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## **Celebrating 175: Virginia Dwan, Dwan Gallery, Franz Kline and Philip Guston, 1961 April 3**

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books & the arts

Los Angeles Mirror Monday, April 10, 1961 Part 1 9

De Kooning, Kline and Guston Shows Attract Great Attention  
BY GERALD NORDLAND

Mirror Art Critic

Of the many exhibitions opening last week, two are of such importance that they would attract attention in any of the art world's capitals. The de Kooning show at the Paul Kantor Gallery is first. The Dwan Gallery exhibition of works by Franz Kline and Philip Guston is the other. Willem de Kooning is now regarded internationally as a leader of world painting. His current show examines eighteen works from the last 23 years.

In a sketchy sense this exhibition reviews the artist's entire career. From abstraction to figure painting and back again, the exhibit makes clear the painter's continuing interest in the human form as subject matter.

THE EARLIEST works recall the ascetic years of the last nineteen thirties and the WPA murals which engaged the efforts of so many artists. Wartime paintings like "Untitled, 1943" show a clear relation to the earlier pictures at the same time that form becomes open and relatively free. By 1947 "Valentine" suggests the vigorous and emotional painting which first brought de Kooning to national attention.

Subsequent developments like "Two Women in the Country" of 1954 ushered in the full sized painting of de Kooning and made him the most shocking and disturbing of the first team artists working today. The distortions, dislocations and displacement of cubist painting are present, together with an expressionist color and emotional drawing which reveals the years of serious draftsmanship behind the painter's easy authority.

FINALLY THE brilliant "Police Gazette" and the three abstractions of 1958-59 brings us to the styles which has been most influential among the younger contemporaries. Already a part of history, these canvases are like specific illustrations of the painterly conclusions which the artist arrived at in his figure paintings of 8 years ago.

The Kline-Guston show is of nearly equal interest. While occasional paintings by these artists have been seen on the western slopes, this is the first show which has permitted southlanders to see as many as eight or ten works by each.

KLINE'S ALLEGED relationship to the smoky skeletons of structural steel or the inky bars of Japanese calligraphy must be sensed in some superficial way. Yet his untranslatable compositions are inescapably themselves and they seem totally non-referential. The painting of 1957 called "Garcia" is clearly the chief work. Other works, both larger and smaller, round out the before and after of Kline's career, without saying anything more powerful or expressive.

Ten examples of the work of Philip Guston are drawn from the period 1958-60. All of these paintings represent the new "tough" Guston who is self-consciously avoiding the sweetness and impressionist fragility of which he has been accused in prior exhibitions. Guston is a painter of unusual professionalism. His high standards of achievement may be felt in virtually every passage of these poetic paintings.



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