

The Museum of Modern Art

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An exhibition of five European paintings recently added to the Museum Collections will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art through January 23. The works are: Portrait of an Equilibrist (1927) by Paul Klee, For the Feast of Christ the King (1952) by Alfred Manessier, a portrait of the French sculptor Etienne Martin (1956) by Karel Appel, Painting (1953) by Joan Miró, and The Menaced Assassin (1926) by René Magritte.

Except for the Magritte, all the paintings were bought by the Museum last spring at the auction of the G. David Thompson Collection. The late Mr. Thompson, a Pittsburgh industrialist, was a member of the Museum's Board of Trustees and of the Committee on the Museum Collections. A Patron of the Collection and a generous friend, he died in 1965.

The Magritte comes from the collection of E.L.T. Mesens, the critic, poet, artist and collector, who was a founder of the Surrealist movement in Belgium.

Writing about the Klee, which the Museum purchased with the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections, recalls that "Portrait of an Equilibrist was reproduced on the cover of the catalog of the Museum's first Klee exhibition. That was in March 1930, a time when the Depression was deepening and the Museum's limited funds did not permit buying even so desirable an acquisition. Portrait was lent to the show by J. B. Neumann. Later it was purchased by the greatest of Klee collectors, G. David Thompson of Pittsburgh. After his death the Museum bought the picture at the auction of his collection. Thus, with the generous help of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, Klee's Portrait of an Equilibrist was brought back to the Museum after 36 years. It is very welcome."

About the Miró Painting, Mr. Barr writes: "Most of Miró's art suggests humor and gaiety and extraordinary charm of color. This Painting with its brutally gouged and burnt forms and its harsh tones reveals a Miró very different from his great mural in the entrance hall of the Museum."

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Both the Miró and the Magritte The Menaced Assassin were purchased with the Kay Sage Tanguy Fund bequeathed by the wife of the late Surrealist artist, Yves Tanguy, who was herself a painter of renown. The Menaced Assassin is the most important canvas Magritte painted before he left Brussels for Paris in 1927. Commenting on the Magritte, Mr. Barr writes "What does the artist mean in this 'problem' picture, this strange dream, naive in style like an early movie, yet haunting. Except for the title, the artist has put no words to his picture. You may invent your own scenario."

For the Feast of Christ the King by the French painter Manessier was first shown at the Museum in 1955 in "The New Decade" exhibition. In the catalog of that show the artist is quoted as saying that "the public lives in a materialistic world and no longer has need of what I wish to express ... Perhaps in a few centuries the public and the artist will of necessity feel things in common, unless God intervenes before, which is my ardent wish. The aged Cézanne, at the end of his life asked: 'Could art be a priesthood?'" **The painting was purchased through the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund.**

In the label note on Etienne Martin, painted in 1956, Mr. Barr adds: "Appel is the best known of the young artists who formed the COBRA group -- Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam -- in 1949. Though less mature, they came nearer rivaling the New York Abstract Expressionists than any other Europeans; but they were generally more violent in style and more concerned with subject matter such as faces and figures."

Recent Acquisitions: Five European Paintings, is one of a continuing series of small exhibitions which supplement the annual exhibitions reporting on additions to the Museum Collections.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.