

exhibition of works

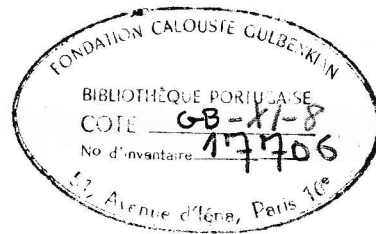
of **Contemporary Art**

belonging to

the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

**This exhibition is presented
under the Patronage of the
Ministry of Culture and Guidance**

by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
at the National Museum of Modern Art



Baghdad, November, 1966

Introduction

It is with special satisfaction and pleasure that the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation presents in Baghdad this exhibition of contemporary art belonging to the Foundation.

With the greatest zeal and enthusiasm the Foundation is fulfilling the resolve of the late Calouste Gulbenkian to promote the spread of cultural art. Under its patronage, artists are being brought together and with them their public.

Acquisition of works of contemporary art, following this policy of encouraging appreciation of cultural art, offers incentive and help for the artists in making possible the assembly of their works on behalf of that part of a public to which they are dedicated, fostering and strengthening awareness and appreciation by repeated exhibitions of their works.

On the other hand, the Foundation seeks to encourage art in many other ways, as witnessed in concrete form in Iraq by the construction of the National Museum of Modern Art, a project financed by the Foundation and whose execution received the full support of its qualified technical services.

Similarly, the institution of competitive awards for Iraqi painters and sculptors, as well as the building of a Studio Centre in Baghdad, which was financed by the Foundation on behalf of the Iraqi Artists Society, may be cited as other examples of artistic encouragement that are being realised.

With this promotion of the arts in mind, the acquisition of works and their presentation in exhibitions can be stated as sound

principles in terms of reciprocal meaning. Thus, the Foundation has acquired and exhibited.

However, none of these exhibitions so far organised has assumed the significance attaching to that which is now being presented in Baghdad, and none of them, we would stress, has included such a large number of works from so many distinct countries and representing so many artistic tendencies.

Works of Iraqi artists which are now in the Foundation's possession have not been included as it is considered that the object of this exhibition should be to afford contact with artistic tendencies manifested by artists from other countries whose works also belong to the Foundation.

The inauguration of this exhibition in Baghdad is particularly gratifying to the Foundation because it is entirely different from those it has organised in the past.

We have devoted our best endeavours to making it possible to offer in Baghdad the finest of the Foundation's works of contemporary art. Thus, the nucleus of exhibits gathered together for this purpose is being shown for this first and unique occasion.

The works of contemporary art owned by the Foundation are, indeed, valuable objects of art and form a significant part of its estate; but they are also of great value on their own. Each of them represents for the Foundation a very precious and irreplaceable means of realising initiatives already scheduled for exhibitions of varied character to be presented in cities of different European countries, whatever lacking in merit, sure of good will and intention, the message of the philanthropic spirit of Calouste Gulbenkian.