



H.W. Janson and the Legacy of Modern Art at Washington University in St. Louis

Sabine Eckmann

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H.W. Janson, renowned for his influential textbook *History of Art*, served in the 1940s as curator of the Washington University art collection in St. Louis. During his tenure as curator, Janson, an exile from Nazi Germany and student of Erwin Panofsky, transformed the University collections significantly. In contrast to the many discussions in the American art world at the time that focused on forming an indigenous modern American art of international acclaim, Janson used the profits from deaccessions that included many American 19th century canvases to assemble a predominantly European modern art collection.

Landmark modern artworks such as Pablo Picasso's *Glass and Bottle of Suze* (1912), Juan Gris's *Still-Life with Playing Cards* (1916), Max Beckmann's *Les Artistes mit Gemüse or Four Men Around a Table* (1943), and Max Ernst's *The Eye of Silence* (1943-44) were acquired by Janson from New York dealers affiliated with the European exile art world. Janson's emphasis on modern and international art had a lasting impact on the development of the University's collection over the following decades. In addition to artworks by important American modernists such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, many European artworks by Jean Dubuffet, Eduardo Chillida, Pierre Soulages, and Antoni Tàpies entered the collection.

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition *H.W. Janson and the Legacy of Modern Art at Washington University in St. Louis*. The exhibition highlights paintings and sculptures by such artists as Beckmann, Gris, Picasso, Alexander Calder, Paul Klee, and Joan Miró that were instrumental to Janson's understanding of modern art, as well as later purchases including works by Dubuffet, Pollock, Arshile Gorky, and Mardsen Hartley. The catalogue illustrates the works in the exhibition as well as many other objects Janson acquired. In addition to Sabine Eckmann's essay on H.W. Janson, it includes texts that explore the reception of modern art, and a lecture heretofore unpublished by the late H.W. Janson.

With 60 illustrations, including 35 in full color

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