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15 Broad Street, New York

Forwarded as of Possible Interest to

Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

From the

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Museum of Modern Art

The growing utilization of American private wealth for public art education is shown in the announcement that a museum of modern art, which will have Mrs John D. Rockefeller, Jr., among its organizers, is to be founded in New York. Opening this fall with loan exhibitions of French and American paintings of the past 50 years, this institution will gradually acquire a permanent collection and have a building of its own. It is the intention of the founders that the new museum shall be a complement to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is felt to be limited more or less to the acquisition of "works of art which seem 'certainly and permanently valuable.'" The new museum will exhibit and collect works by recent artists and contemporaries and will neither wait for the critical judgment of time nor try to anticipate it. In short, this museum will show contemporary art in the making, though presumably selecting what is most meritorious or most characteristic.

Such a museum, if discreetly conducted, should be a stimulus to living American artists, for it will offer a chance of sale and permanent exhibition to works of merit for which there would be no room in the Metropolitan even if that great institution could open its doors more hospitably to contemporary art. Paintings are shown every year at the National academy, the Pennsylvania academy and other leading exhibitions which are deserving of indefinite public attention, though not necessarily destined to be classed with great art. A museum of modern art which gave recognition to contemporary work of merit would encourage serious artists to do their best and cultivate their individuality regardless of the whims of private purchasers. There are numerous American artists of the past 50 years whose works are not as fully shown in public New York collections as they deserve to be.

In regard to importations, the museum will no doubt follow a prudent course. For the stage may come in the reputation of any modern artist when his works are sold more on promotion by dealers than on merit. Sturge Moore, an English writer on esthetics, referred recently to the day when "America had absorbed all the worst Rodins and 'Cezannes'" and "somebody else would 'have to be boomed.'" Rodin and Cezanne are important artists, but that fact does not lend value to their inferior works any more than it lends value to their imitators.