

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As a memorial to the late Mark Rothko, who died February 25, ten of his paintings in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art or promised to it, have been installed in a special exhibition and will be on view on the Museum's third floor until May 31. An eleventh painting by Rothko in the Museum's Collection is touring Europe as part of The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection exhibition.

Among the paintings shown are three new acquisitions given by the artist at the end of last year and two paintings promised to the Museum by his widow. Another recent acquisition is Number 18, 1949, given by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd last June at the time of The New American Painting and Sculpture: The First Generation exhibition in which all the works in this memorial show were included. Philip Johnson, who in 1951 contributed the funds for the acquisition of the Museum's first Rothko -- Number 10, 1950 -- has lent his 1956 canvas, Yellow and Gold, which he has promised to the Museum.

Born in Dvinsk (now in Latvia, then part of the Russian empire) in 1903, Rothko came to the United States in 1913. In 1925 he established himself in New York and began to study art. By 1947 he had arrived at his familiar mature style characterized by rectangular shapes which appear to float in space.

Rothko had been given a number of one-man shows beginning in 1933 in Portland, Oregon (where his family lived and he attended elementary and high school), and including an exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in 1961 of some 54 works covering the period 1945-1960. This show was also seen in London, Amsterdam, Brussels, Basel, Rome and Paris. The Museum had previously included Rothko in its 1951 exhibition Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America, in Fifteen Americans, 1952, and in The New American Painting and Sculpture, 1958-59, an exhibition which was also shown in eight European countries. Rothko participated in a number of other exhibitions sponsored by the Museum International Council including 12 Modern

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American Painters and Sculptors, 1953-54, Modern Art in the U.S.A., 1955-56, and Two Decades of American Painting, 1966-67.

In his label text, William S. Rubin, Chief Curator of the Painting and Sculpture Collection, writes:

"In gambling that color, to the virtual exclusion of other components of a painter's battery, could sustain great art, Rothko became a pioneer of what has since been called color-field painting ... his colored rectangles seemed to dematerialize into pure light, a bodilessness achieved through the superimposition of multiple color veils. Modernist color -- as in Impressionism and Fauvism -- is bodied forth in the robust materiality of the pigment ... To this joyous and ultimately hedonistic universe, Rothko opposed a kind of color which, even when light or pastel, seemed rather to evoke a tenebrous and meditative inner world. And his light, different from that of nature, appeared as in Byzantine art to emanate from the pictures rather than to be refracted from the environment of the spectator."

Rothko himself wrote that "painting is really a matter of ending (the) silence and solitude of breathing and stretching one's arms again."

The exhibition was installed by Alicia B. Legg, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture.

List of works on view as a special tribute to Mark Rothko:

1. Slow Swirl by the Edge of the Sea. 1944. Oil on canvas, 6'3" x 7' 1/2". Promised gift of Mrs. Mark Rothko.
2. Number 24. (c. 1947-48). Oil on canvas, 33 1/2 x 50". Gift of the artist, 1969.
3. Untitled. (c. 1948). Oil on canvas, 8'10 1/8" x 9'9". Gift of the artist, 1969.
4. Number 18. 1949. Oil on canvas. 67 1/4 x 56". Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd. 1969.
5. Magenta, Black, Green on Orange. 1949. Oil on canvas, 85 1/2 x 64 3/4". Promised gift of Mrs. Mark Rothko.
6. Number 10. 1950. Oil on canvas, 90 3/8 x 57 1/8". Gift of Philip C. Johnson, 1951.
7. Number 22. 1950. Oil on canvas, 9'9 1/2" x 8'10 3/4". Gift of the artist, 1969.
8. Yellow and Gold. 1956. Oil on canvas, 66 x 62". Promised gift of Philip Johnson.
9. Red, Brown and Black. 1958. Oil on canvas, 8'10 5/8" x 9'9 1/4". Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1959.
10. Number 19. (1958). Oil on canvas, 7'11 1/4" x 7'6 1/4". Given anonymously, 1961.

Additional information available from Garry George, Assistant, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. (212) 956 - 7504.

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MARK ROTHKO 1903 - 1970

March 26 - May 30, 1970

C H E C K L I S T

Notes: Installed in the first gallery on the third floor.

Unless enclosed in parentheses, dates appear on the works themselves.
Dimensions are given in feet and inches, height preceeding width.
The acquisition number appears at the end of each credit line, except
where the work is a promised gift.

Slow Swirl by the Edge of the Sea. 1944. Oil on canvas, 6' 3" x 7' 1/2".
Promised gift of Mrs. Mark Rothko. Photo number: Pollitzer 11543.

Number 24. (c. 1947-48). Oil on canvas, 33 1/2 x 50".
Gift of the artist. 1106.69. Photo number: Clements 31-726 (736?).

Untitled. (c. 1948). Oil on canvas, 8' 10 1/8" x 9' 9".
Gift of the artist. 1107.69. Photo number: Mathews 3640.

Number 18. 1949. Oil on canvas, 67 1/4 x 56".
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd. 243.69.
Photo number: Sunami 13,051.

Magenta, Black, Green on Orange. 1949. Oil on canvas, 85 1/2 x 64 3/4".
Promised gift of Mrs. Mark Rothko. Photo number: Pollitzer 15076.

Number 10. 1950. Oil on canvas, 90 3/8 x 57 1/8".
Gift of Philip Johnson. 38.52. Photo number: Clements 7212.

Number 22. 1950. Oil on canvas, 9' 9 1/2" x 8' 10 3/4".
Gift of the artist. 1108.69. Photo number: Clements 31-743

Yellow and Gold. 1956. Oil on canvas, 66 7/8 x 62 5/8".
Promised gift of Philip Johnson. Photo number: Burckhardt PJ-61.

Red, Brown, and Black. 1958. Oil on canvas, 8' 10 5/8" x 9' 9 1/4".
Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. 21.59. Photo number: Sunami 16,138.

Number 19. (1958). Oil on canvas, 7' 11 1/4" x 7' 6 1/4".
Given anonymously. 389.61. Photo number: Clements 30-345.