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# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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ODILON REDON, GUSTAVE MOREAU, RODOLPHE BRESLIN by John Rewald, Dore Ashton and Harold Joachim. 184 pages, 123 plates (31 in color). Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed by Doubleday & Co., Inc. Cloth, \$7.50; paper \$3.75.

A comprehensive study of the art of three 19th century masters of symbolism--Odilon Redon, Gustave Moreau, Rodolphe Breslin--has been published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The 184 page book, illustrated with 92 black and white plates and 31 color plates, is by John Rewald, Dore Ashton and Harold Joachim, who assembled the Museum's recent exhibition of the French artists' work. It is available in hard-cover and paperback editions at the Museum, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, and in bookstores throughout the country.

The art of Redon, Moreau and Breslin is characterized by a poetic fantasy which set them apart in a period dominated by naturalism and impressionism. Their breadth of imagination and freedom of expression foreshadows surrealism and present abstract art, resulting in the recent revival of interest in their work.

The major part of the book is devoted to Redon, the most famous of the three, friend of Mallarmé and Huysmans. Quoting frequently from the artist's diary and letters, Mr. Rewald provides an account of Redon's life and describes the "bizarre universe of improbable beings" which he created. He traces the evolution of his art from somber black prints and charcoal drawings to the colorful oils, watercolors and pastels of his last 25 years. Redon's etchings and lithographs are further discussed by Harold Joachim, who has also written the chapter on Breslin.

According to Mr. Joachim, Breslin, Redon's teacher, was largely ignored during his lifetime. He is now considered an artist of potent imagination and poetic insight. His work is admired by contemporary artists searching for new content and means of expression. With the exception of one small painting, Breslin's art consists entirely of drawings, etchings and lithographs. The book also includes two essays on Breslin by his famous pupil.

In her chapter on Gustave Moreau, teacher of Matisse and Rouault, Dore Ashton reveals the complexity that characterized his approach to art. She cites various critical theories about his work as well as statements by the artist himself and his close friends. Although widely admired during his lifetime as a painter of allegorical compositions, his work was dismissed in the early 20th century as too literary. Moreau never exhibited the hundreds of small oils and watercolors in which he experimented with abstraction. Recent public showing of this vast secret oeuvre has led to renewed interest in his art. In selecting illustrations for the book, emphasis has been placed on these little-known works.

John Rewald, well-known art historian, is author of the recently revised volume, "The History of Impressionism," "Post-Impressionism--from van Gogh to Gauguin" and several monographs; Dore Ashton is a frequent contributor to American and European art periodicals; Harold Joachim is Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago where the Redon, Moreau, Breslin exhibition will be shown next spring.

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Photographs and review copies are available from Nancy Reed, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N.Y. CI 5-8900.