

Exile Beckmann Returns to Exhibition Arena



*Elephants with Dancing Girl*: MAX BECKMANN (1944)

MAX BECKMANN has been accorded many honors, both in Europe where he was shown in retrospect at Basil in a great exhibition in the municipal Kunsthalle in 1930 and in America where he merited a coveted Carnegie Award. A violent anti-Nazi, he spent the war years in voluntary exile in Holland where he painted all through the occupation.

The first exhibition of the artist's work since 1941 is currently being held at the Buchholz Gallery in New York. Director Curt Valentin has assembled for this event important examples of Beckmann's brush dating from 1939 to the present. A slightly earlier picture (1937), the ambitious and well known triptych titled *Departure* (courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art) is shown, as is the later (1939) triptych titled *Acrobats*, loaned for the occasion from the collection of Lt. Wright Ludington. Both works might be considered as the flowering of an approach that has grown constantly through the long and distinguished career of the German expressionist. Powerful color at once clashes and harmonizes while mammoth forms, purposefully distorted, are masterfully balanced.

*Swimming Pool* adroitly manipulates its commanding rectangular forms, while a sunlit *Genius* is a telling lesson composition-wise. *Elephant with Dancing Girl* semi-abstractly divides space with rhythmic masses. *Still Life with Helmet* is a top entry in regard to its color and its mature synthesis of subject matter. Modeling and power motivate the integrated expressionism of Beckmann's rich *Women in Dutch Costume*. *Self Portrait* is a triumph of introspection. Technically this work owes much of its force to its solid use of pigment and sculptural approach.

Among the many drawings particularly remembered are a satirical *Radio Singer* and a tongue-in-cheek *Anglers*, along with *Head Waiters*.—BEN WOLF.