



PARRISH ART MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***ANGELS, DEMONS, AND SAVAGES* EXHIBITION FOCUSES ON THE CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE AMONG POLLOCK, OSSORIO, AND DUBUFFET**

WATER MILL, NY 3/6/2013 — *Angels, Demons, and Savages: Pollock, Ossorio, Dubuffet*, the first exhibition to explore the cross-cultural artistic dialogue among American painter Jackson Pollock, Philippines-born artist and art patron Alfonso Ossorio, and French painter and sculptor Jean Dubuffet, will open at the Parrish Art Museum Sunday, July 21, 2013, and remain on view through October 27, 2013. Focused on the years 1948 to 1952, during which the art world's center of gravity was shifting from Europe to the United States, and consisting of more than 50 paintings and works on paper, the exhibition will reunite a number of works by Pollock and Dubuffet from Ossorio's former collection for the first time since they were dispersed after his death in 1990. The exhibition is copresented by the Parrish Art Museum and The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and organized by Klaus Ottmann, Phillips curator at large and former Robert Lehman Curator at the Parrish, and Phillips Director Dorothy Kozinski.

Angels, Demons, and Savages explores the artists' work, their relationships, and their influence on one another. Alfonso Ossorio is the central figure in the exhibition. Heir to a vast Philippine sugar fortune and educated in England and the United States, he began exhibiting in New York City in 1941. In 1949, after forming friendships with Pollock and Dubuffet and acquiring their work, he visited Pollock and Lee Krasner in Springs, New York, and spent the summer in East Hampton. Two years later he purchased The Creeks, a large estate on Georgica Pond in East Hampton, where he lived until his death. The Creeks became a cultural hub where friends such as Pollock, Dubuffet, Krasner, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, and Costantino Nivola gathered. It is also the home of Ossorio's art collection and gardens.

Gallery owner Betty Parsons introduced Ossorio to Pollock and Krasner in 1949, and Ossorio traveled to Paris a year later, at Pollock's suggestion, to meet Dubuffet. Ossorio spent a year in Paris, during which he and Dubuffet became close. After Ossorio returned to New York, Dubuffet followed in October 1951. Ossorio tried to bring Pollock and Dubuffet together at a dinner at the Pollock house in Springs, but Pollock never appeared for the occasion, and the two artists never met, despite their interest in each other's work.

Pollock, Ossorio, and Dubuffet, like so many artists of their time, sought to create a different pictorial language through innovative use of materials and techniques. While each was classically trained, all three moved away from traditional easel painting to develop such techniques as dripping, pouring, rubbing, and throwing their materials onto paper, canvas, and hardboard panels placed on horizontal surfaces. Pollock is most strongly associated with his drip paintings, which culminated in his exhibition at Betty Parsons in the fall of 1950. In 1950 and 1951, Pollock worked at times in Ossorio's studio in Greenwich Village, where he was surrounded by

Ossorio's paintings. It was during this period that he abandoned his iconic abstract drip paintings and produced the Black Pourings, a series of "drawings" on unprimed cotton duck using mostly black industrial paint. Recently, such eminent Pollock scholars as Helen Harrison, director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center and Francis O'Connor, coauthor of the Pollock catalogue raisonné, have considered Ossorio's role in the evolution of Pollock's art, specifically the figurative Black Pourings.

Dubuffet was not embraced by French critics and curators during the 1940s. His use of such unconventional materials as sand, asphalt, gravel, and household paints and his interest in *art brut* (raw art, known more recently as outsider art) were controversial in France. But after Clement Greenberg wrote positively about his work, he became the most visible and talked-about French artist in New York. In 1949 he cofounded the Compagnie de l'Art Brut, a collection of 1200 works by 100 artists working outside the prevailing culture. "The author of this art draws all...from within themselves, and not from the clichés of classical art or the latest art trends," Dubuffet explained. When the Compagnie was dissolved, Dubuffet persuaded Ossorio to install the Art Brut collection at the Creeks. While the collection remained there until 1962, most of the American artists who saw it, including Pollock and Clyfford Still, were unimpressed.

Of the three artists, Ossorio is the least visible in art history texts. According to Klaus Ottmann, "He was a multicultural artist who synthesized Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, and Art Brut with his Hispanic and Asian roots." Artist Mike Solomon, former director of the Alfonso Ossorio Foundation, has said, "Ossorio was a major link between Europe and America." In the late 1940s, Ossorio developed wax-resist technique, building up a rich visual vocabulary in layers of wax, black ink, water-based paintings, and other drawing materials. Dubuffet praised Ossorio's "rich and complicated grammar." While Ossorio learned from Pollock how the medium itself could become the image and from Dubuffet how a consciously intended image could be abstracted to its most primitive essentials, his work, though highly expressive, stopped short of absolute abstraction.

Klaus Ottmann has summed up the connection among the artists: "One thing that really created a strong affinity among these three artists was that all three were extremely interested in process and materiality and were very experimental. Pollock is well known for having pioneered new techniques, working with materials that until then had never been used in art. Dubuffet similarly used anything—even dirt from the street; he was extremely interested in raw material and in process. Ossorio did the same, and he continued to do it even in his late work."

A fully illustrated catalogue copublished by The Phillips Collection and Yale University Press accompanies the exhibition, featuring essays by Klaus Ottmann and Alicia Longwell, the Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Chief Curator, Art and Education, at the Parrish Art Museum. The catalogue also includes the first English translation of Dubuffet's major essay on Ossorio and an in-depth study of the materials and techniques used in the works of the three artists, prepared collaboratively by Phillips Head of Conservation Elizabeth Steele and Paper Conservator Sylvia Albro with independent conservator Chantal Bernicky and Philadelphia Museum of Art conservator Scott Homolka.

The exhibition is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

The exhibition in Washington is proudly sponsored by Lockheed Martin. Support for the catalogue is provided by the Dedalus Foundation, Inc. The exhibition media partner is WAMU 88.5.

The Parrish Art Museum's programs are made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the property taxpayers from the Southampton School District and the Tuckahoe Common School District.

About the Parrish Art Museum

The Parrish Art Museum is the oldest cultural institution on the East End of Long Island, uniquely situated within one of the most concentrated creative communities in the United States. The Parrish is dedicated to the collection, preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of art from the nineteenth century to the present, with a particular focus on honoring the rich creative legacy of the East End, celebrating the region's enduring heritage as a vibrant art colony, telling the story of our area, our "sense of place," and its national—even global—impact on the world of art. The Parrish is committed to educational outreach, to serving as a dynamic cultural resource for its diverse community, and to celebrating artistic innovation for generations to come.

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