

The Museum of Modern Art

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THREE GENERATIONS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY ART: THE SIDNEY AND HARRIET JANIS COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART. 252 pages; 157 illustrations (17 in color); clothbound \$22.50. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Distributed to the trade by New York Graphic Society Ltd.

The 103 works of painting and sculpture comprising The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection of The Museum of Modern Art are the subject of a new publication, the most detailed catalogue that the Museum has ever issued. Received as a magnanimous gift from the astute connoisseur and dealer Sidney Janis, the collection was exhibited at the Museum in 1968 and circulated on a two-year tour throughout the United States and abroad, winning immediate acclaim for its breadth of taste, considered balance and high level of quality.

A brief essay precedes each of the three sections of the catalogue, which comments upon and reproduces every work in the collection. The first of the "three generations of modern art" is dealt with in the opening section, devoted to "Modern Masters and Movements in Europe before the Second World War." It includes works by artists associated with Cubism, Expressionism, Dada, Surrealism, and related movements -- among them Picasso, Léger, Mondrian, Boccioni, Klee, de Chirico, Dali, Schwitters and Arp.

Among the self-taught artists in the second section, "Modern Naive and Primitive Painters," are three Americans whom Mr. Janis discovered, befriended, and brought to public attention. Outstanding among them is Morris Hirshfield, six of whose pictures are included.

The third section is made up of two generations of European and American artists who came to prominence after the Second World War. Side by side with older Abstract Expressionists and others related to that style, such as Dubuffet, Giacometti, Gorky, Tobey, Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Still, Newman and Rothko, are the pioneers of the quite opposite hard-edge or geometric tendency, Albers and Vasarely. The younger generation includes men working in that style, such as Anuszkiewicz and Kelly, as well as

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Pop artists. These are represented through examples by Johns, Dine, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist, Wesselmann, and Oldenburg, as well as by portraits of Mr. Janis by Warhol, Segal and Marisol.

Following a catalogue raisonné giving the history and bibliography of each of the works in the collection is a detailed illustrated Chronology. This documents the career of Sidney Janis and his remarkable wife and frequent collaborator "Hansi," and records all the exhibitions mounted by the prestigious Sidney Janis Gallery from the time of its founding in 1948 to the date of the gift of the collection to The Museum of Modern Art.

The publication offers a portrait in depth of a fascinating personality, Sidney Janis himself, as collector, lecturer, author, dealer, and above all impassioned devotee of modern art. His recollections of the many artists whom he knew personally are frequently quoted in the comments on individual works and the Chronology. The activities of Sidney and Harriet Janis, and of the Sidney Janis Gallery, constitute an important chapter in the history of taste in the United States from the late 1920s on. The gallery developed into a mecca for those who came to see the outstanding, often innovative, exhibitions presented there, and to engage in impromptu discussions on them with Mr. Janis. In the words of the critic Clement Greenberg, "He made of his place a kind of museum-cum-seminar."

Further insight into Mr. Janis' contribution to the knowledge and appreciation of modern art, and his long-standing connection with The Museum of Modern Art, which he called "the museum of my first love," is provided in the Foreword by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., first Director of the Museum and until 1967 Director of Museum Collections, and the Introduction by William Rubin, Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture Collections.

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