

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, announces that it will open to the public on Wednesday, October 21, a retrospective exhibition of the works of John Marin, the noted American artist. The exhibition, directed by Alfred Stieglitz, will fill the first and second floors of the Museum and will be composed of more than one hundred eighty watercolors, drawings, etchings and oils. The exhibition will be open to the public through Sunday, November 22.

John Marin was born in Rutherford, New Jersey, December 23, 1870. His paternal grandfather was French; his maternal ancestors, of English descent, settled in New York and New Jersey before the Revolution. Marin attended the public schools and Stevens Institute in New Jersey. After a year at Stevens Institute he had several odd jobs, then worked for four years in architects' offices. For a short period he was a free-lance architect. From the time he was fifteen until he was nearly thirty, he made sketching tours through several eastern states, in middle western cities including Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and along Lake Michigan and in the Mississippi Basin.

From 1899 to 1901 Marin studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and from 1901 to 1903 at the Art Students' League in New York. He went abroad in 1905, making Paris his headquarters. Each year thereafter until his final return to America in 1911 he made a European trip, including in his itineraries Amsterdam, Venice, Rome, Florence, Genoa, London, Bruges, Antwerp, Brussels, Strasbourg, Nuremberg, the Belgian Coast, and the Austrian Tyrol.

In 1900 Marin won a prize for "original" sketches at the Pennsylvania Academy. In 1906 his oil, The Mills of Meaux, was purchased for the Luxembourg. His work was shown in the Salon d'Automne of 1908, and he exhibited oil paintings in the Salon des Independents of 1909. About this time he met Edward Steichen who as a member of the Photo-Secession Group in New York sent some of Marin's work to the Photo-Secession Gallery. Alfred Stieglitz was Director of the Group and of the gallery. Since that time Marin's entire output has been shown annually somewhere, somewhere by Mr. Stieglitz. Ten of his watercolors were shown in the Salon d'Automne of 1910, and his work was exhibited in the Armory Show in New York in 1913. His work has been included in many important exhibitions in this country and abroad.

The catalog of John Marin's works which the Museum will publish concurrently with the exhibition includes, in addition to six color prints and 41 black-and-white reproductions of his paintings, a preface by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director

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of the Museum of Modern Art, and articles by Henry McBride, New York art critic who has known Marin since his youth; Marsden Hartley, friend and fellow-artist; and E. M. Benson, Marin's biographer.

E. M. Benson writes: "John Marin is an isolated figure in contemporary American art. He has never identified himself with any school or doctrine of painting either domestic or foreign. He has few followers and no disciples. For twenty-seven years he has exhibited his work at the various galleries over which Alfred Stieglitz has faithfully presided. Today at the age of sixty-six he is as uncompromising a free-lance as he was at thirty-six. Perhaps no American artist has courted Nature more tirelessly and with greater understanding of all her seasonal moods. Boats and buildings are as much his province as skies, seas, islands, and mountains. He has stamped his creative signature on all of them - a signature which many of us have come to regard as unique in American art."

In speaking of Marin's early work, Henry McBride says: "But distinct as was the Marin style at the time of his first New York exhibition there was nothing in it to disturb the sensibilities of purists. The colours were sparkling and pleasant and practically every drawing could be called honestly a poem. It was a young man's irresistible lyricism that impelled them. They were not profound but they were natural and unforced." Of the artist's development a few years later, about the time of the War, McBride comments: "The light-hearted singing troubadour who had come from Paris changed into a serious dramatist almost overnight. The little dancing boats in the harbour from which the artist had previously heard tinkling melodies now bounced about on positively black waves and against gray skies; and the recurring tune sounded mighty like a dirge. The towering buildings of lower New York also occupied his attention and he did them in a perfect frenzy of appreciation of their significance and importance. He became an excited and exciting painter."

In writing of Marin, his ideas and his watercolors, Marsden Hartley says: "Perhaps Cubism has been a sort of hilarious influence at times in these water colours and the natural wit of Marin has cooperated in ways that make us wonder why, but for all that, don't be bothered. First of all Marin has loved his medium, his work, and his life. He has spent six and a half decades telling the world that the privileges of beauty are enormous, that it even affects those that have no experience of it. You will never see water colours like these of John Marin again so take a good look and remember, and if you are a painter, don't try to cope with the style because the style in this case is several times the man."

In The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, which will be published at the

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time of the exhibition, Loren Mozley, a young artist friend of Marin, presents a vivid picture of the "Yankee Artist" and his methods of work. Mr. Mozley says in part: "John Marin is an American original, a curious little man, wiry and frail. His face is incredibly wrinkled and puckers into all sorts of criss-cross lines. His candid eyes peer out brightly and mischievously under an outlandish curling bang. His hair is scarcely streaked with gray. When he comes to town he dresses old-fashioned with a quaint/elegance. A few freckles. A dark green tie knotted in a remembered way. A pearl. And a tense grace born of habitual alertness: the axis under control. He is ambidextrous and makes abrupt, nervous gestures with both hands. He seems to lean rather than stoop, his shoulders bent by years of relentless peering ahead. A strange, honest-to-God sort of man.....a brush in either hand, working feverishly. He made the trees and skyscrapers lean merrily in Madison Square. He took Brooklyn Bridge apart and put it together again on his paper, and when he had some nuts and bolts left over, he scattered them around. Now Marin began to do those amazing factual reconstructions of nature. His color sang in clear dazzling washes or sputtered in tender staccato."

But let Marin, the artist, have the last word. In letters to Alfred Stieglitz he has written: "Nature's arrangements are finer, more, infinitely finer than your studio arrangements, my fine studio arrangements. Seems to me that the true artist must perforce go from time to time to the elemental big forms - Sky, Sea, Mountain, Plain - and those things pertaining thereto, to sort of re-true himself up, to recharge the battery. For these big forms have everything. But to express these, you have to love these, to be a part of these in sympathy. One doesn't get very far without this love, this love to enfold too the relatively little things that grow on the mountain's back. Which if you don't recognize, you don't recognize the mountains."

The exhibition has been selected by Alfred Stieglitz from the following collections: Mr. A. E. Gallatin, Mr. Philip Goodwin, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel A. Lewisohn, Mrs. Charles J. Liebman, Miss Georgia O'Keeffe, Mr. Fairfield Porter, Mr. Paul Rosenfeld, Bryner-Schwab, An American Place, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, all of New York; Mrs. Eugene Meyer, Washington, D.C.; Mr. Robert H. Tannahill, Detroit, Michigan; The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio; Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D.C.

During the exhibition of John Marin's work, paintings from the Museum's Permanent Collection and the Lillie P. Bliss Collection will be shown on the third and fourth floors of the Museum.