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The Museum of Modern Art

RARE PRINTS BY JACKSON POLLOCK ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Complementary Print Exhibition Provides Contextual Background

Focus: Pollock and Printmaking
October 29, 1998-February 2, 1999

Dubuffet to de Kooning: Expressionist Prints from Europe and America
October 29, 1998-February 2, 1999

An exhibition of prints by Jackson Pollock examining a little-known aspect of the celebrated artist's career opens October 29 at The Museum of Modern Art. Comprising nearly thirty works, ***Focus: Pollock and Printmaking*** is the first exhibition to feature such a notable range of Pollock's exceedingly rare prints. The exhibition, which remains on view through February 2, was organized by Deborah Wye, Chief Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, in conjunction with the retrospective *Jackson Pollock*.

Most of the works on view are unique or known only in a few examples, including six works from a series of screenprints found in 1984, now part of the Museum's collection. These important works, which were neither documented nor shown publicly until 1995, provide remarkable insight into the artist's working method and creative process. In contrast to the mythic image of Pollock at work in his studio, pouring paint onto large-scale canvases with wild and spontaneous gestures, his prints portray him as a methodical and deliberate worker who painstakingly experimented in small scale on paper.

"The Museum's collection of Jackson Pollock's prints is a unique treasure, and the occasion of the retrospective exhibition of this artist's work provides a wonderful opportunity to show them," remarked Ms. Wye.

One of the few Abstract Expressionists to work in printmaking at periods throughout his career, Pollock began making lithographs in the 1930s that were realist in style and largely influenced by his teacher, Thomas Hart Benton, the American Regionalist painter best known for his sprawling murals. He later moved to engravings, which show a subtle interaction between figuration and abstraction through an overall network of lines, and screenprints, in which he experimented with colored inks and papers.

A complementary print exhibition, meant to provide a contextual backdrop for the adjacent installation of *Focus: Pollock and Printmaking*, features some seventy-five works by Jackson Pollock's American and European contemporaries. Opening on October 29, ***Dubuffet to de Kooning: Expressionist Prints from Europe and America*** explores a mode of art that was widespread in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.

American audiences are most familiar with the New York version of this style, known as Abstract Expressionism. Yet artists in many other

countries were forging a visual language that employed similar characteristics, including spontaneous and gestural line, coupled with abstracted, biomorphic shapes.

"The extensive holdings of the Museum's print collection allow us to compare and contrast the abstract expressionist phenomenon on both sides of the Atlantic," said Ms. Wye.

This exhibition includes works by Pollock's contemporaries, including Philip Guston, Willem de Kooning, and Robert Motherwell, as well as rare examples by Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb, and Clyfford Still. The work of their European counterparts, commonly referred to as *art informel*, will be seen through prints by such artists as Jean Dubuffet, Hans Hartung, and Pierre Soulages from France, Wolfgang Schulz Wols from Germany, Pierre Alechnisky from Belgium, Asger Jorn from Denmark, and Antonio Saura from Spain.

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