady with a Parasol, drawings, by Georges Pierre Seurat.

During her lifetime Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., one of the founders of the Museum, was consistently and generously interested in the Museum Collections. In 1937 and 1938 she provided its first large purchase funds. She also presented the Museum with several large collections. Altogether over the years 1930 to 1948 she gave the Museum of Modern Art no less than 230 paintings, drawings and water colors, most of them by American artists, 60 sculptures and almost 2,000 prints.

Among the comparatively few works of art which she kept until the time of her death in April of this year were the three distinguished nineteenth-century drawings and the gouache which she bequeathed to the Museum and which are now to be exhibited.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum Collections, has written of these works as follows: "In June 1888 van Gogh made an excursion from Arles to the nearby fishing village of Saintes-Maries where he made the Museum's drawing, Street in Saintes-Maries. Less than a year after the happy week there, van Gogh who had recently suffered three mental attacks went to the hospital of St. Pol at St. Rémy near Arles. There he painted some of his greatest landscapes including the Museum's famous Starry Night. However, by May 1890 he was writing his brother, Theo: 'My surroundings here weigh on me more than I can express....I need air, I feel overwhelmed with boredom and depression.' It was perhaps in this mood that he painted the interminable vista of the Hospital Corridor at Saint-Rémy.

"Though van Gogh sold only one painting during his lifetime, he often thought wistfully about prices both for his own works and those of his friends, once even mentioning "Scottish or American" collectors as the most likely purchasers. In a letter of October 1888 he writes Theo about the paintings of Seurat: 'In my opinion we must at lowest reckon his big pictures of The Models and The Grande Jatte at well - let me see - say five thousand apiece.' This was about \$1,000 in 1888. In 1925 after forty years' neglect The Grande Jatte was bought for the Art Institute of Chicago for about \$25,000. In 1930 that museum refused an offer of \$400,000 and more recently turned down a second offer of over twice as much for this large canvas now generally considered the greatest painting of its period. The two drawings by Seurat now on view are studies for The Grande Jatte or, more correctly, A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte, which Seurat finished in 1886, the year van Gogh came to Paris."

In her will Mrs. Rockefeller directed that the van Gogh drawing and gouache should be transferred within the next 25 years to the Metropolitan Museum in New York; the Seurat drawings are to join the painting, for which they are studies, in the Art Institute of Chicago.