

# Early US Abstract Art On Show

American art is said to have won an unshakable reputation for the first time with its abstract expressionism, a style which first appeared in Europe in the early 20th century.

America came to lead the artistic world, in fact, after World War II by creating novel styles such as action painting, pop art or new realism, optical art and minimal art.

A unique exhibition, so designed as to spotlight formative abstract expressionism in the US, is now under way at the Seibu Museum of Art on the 12th floor of the Seibu department store, Ikebukuro, Tokyo. The exhibition will last until July 12.

On display are 80 paintings by 15 artists, including William Baziotas, Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, produced from 1935 to 1949.

What impresses the viewer, looking at the variety of the artists' styles, is probably the individual attempts and efforts to attain their own style in the very groping years of American abstract expressionism.

If one realizes that abstract expressionism was stimulated by cubism and surrealism and that Kandinsky, Miro and Picasso influenced many painters who pursued abstract style in those early days, one

will understand why one finds that some of the works on display are obviously linked to certain styles of the aforementioned art forms or artists.

Abstract painting does not mean merely the forming of an abstract figure. It is like a portrait of the insight and sensitivity of an artist visualized and expressed in his own manner.

Some put importance on the impromptu or automatic reaction to sensitivity. Some tried to compose a symphony on canvas out of hues and shapes without relying too much on geometric patterns, and others intended to set down an image of their impressions.

The exhibits include early works of Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) who eventually went so far as to originate "drip painting" which made him a star of action painting. His works are being exhibited in line with those of his wife Lee Krasner (1908- ) who seems to attain a pure abstract style a little earlier than Pollock.

There are also some impressive works with unique texture by Arshile Gorky (1904-1948), whose works correspond to Miro and Kandinsky whom he favored, and others, of Adolph Gottlieb (1903-1974) who attained his own world of pictographic painting.

The works of Willem de Kooning (1904- ) suggest a turning point of his abstract art and the creations of Mark Rothko (1903-1970) stand out for his surrealist portrayal of images.



"MOON Woman Cuts the Circle" by J. Pollock (oil, 1943).