

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

PRESS PREVIEW: TUESDAY

FEBRUARY 27, 2-5 P.M.

510221 - 14

FOR WEDNESDAY RELEASE  
February 28, 1951

## LARGE NEW RELIGIOUS MURAL BY RICO LEBRUN TO GO ON VIEW

A monumental triptych from the Crucifixion cycle recently completed in California by the well-known modern painter Rico Lebrun will be on view in the third floor hall of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from February 28 through April 15.

The mural, 16 feet by 26 feet, is the culmination of more than 200 paintings and drawings on which Lebrun has been working for the past 5 years. Although he has titled the triptych "The Crucifixion" it actually represents the Deposition from the Cross.

As Lebrun was mainly concerned with making the cycle adaptable to a new kind of art film, he worked in a monochrome key and developed tentative sequences for the film, plans for which are now under way.

The complete Crucifixion cycle to date was shown at the Los Angeles County Museum two months ago. In the accompanying catalog Mr. Lebrun, who was born in Italy in 1900 and came to the United States in 1924, wrote:

"My choice of the theme, Crucifixion, was prompted by the constantly repeated history of man's blindness and inhumanity.... Since it is my inclination to be a maker of images, a story teller...the actors in the drama are to be explained in their true role. The soldiers, overburdened with armor...are the symbol of most of us armored against true compassion. Prejudice is cruel and extravagant; therefore, the agitated forms which however are designed and controlled within their own rhythm. The crying women are, like all bereaved mothers, empty houses pierced by screams.... The carpenters of the cross are, as are all men who accept wages for execution, lunatics and wolves. They gesture accordingly, and finally here and there the prophecy of self-crucifixion is indicated.... The rooster, trigger-like in the web of his own shadow, is...like a crowing toy.... The shroud and wood of the cross recall the stretched hand and wasted body."

Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, Director of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture, who arranged for the showing, says:

"For many reasons religious art since the Renaissance has usually been weak or sentimental. Not until our own day, perhaps under the violent emotional stress of wars and revolution, have artists begun to think in sufficiently passionate terms about humanity in relation to religion to make possible a statement so monumental and so moving as Rico Lebrun's triptych."

The mural has been lent to the Museum through the courtesy of the Jacques Seligmann Gallery of New York.