INAUGURAL EXHIBITION PRESENTS MOST EXTENSIVE DISPLAY OF DRAWINGS FROM MoMA'S COLLECTION

Drawing from the Modern, 1880-1945
The Paul J. Sachs Drawings Galleries, third floor
November 20, 2004—March 7, 2005

NEW YORK, November 15, 2004—To celebrate its 75th anniversary and the reopening of its newly expanded and renovated building, The Museum of Modern Art presents the most extensive display ever of drawings from its collection. Divided into three chronological segments, the year-long exhibition *Drawing from the Modern* examines 125 years of achievements in drawing through over 300 works from the collection. All three parts will be presented in the new Paul J. Sachs Drawings Galleries on the third floor. The first exhibition, ***Drawing from the Modern, 1880–1945****,* explores radical shifts in drawing practices that occurred during this period, from the introduction of new media and subject matter to the invention of new strategies and techniques, many of which count among modernism's most important accomplishments: Cubism's transformation of space, form, and structure, the introduction of found materials in collage, and the focus on geometry in abstraction. Highlighting the collection's unparalleled breadth and depth, the exhibition presents masterworks by key artists including Paul Cézanne, Hannah Höch, Paul Klee, Kazimir Malevich, Henri Matisse, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, and Kurt Schwitters. Also on view for the first time is the newly acquired *Vision: Berenice's Teeth* (1883) by Odilon Redon. *Drawing from the Modern, 1880–1945*, on view from November 20, 2004, through March 7, 2005, is organized by Jodi Hauptman, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings.

Ms. Hauptman states, "The perfect laboratory for avant-garde experimentation, drawings offer a vivid view both of the artist at work and the very shaping of modernism. The diverse works presented here reconsider the role of line and hand by rejecting or altering conventional drafting methods, challenge the position of the artist by embracing chance, reject expression by taking up the operations of the machine, assault paper's surface through collage and montage, and disavow traditional subject matter in favor of abstraction."

Drawing from the Modern, 1880-1945 traces the quest for a new kind of drawing. In response to changing social, cultural, and economic conditions sparked by the growth of cites and the expanded role of the machine—a state of perpetual transition and heightened speed known as modernity, artists set aside traditional processes and familiar materials and invented a host of new techniques.

In traditional drawing, line negotiates between description—providing a two-dimensional illusion of a three-dimensional thing—and revelation—a graphic reflection of a particular person. Challenges to such drawing conventions can be seen in Georges-Pierre Seurat's *At the Concert Européen* (1886–88), in which line is omitted in favor of atmosphere; Cézanne's *Mercury after Pigalle* (c. 1890), composed of a scratchy, uncertain outline; and Matisse's *Girl with Tulips* (1910), in which the aggressive erasures, smudges, and multiple views undo the assured, conventional line.

The use of chance to make art is a prevalent theme in the exhibition, especially in work by Dada and Surrealist artists. In an attempt to, as he described it, "banish compositional choice" and "deny human egotism," Jean Arp developed his *Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance* (1916–17) "by arranging pieces automatically, without will." Arp claimed to have dropped paper scraps onto a blank sheet and pasted them down in the resulting pattern. Other examples of the use of chance include Surrealist "Exquisite Corpse" drawings in which multiple players contribute parts of a figure without seeing the other participants' contributions; a decalcomania by Marcel Jean which was created by peeling apart a sandwich of pigment, glass, and paper; and examples of automatic drawing, practiced by Arp and André Masson, in which the pen is allowed to wander across the page without the intrusion of conscious thought.

Another way of responding to the modern world was to incorporate the machine as an art-making tool. This strategy challenged conventions of artistic expression and, at its most extreme, rendered draftsmanship obsolete. The tension provoked by optimism in the machine's technological feats and apprehension at its dehumanization can be seen in the Dada portrait, *"The Convict": Monteur John Heartfield after Franz Jung's Attempt to Get Him Up on His Feet* (1920), in which George Grosz replaced John Heartfield's heart with a mechanical pump; Alexandra Exter's *Guardian of Energy* (1924), a part-human, part-machine figure; and Klee's *Twittering Machine* (1922) in which birds are tethered to a mechanized box.

The juxtaposition of text and image, mixing of mediums, use of nonart materials, and construction of works from discarded objects are common in art today, but at the beginning of the twentieth century these ideas and techniques were radical. The exhibition foregrounds collage, montage, and assemblage as important developments that dramatically extended the field of drawing. In *Man with a Hat* (1912), Picasso integrated cut and pasted paper and newspaper into a charcoal drawing. In *Drawing A2: Hansi* (1918), Schwitters composed with detritus: a common chocolate wrapper is the ground for other pieces of found ephemera. *For Indian Dancer: From an Ethnographic Museum* (1930), Höch—the sole woman involved in Berlin Dada—began with a photograph of the actress Renée Falconetti and then bound and gagged her with paper additions.

Abstraction was a key development in the first half of the twentieth century, creating new possibilities for the work's composition and materiality. Arriving at abstraction via Cubism, Piet Mondrian's gridded compositions owe much to his observation and analysis of forms in nature, such as dunes, trees, and the sea. Mondrian's *Pier and Ocean 5 (Sea and Starry Sky)* (1915) uses vertical and horizontal lines to graph the way light moves across a wet surface and the patterns

on waves and pier. Other artists made complete breaks with the real world: Aleksandr Rodchenko rejected the brush in favor of ruler and compass in order to achieve mechanical geometries; Lyubov Popova composed abstractions with shapes cut from paper; and Kazimir Malevich used dense hatching and layers of pencil in *Suprematist Elements: Squares* (1923) to create a vibrant surface that threatens to explode its four-sided bounds.

Along with such breaks from convention, at certain times artists turned toward figuration and revived the skill of the hand. Picasso's *Sleeping Peasants* (1919) mixes a range of traditions, borrowing from Pompeian frescoes, drawings of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and paintings by Auguste Renoir. Though these building blocks may be fragments of the past, the results—in which styles are self-consciously shuffled—are, once again, new.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF DRAWINGS

MoMA has one of the world's most comprehensive single collections of modern drawings, with more than 7,000 works including those in such traditional mediums as pencil, ink, charcoal, and watercolor as well as collage, assemblage, and works in mixed mediums. The Department of Drawings is lead by Gary Garrels, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings. The reinstallation was organized by the curatorial staff of the Department of Drawings, under the direction of Gary Garrels, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings. The first installment, *Drawing from the Modern, 1880–1945*, is organized by Jodi Hauptman, Associate Curator; the second, *Drawing from the Modern, 1945–1975*, on view March 29–August 29, 2005, by Gary Garrels, Chief Curator; and the third, *Drawing from the Modern, 1975–2005*, on view September 13, 2004–January 16, 2004, by Jordan Kantor, Assistant Curator.

PUBLICATIONS

The three volumes of *Drawing from the Modern* will be the most comprehensive catalogue of MoMA's drawings collection. In addition to highlighting masterworks of the collection, the books will showcase new formal strategies—including collage, abstraction, chance, process, seriality, and the integration of text and image—and new subject matter, including the urban experience, the body, and identity. Volume I spans the period from 1880 to 1945, and includes work by such artists as Jean Arp, Paul Cézanne, Arshile Gorky, Hannah Höch, Paul Klee, Kazimir Malevich, Henri Matisse, Georgia O'Keeffe, Pablo Picasso, Odilon Redon, and Kurt Schwitters. Volume II, available in spring 2005, will cover 1945 to 1975, and Volume III, available in fall 2005, will bring us from 1975 to the present day. Drawing from the Modern, 1880–1945 by Jodi Hauptman: Flexi-bound, 8.25 x 10.5 in./220 pgs / 166 color and 9 black and white ISBN: 0870706632, publication date: October 2004, $40.00

SPONSORSHIP

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