

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

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The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, announced this morning, following a meeting of its Board of Trustees, that an Endowment Fund of over \$600,000 had been raised, thereby securing permanently for the Museum the famous Bliss Collection of modern paintings, bequeathed conditionally to the Museum by the late Miss Lizzie P. Bliss three years ago. The time limit in which the Museum under the terms of the Bliss bequest was obliged to establish itself financially as a permanent institution in order to qualify to receive the paintings expired today, March 12.

The Bliss Collection is valued at three-quarters of a million dollars and is one of the most important collections of modern paintings in the world. No other public institution in this country has in its permanent collection so many of the finest examples of the leaders of the modern school.

A. Conger Goodyear, President of the Museum issued the following statement. "It is a fitting climax to the five experimental years of the Museum to secure permanently the great collection of modern paintings bequeathed conditionally to the Museum by Miss Lizzie P. Bliss three years ago and to establish the Museum as a permanent institution. Under the terms of her will the Museum was required to satisfy the executors of her estate that the Museum was a permanent institution. One million dollars was originally set as the total endowment needed to meet this condition. Mr. Cornelius N. Bliss, chief executor of the Estate, reduced this requirement because of the prevailing unfavorable business conditions to \$750,000. Subsequently he has generously accepted the sum of \$600,000, which has been secured, as sufficient evidence that the Museum has attained permanency, with the strict understanding, however, that the Museum will continue its efforts to attain the goal of \$750,000. I have

every confidence that this amount will be raised by the end of April of this year."

Commenting on the donor herself, Mr. Goodyear said: "The life of Lizzie P. Bliss was a life of wide interest in the arts and in charity. She held a unique place in the affection and devotion of all who knew her and of many who knew only her name. To many institutions and undertakings she gave generously of her personal service and financial support. The Kneisel Quartet, the Juilliard Foundation and the Armory Exhibition of 1913 all enjoyed her substantial backing.

"During the last two years of her life the Museum of Modern Art was her chief interest. A founder of the Museum and its Vice-President, she had a principal part in its establishment and in the conduct of its activities. Her splendid legacy of paintings, drawings, and prints which the Museum has now received gives it a high place among public institutions of similar purpose.

"Miss Bliss's collection bears the hall-mark of her unerring taste and fine courage. Her interest in modern art began long before there was any general recognition of its value. As the years went on her collection increased steadily but no picture could find a permanent place on her walls that could not stand the test of the masterpieces that already hung there.

"Thanks to the generous support of its friends, the Museum has now been able to meet the condition wisely fixed in Miss Bliss's will."

The most important milestone in the career of New York's Museum of Modern Art has been passed quietly without appeal to the general public - already overburdened with demands on its generosity. The Endowment Fund has been contributed by 125 subscribers, over 93% of them already annual members of the Museum, a membership which has nearly doubled within the last year. Included in the total is a grant of \$100,000 from The Carnegie Corporation of New York. Plans for the continuance and completion of the drive will be announced shortly.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum, commented on the gift: "With the Bliss Collection, New York can now look London, Paris, Berlin, Munich, Moscow and Chicago in the face so far as public collections of modern art are concerned. Without it we would still have had to hang our heads as a backward community.

"Even in the fourth year of the depression the Collection is valued at \$750,000. It contains a Renoir, an oil and many drawings by Degas, a Daumier almost identical to the famous 'Washerwoman' of

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the Louvre, paintings by Pissarro, Gauguin, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse, Modigliani, Picasso, Arthur B. Davies, Walt Kuhn, and scores of drawings and prints, Most important of all are the Cezannes--11 oils and 9 watercolors--twenty paintings in all, the largest group of Cezannes that have ever been given to a museum anywhere in the world.

"The Bliss Collection is of fundamental importance to the Museum of Modern Art. By securing this magnificent group of modern paintings we have laid the cornerstone of our permanent collection."

The Museum has grown steadily since it opened its doors to the public on the 12th floor of the Heckscher Building in 1929. In the spring of 1932 it moved into a home of its own in the five-story building at 11 West 53 Street, its present location. In five years the Museum has held 34 major and scores of minor exhibitions which have been attended by nearly 900,000 persons. In connection with its exhibitions the Museum has published 27 catalogs known throughout this country and Europe for their scholarly introductions, profuse illustrations, and lists of detailed information about modern art.

The Museum of Modern Art does not serve New York alone. Its circulating exhibitions have toured the country and have been seen in more than 60 cities by over three million persons. Its membership, which is national, has nearly doubled during the past year and its attendance has increased 22.7%. Art critics have accepted the Museum as a testing ground for the art of the past fifty years. The Museum has exhibited the work of more than 300 artists.

In a recent letter Mr. George Blumenthal, President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, stated that the Museum of Modern Art "has reached in a short time an importance to the art world of New York and I might say of America which is most creditable. We of the Metropolitan Museum of Art recognize that your Institution is to-day a very important link in the artistic life of our country as you can do many things in support of the younger generation of artists which are outside of our field of work. I am sure that ways will be found for close cooperation between the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art advantageous to both Institutions, to the public and to the artist."

The Bliss Collection contains the following works:

(See attached list)

For information about the pictures in the Bliss Collection and about Miss Bliss as a collector, please see the attached excerpt from the introduction by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to the catalog of the Memorial Exhibition of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, held in May 1931.

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Excerpt from the introduction by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to the catalog of the Memorial Exhibition for Miss Lizzie P. Bliss held in May 1931 at the Museum of Modern Art.

"To write impersonally of Miss Bliss' collection after having known Miss Bliss is very difficult. For those who were her friends something of her gentle and courageous spirit lingers about the paintings which she loved so much and which she left, perhaps reluctantly, in this world.

Although she possessed well-chosen works of earlier and later periods, the most important part of her collection is the magnificent group of French paintings and drawings of the latter half of the 19th Century. Degas, Renoir, Cezanne, Pissarro, are included and, among a generation slightly younger, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin, Redon - almost the entire roster of those pathfinders whose present fame is equalled only by the neglect or contempt which they endured so often when they were alive. Even fifteen years ago Miss Bliss, at that time one of the few American collectors who found their work admirable, received little sympathy for her enthusiasm - but today how amply is her courage vindicated!

Her superb Daumier "Laundress", her Renoir "Landscape", most of her 19th Century "old masters" as well as her excellent contemporary paintings by Picasso, Derain and Matisse, were in a way a background, a complement, to the work of the two French artists whom she especially admired - Cezanne and Seurat.

Her eleven oils and ten watercolors by Cezanne give an almost complete picture of the work of the artist who has most influenced contemporary painting. His "Self-Portrait" in a lawyer's hat painted during the sixties is an excellent example of his crude, rather labored but vigorous early style. The grandeur with which, during his maturity, he could invest even an awkward human figure is demonstrated in the "Bather" of about 1880. The small interior with the seated figure of the collector, Chocquet, is a jewel of the most precious quality in surface and color. The portrait of

the artist's sister and two watercolor studies for "bather" compositions round out a remarkable series of figure paintings.

Outstanding among her five Cezanne still-life paintings are the unfinished but magnificent "Apples", formerly in the Kelekian collection, and the sombre "Oranges" which glow like coals in a dark hearth. The early "Landscape", painted under the influence of Pissarro, the extraordinary "Pines and Rocks", are supplemented by a half dozen watercolors, among them a study of foliage which conveys as clearly as any work by Cezanne the patience and intensity of his observation and his unflinching sense of color.

After she had completed her group of Cezannes, Miss Bliss turned increasing attention to Seurat, perhaps the last of the great artists of the 19th Century to win general recognition. Unfortunately his meticulous technique and the brief decade of his painting career have made his work extremely rare and recently extremely costly. In spite of these difficulties, Miss Bliss succeeded in adding to her single oil by Seurat what is probably the largest group of Seurat drawings in America. Had she lived she might also have added (as she desired to) the most important of Seurat's landscapes."

Miss Bliss did not neglect American painting in her bequest. The sensitive "Italian Landscape" by Arthur B. Davies, the "Wine Press" by the same artist and "Jeannotté" by Walt Kuhn are among the pictures left to the Museum.

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THE BLISS COLLECTION

Works of art bequeathed by the late Miss Lizzie P. Bliss
to the Museum of Modern Art, New York City:

CÉZANNE, Paul (French)

Oils

Self Portrait (L'Avocat), before 1870
Landscape, about 1875
Fruit and Knife
The Decanter
Oranges
Portrait of M. Chocquet, about 1885
Portrait of the Artist's Sister
The Bather
Landscape: Pines and Rocks
Fruit and Wine
Still Life with Apples

Watercolors

Bathers
Bathers under the Bridge
The Bridge
The House
House and Trees
Landscape
Rocky Ridge
Trees among Rocks
Trees on a Mountainside
Foliage

2 lithographs

DAUMIER, Honoré (French)

Oils

The Laundress

4 lithographs

DAVIES, Arthur B. (American)

Oils

Italian Landscape
The Wine Press

DEGAS, H. G. E. (French)

Oils

Race Course

Pastel

After the Bath

6 drawings

DELACROIX, Eugène (French)

1 drawing

DENIS, Maurice (French)

3 lithographs

DERAIN, André (French)

Oils

Landscape
Landscape: the Farm
Head

GAUGUIN, Paul (French)

Oils

Hina Tefatu, 1893
Head of a Tahitian

12 woodcuts

2 lithographs

GUYS, Constantin (Dutch)

Watercolor

Coach

1 wash drawing

KUHN, Walt (American)

Oils

Jeannette

LAURENCIN, Marie (French)

1 Lithograph

LORRAINE, Claude (French)

1 wash drawing

MATISSE, Henri (French)

Oils

Girl in Green

Interior

2 lithographs

MODIGLIANI, Amedeo (French)

Oils

Anna de Zborowska, 1918

PICASSO, Pablo Ruiz (School of Paris)

Oils

Green Still Life

Woman in White

6 color stencils

3 etchings

PISSARRO, Camille

Oils

By the Stream

REDON, Odilon (French)

Oils

Silence

Etruscan Vase

Pastel

Roger and Angelica

6 lithographs

2 etchings

RENOIR, Auguste (French)

Oils

Landscape

2 color lithographs

ROUSSEAU, Henri (French)

Oils

The Jungle

SEGONZAC, Dunoyer de (French)

Watercolor

Landscape

SEURAT, Georges-Pierre (French)

Oils

Port en Bessin, 1885

8 drawings

SIGNAC, Paul (French)

Watercolor --Harbor of La Rochelle

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC, Henri (French)

Oils --Miss May Belfort, 1895

NEAR EASTERN TEXTILES

Child with Bird (Coptic, 3rd Century)

Three Saints (Coptic, 7th-8th Century)

Bird (Egypto-Arabic, 8th-9th Century)

Woman (Persian, 16th Century)