Art Lending Service retrospective, 1950-1960 : January 26-March 20, 1960

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ART LENDING SERVICE RETROSPECTIVE

1950-1960

January 26-March 20, 1960

sponsored by the Junior Council of the Museum of Modern Art, New York

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FOREWORD

Just ten years ago, in the winter of 1950, the possibility of setting up an art rental service at the Museum of Modern Art was first suggested. The following fall the idea was formally presented to the Junior Council. The aims seemed admirable; the obstacles formidable.

There was immediate enthusiastic agreement as to the main goal; to encourage the wider appreciation and purchase of original and contemporary works of art. A rental system seemed a good means to this end. It was recognized that the appreciation of art deepens with prolonged experience and that the rental of pictures would offer young collectors and potential collectors an opportunity to test their selections at leisure and at home.

The mere bringing together of a representative cross-section of current schools and trends would be a convenience. The fact that selections would have initially been made by experienced, non-professionals, then carefully combed and weeded by members of the Museum staff, might help to inspire confidence.

Obviously, too, it would be easier for a beginning collector to decide to rent a work of art for a few months than to buy it then and there. The financial risk would be far less and so would the psychological hurdle.

But this was only half the goal. The building up of a venturesome group of new collectors would in turn be of help to the younger artists. A top limit was set on the value of any object to be included, and at least half the collection has always been kept within the modest range of $50 to $300. The intent of these limitations is clear: to develop a patronage for new work by artists in their early productive years.

And even among the established names, drawings, watercolors and prints, seemed to be largely an untapped field. For a modest investment, these works of art can be helpful stepping-stones leading to important collections.

The collection was to be built up, and constantly replenished, solely through loans from established galleries. All financial, legal and insurance arrangements were to be made with them.

But all these laudable aims seemed easier to talk about, at that Junior Council meeting in November 1950, than they might be to carry out.

Would the galleries and the artists go along with the idea? How could legal responsibility be fixed for what would, after all, be a valuable collection borrowed, with one hand, from several dozen galleries and lent, with the other, to a group of individuals, unknown, and perhaps irresponsible? What would the insurance companies say? How could the objects be protected in transit? Would borrowers take proper care of them in their homes? Would they pack them properly and return them on time? What rental fees would they pay? What would it cost to set up and run the service? Who should be allowed to borrow and for how long? How should the collection be selected and maintained? How displayed? What standards should be established and by whom? How could the Junior Council members ever keep track of several hundred objects constantly coming in and going out? Would things be lost, damaged, stolen? Would the good name of the Museum of Modern Art be irreparably compromised by this handy, but perhaps disastrous, venture?

These, and a host of questions like them, were turned over to a committee to explore. During the winter of 1950-1951, this committee tried to find answers or at least to recommend how or where answers might be found. Museum trustees and staff, legal and insurance counsel, galleries' and artists' representatives, all were called upon for advice. By April, the committee was "convinced . . . that the lending library is both a practicable and a desirable undertaking, and one which can . . . be put into actual operation by September of 1951." The Junior Council concurred, the Museum trustees approved, and a generous group of sponsors advanced the necessary working capital to launch the undertaking. In October the Art Lending Service, with some trepidation, opened its doors.

What has happened since can best be told in figures that summarize the operations of the eight seasons that have ensued. There have been 4,231 rentals to 1,762 different borrowers, all of whom are Museum members, since membership is the prerequisite for borrowing. 96 galleries have been represented. 926 objects have been sold for $165,085.50. $146,639.45 has been distributed to the galleries and, through them, to the artists. The art Lending Service is a non-profit enterprise and takes only 10% on sales. This is approximately the same as the rental fee which is deductible from the purchase price.

Trends also are interesting. The number of rentals the eighth year was more than double that of the first year, while sales were about four times as numerous and reached eight times the monetary value. In the most recent years, there has been a sale, on the average, for every three and one half rentals, while in the beginning, there was only one in eight. Meanwhile, the average size of the collection has grown from three hundred to five hundred objects and the variety has increased. Small sculptures, watercolors, drawings, prints, collages and recently, photographs, now supplement the paintings. As far as the quality of the collection is concerned, and its wide range of style, this retrospective exhibition must speak for itself. Of course, no small exhibition can be representative of the wide variety of works in the Art Lending Service. The present exhibition is limited to works readily available in the metropolitan area.

The Art Lending Service has from its inception been a collaborative and a cooperative effort, an extension of the services of the Museum made possible by the Junior Council. Its organization and its operation have depended upon the enthusiastic support of many people. It is with a real sense of this obligation that grateful appreciation is now offered to the trustees of the Museum of Modern Art for their encouragement and for having made available the gallery space; to the financial sponsors for their generous support; to the many members, past and present, of the Museum staff for invaluable advice and assistance; to the art galleries of New York for their courage in joining this experiment; to the artists without whom the experiment could not have existed; to the devoted staff members of the Art Lending Service who have carried the burden of daily routine; and to the many members of the Junior Council and the auxiliary volunteers on whose countless hours of donated services so much has depended.

What we have done in the past speaks for itself. Nor have we any doubt that the artists in the next decade will supply us with works of art of equal if not finer quality.

Harmon H. Goldstone

CATALOG

Dates appear on the works of art unless enclosed in parenthesis. In dimensions height precedes width.

ALBERS, Josef. American, born Germany 1888.

1 *Study for Homage to the Square: Night Shades.* (1957) Oil on Masonite, 17⅞ x 17⅞". Collection Ulrich Franzen, New York.

ARMITAGE, Kenneth. British, born 1916.

2 *Seated Woman with Square Head.* (1954) Bronze, 15" high. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Eliot Noyes, New Canaan, Connecticut.

3 *Standing Figure with Hands Up.* (1952) Bronze, 14" high. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Simon Pearl, Philadelphia.

BAZIOTES, William. American, born 1912.

4 *Spectre.* (1956) Oil on canvas, 30 x 24". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis Stern, Rochester, New York.

BROOKS, James. American, born 1906.

5 *Number 39.* (1951) Oil on canvas, 30 x 37". Collection Dr. John MacL. Johansen, New Canaan, Connecticut.

BROWN, Carlyle. American, born 1919.

6 *Geraniums.* 1956. Oil on canvas, 21½ x 15". Collection Mrs. John Alex McCone, Washington, D. C.

BURCHFIELD, Charles. American, born 1893.

7 *Song of Spring.* 1946. Watercolor, 25 x 29" (sight). Collection Mrs. Stephen Haynes, New York.

BURRI, Alberto. Italian, born 1915.

8 *Number 8.* (1953) Collage, 33¾ x 39½". Collection Ulrich Franzen, New York.

CALDER, Alexander. American, born 1898.

9 *Black Triangle with White Dots.* (1953) Sheet iron, aluminum and wire, 19½" high. Collection Dr. and Mrs. Harry Shwachman, Newton Center, Massachusetts.

CALLERY, Mary. American, born 1903.

10 *Reclining Woman.* (1950) Bronze, 18" long. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bremer, New Canaan, Connecticut.

CAPOGROSSI, Giuseppe. Italian, born 1900.

11 *Surface 184.* 1956. Oil on canvas, 25⅝ x 30¼". Collection Dr. and Mrs. Gerald T. Niles, New York.

CHERRY, Herman. American, born 1909.

12 *Number 15.* (1955) Oil on canvas, 28 x 41". Collection Whitelaw Reid, New York.

CICERO, Carmen. American, born 1926.

13 *The Kiss.* 1955. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48¾". Collection Larry Aldrich, New York.

CONGDON, William. American, born 1912.

14 *Santorin Number 1.* (1955) Oil on Masonite, 34½ x 42½". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Jack Kriger, New Rochelle, New York.

CORBETT, Edward. American, born 1919.

15 *Number 12.* 1951. Charcoal and pastel, 22⅞ x 18". Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

DUBUFFET, Jean. French, born 1901.

16 *Woman with Uncombed Hair.* 1954. Oil on Masonite, 9½ x 6⅞". Private collection, New York.

FEININGER, Lyonel. American, 1871-1956.

17 *Ray of Light.* 1950. Watercolor, 12¾ x 19". Collection Richard Brown Baker, New York.

FORSBERG, James. American, born 1919.

18 *The Family.* (1953) Cardboard cut with woodcut, printed in black, 19⅞ x 31¼". Collection Miss Walda Kirkland, New York.

GIACOMETTI, Alberto. Swiss, born 1901.

19 *Plaster Head.* (1950) Oil on canvas, 20½ x 16¾". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Alexander L. Berliner, New York.

GRAVES, Morris. American, born 1910.

20 *Seeking to Nest.* (1947) Tempera, 13¾ x 13⅝" (sight). Collection Philip Roddman, Brooklyn.

21 *"Yu" Double Owl.* (1947) Tempera, 14⅝ x 17¾" (sight). Collection Mrs. Rowene L. Butler, New York.

GREENE, Balcomb. American, born 1904.

22 *Classical Portrait.* (1953) Oil on canvas, 40 x 30". Collection Miss Martha Shaeffer, New York.

HARE, David. American, born 1917.

23 *Sunset I.* (1953) Stone and painted wire, 19¼" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase.

HARTIGAN, Grace. American, born 1922.

24 *City Life II.* 1956. Oil on canvas, 30 x 37¾". Collection Mrs. Bliss Parkinson, New York.

HOFMANN, Hans. American, born Germany 1880.

25 *The Yellow Pitcher (2).* 1953. Casein on Masonite, 21¾ x 29½". Collection Dr. and Mrs. William Metcalf, New York.

HULTBERG, John. American, born 1922.

26 *Airport.* (1952) Tempera, 17 x 19⅞" (sight). Collection Peter E. Hermann, New York.

JAENISCH, Hans. German, born 1907.

27 *Bird.* (1952) Bronze, 11" long. Collection Albert J. Petcavage, New York.

KAHN, Wolf. American, born Germany 1927.

28 *Landscape.* (1955) Pastel, 8½ x 11⅛" (sight). Collection Mrs. Joseph P. McElroy, Brooklyn.

LEVEE, John. American, born 1924.

29 *July III, 1957.* Oil on canvas, 29 x 46½". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard Rodgers, New York.

LIPTON, Seymour. American, born 1903.

30 *The Cloak.* 1952. Bronze, 18⅜" high. Collection John A. Carr, Jr., New York.

MACIVER, Loren. American, born 1909.

31 *Fireflies.* (1951) Oil on canvas, 12¾ x 25¾". Collection Mrs. Morris H. Grossman, New York.

MATHIEU, Georges. French, born 1921.

32 *Untitled.* 1957. Gouache, 22⅝ x 28½" (sight). Collection Mr. and Mrs. Winslow Carlton, New York.

MATTA (Sebastian Antonio Matta Echaurren). Chilean, born 1912.

33 *Growth.* (1955) Oil on canvas, 25½ x 29½". Collection Mrs. Horace Lamb, New York.

MIRO, Joan. Spanish, born 1893.

34 *The Bird Catchers.* 1951. Color lithograph, 21 x 14⅛" (sight). Collection Miss Ruth Last, New York.

MOORE, Henry. British, born 1898.

35 *Reclining Figure.* (1938) Bronze, 5⅛" long. Collection Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Kayden, New York.

NADELMAN, Elie. American, born Poland. 1882-1946.

36 *Acrobat.* (c. 1916) Bronze, 14⅞" high. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Goldsmith, New York.

OKADA, Kenzo. Japanese, born 1902.

37 *Number 36, 1954.* Oil on canvas, 30 x 29". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bart, New York.

PARKER, Robert Andrew. American, born 1927.

38 *Diplomat from Denmark.* 1956. Watercolor, 17½ x 21⅞" (sight). Collection Lewis Carliner, Washington, D. C.

PETERDI, Gabor. American, born Hungary 1915.

39 *Germination.* 1952. Aquatint, etching and engraving, printed in black with offset color, 19¾ x 23⅞". Collections: Mark Gittelson, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bareiss.

PICASSO, Pablo. Spanish, born 1881.

40 *Nude Pose.* 18 March 1954. Lithograph, 21 x 14½". Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. Powis Jones, New York.

PIERCE, Leona. American, born 1922.

41 *Strange Bird.* 1952. Color woodcut, 10¾ x 27⅝". Collections: Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Dewey, Jr., New York, Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Kintner, New York, Mrs. Gertrud A. Mellon, Greenwich, Connecticut.

POLLOCK, Jackson. American, 1912-1956.

42 *Free Form.* 1946. Oil on Masonite, 19 x 13⅝". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Marcel T. Freudmann, Scarsdale, New York.

RIOPELLE, Jean-Paul. Canadian, born 1923.

43 *Nocturne.* (1953) Oil on canvas, 25⅝ x 36". Collection Lewis Garlick, Woodmere, New York.

SCHWITTERS, Kurt. British citizen, born Germany. 1887-1948.

44 *Poco Poco.* 1947. Collage, 8½ x 6¼" (sight). Collection Richard Brown Baker, New York.

SHAHN, Ben. American, born Russia 1898.

45 *Phoenix.* (1952) Serigraph and water color, 22¾ x 21½". Collections: Harold R. Colvin, New York, Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Graff, New York, Mr. and Mrs. August Heckscher, New York.

46 *Shakespeare.* (1954) Ink. 12 x 9⅝" (sight). Collection Mr. and Mrs. Ted Cott, New York.

SOULAGES, Pierre. French, born 1919.

47 *Abstraction.* (1957) Gouache, 16 x 22" (sight). Collection Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis Stern, Rochester, New York.

SUTHERLAND, Graham. British, born 1903.

48 *Bird.* (1954) Color lithograph, 17½ x 17¼". Private collection, New York.

TOBEY, Mark. American, born 1890.

49 *Apparitions.* 1954. Tempera and watercolor, 17¾ x 12" (sight). Collection Mrs. Bliss Parkinson, New York.

50 *Multiple Journeys.* 1954. Tempera, 11⅞ x 8". Collection Mrs. John Barclay, Jr., Marion, Massachusetts.

TOMLIN, Bradley Walker. American, 1899-1953.

51 *Number 15.* (c. 1949) Oil on canvas, 31⅞ x 18⅞". Private collection, New York.

ZIEGLER, Laura. American, born 1927.

52 *Girl Leaning Against Stool.* (1955) Bronze, 7½" high. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Alfred R. Stern, New York.