

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

42436-11

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, announces an Exhibition of Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators to open to the public Wednesday, April 29 and to remain on view through Sunday, June 14. The Exhibition is under the direction of Monroe Wheeler, an authority on modern de luxe editions and one of the founders of the publishing house of Harrison of Paris. Mr. Wheeler directed the American section of the Salon International du Livre d'Art, held at the Petit Palais in Paris the summer of 1931.

The entire Museum will be devoted to the exhibition, which will be installed in an unusual fashion. For the first time in an exhibition of this sort there will be a wall display of books. Instead of showing a book opened so that only two pages may be seen, which is customary, many pages of illustrations (combined at times with typography) will be removed from the most valuable books and placed on the walls so that the visitor may obtain an adequate idea of the entire book.

There are three factors of unusual interest in the exhibition:

(1) The opportunity to see in the unfamiliar role of illustrators modern artists who are known almost entirely as painters and sculptors. (2) The joining of the best in modern art with the finest literature, past and present. (3) The success with which artists who are noted for their abstract compositions have confined themselves to representational art. This is particularly true of the great artists whose abstract works were shown in the Museum's recent exhibition of Cubism and Abstract Art and who will be represented in the present exhibition by works of a very different character.

In his foreword to the Museum publication, Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators, Mr. Wheeler writes: "This exhibition may be studied as a miniature survey of modern art in general.....Many people still believe that modern art is or should be non-literary; that the best modern painters feel not mere timidity but repugnance in regard to the pictorial treatment of dramatic or poetical subjects.....In this exhibition we have evidence that the great men of

modernism themselves, even cubists, have not consistently held this opinion, nor felt any real repugnance to the forbidden themes. On the contrary, with obvious enjoyment, they have welcomed opportunities to try their skill at legend and symbol and sentiment, adapting their style to new uses, if necessary, and accepting whatever restrictions complex subject-matter may impose.

"Naturally Balzac's Le Chef-d'Oeuvre Inconnu appealed to Picasso. This famous tale is the romance of an old painter's folly and glory, working for ten years on one canvas, an epitome of womanly beauty, with nothing to show for it at last but a superb abstraction, meaningless in others' eyes. In story-form it is a sort of preface to cubism. It is significant of that tragi-comic episode in art-history that the great cubist master himself, in 1933, given that most appropriate text to illustrate, should have chosen to do the major part of it, not abstractly, but in romantic and representational style. Picasso's labour of love has made this publication of Vollard's one of the most beautiful books in the world."

The enrichment which great modern artists have brought to great literature, ancient and modern, is shown in many of the books in the exhibition. A few of them are Picasso's etchings for Ovid's Metamorphoses and his etchings and wood engravings for Balzac's The Unknown Masterpiece; Maillol's lithographs and woodcuts for Ovid's The Art of Love, his woodcuts for Virgil's Eclogues and his etchings for Ronsard's poems; Rouault's magnificent color etchings for his own books, The Circus of the Flying Star and Legendary Landscapes, and his copper engravings for his books Miserere and War; Matisse's etchings and drawings for James Joyce's Ulysses and Mallarmé's poems; Segonzac's etchings for The Grape Arbor by his friend Colette and his etchings for Bubu of Montparnasse by Charles Louis Philippe; Derain's line engravings for Petronious' Satyricon and his lithographs for La Fontaine's Fables; Dufy's wood engravings for The Bestiary by the great contemporary poet Apollinaire; Bonnard's lithographs for Daphnis and Chloë and for Parallelement by Verlaine; Edy Legrand's aquatints for The Song of Songs.

The American work in this group includes Rockwell Kent's famous

drawings for Candide and Moby Dick; Charles Demuth's watercolors for Henry James' The Turn of the Screw; Boardman Robinson's drawings for Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov and The Idiot; Alexander Calder's drawings for Aesop's Fables; Grant Wood's crayon drawings for The Farm on the Hill by Horn; and Hugo Gellert's lithographs for Capital by Karl Marx.

A small section of the exhibition will be devoted to 19th century prototypes of the great 20th century painters and sculptors who are represented in this show by illustrations. This section includes works by Delacroix, Daumier, Degas, Manet and Rodin. A curious coincidence is illustrated in this section by the arbitrary use of a series of Degas' drawings of ladies of easy virtue as illustrations for de Maupassant's La Maison Tellier. The drawings were done and the book written during approximately the same period but with no thought of their conjunction. Many years later Vollard combined them in one of the most striking books in the exhibition. This is an example of a happy though unpremeditated joining of art and literature.

"Today we think of pictures and literature as almost opposite arts," Mr. Wheeler further writes in his foreword, "and many who are not strict bibliophiles feel that it is unnecessary and disorderly for them to mix and overlap. In the dim beginning of history, drawing and writing developed together as human faculties, nearly identical. Primitive man's sense of magic in nature and his own nature probably started him representing things, and he found it useful. Certain images became alphabet.

"For a long time after languages had become elaborate, pictures were still used as a sort of alternate vocabulary, for both religious and practical purposes. In a sense all art was illustration, and in that sense illustration may be said to have preceded text. First came beauty of art, and after it a conscious sense of beauty; theory came last.

"The highest type of illustrated book is the joint work of author and artist who are contemporaries, working as in equal collaboration; inspired by similar feeling; approaching the same subject-matter from opposite directions; dealing with it twice within the

covers of the one volume.....Neither should seem to take precedence. Of course, one does precede the other, in practise; but our impression in the ideal instance is of simultaneity, as if in free enthusiasm author and painter had each created alone, and the results had just happened to coincide: an impression of spiritual unity."

Artists whose work will be shown in the exhibition are: Altman, Annenkov, Bacon, Barlach, Beaudin, Bellows, Benton, Berman, Bernard, Bibikov, Bilibin, Bonnard, Bourdelle, Braque, Calder, Chagall, Charlot, de Chirico, Corinth, Dali, Daumier, Degas, Delacroix, Demuth, Denis, Derain, Despiou, Dufy, Ernst, Esherick, Fiene, Forain, Friesz, Gauguin, Gellert, Gill, Glackens, Gris, Gromaire, Grosz, Hugo, Iacovleff, Kandinsky, Kauffer, Kent, Kirchner, Kokoschka, Krohg, Krukov, La Fresnaye, Laprade, Laurencin, Lebedev, Leger, Legrand, Lhote, Liebermann, Lissitzky, Littlefield, Lurçat, Lydis, Maillol, Manet, Marcoussis, Masereel, Masson, Matisse, Miro, Moreau, John Northcote Nash, Paul Nash, Nivinski, Orozco, Pascin, Pechstein, Petrenka, Picasso, Redon, Rivera, Robinson, Rodin, Rouault, Roy, Samokhvalov, Segonzac, Slevogt, Sloan, Sterenberg, Tatlin, Tchelitchev, Titov, Toulouse-Lautrec, Tyrsa, Vasnetzov, Vlaminck, Volshstein, Weber, Wood, and Yudovin.

Books and original drawings shown in the exhibition have been selected from the following collections: Mme. Jeanne Bucher, Paris; Jean Charlot, New York; Erich Cohn, New York; Frank Crowninshield, New York; André Derain, Paris; Marie Harriman Gallery, New York; Philip Hofer, New York; Pierre Loeb, Paris; Mme. Nadejena-Krinkin, New York; J. B. Neumann, New York; Frank Osborn, Manchester, Vt.; Mrs. Alma Reed, New York; André Dunoyer de Segonzac, Paris; John Sloan, New York; Mrs. Lloyd Bruce Wescott, New York; Miss Edith Wetmore, New York; E. Weyhe, New York; Carl Zigrosser, New York.

The following publishers have also lent valuable material: The Black Sun Press, Brentano's, Inc., Delphic Studios, Harcourt, Brace & Co., Harper & Brothers, The Limited Editions Club, The Macmillan Co., Robert M. McBride & Co., Random House, Charles Scribner's Sons, The Society of American Bibliophiles, and The Spiral Press of New York; Cassell & Co., Ltd., and The Nonesuch Press of London; Philippe Gonin, Count G. Govone, M. Jacquard, Au Nouvel Eclair, La Nouvelle Revue Française, Les Editions des Quatre Chemins, Galerie Simon, Albert Skira and Ambroise Vollard of Paris; Harrison of Paris and New York.