

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

The Museum of Modern Art was founded in New York City in 1929 by a small group of art patrons as an educational institution for the purpose of helping people know and enjoy the arts of our time.

From the beginning it has been concerned with all the visual arts--drawings and prints, architecture, industrial and typographic design, photography and films as well as painting and sculpture. Although chronologically its field is roughly defined as extending from about 1875 to the present, the Museum also exhibits arts of a much earlier time if they have special relevance to modern forms of expression. "Arts of the South Seas," "Ancient Arts of the Andes," and The Japanese Exhibition House are among the major exhibitions which have reappraised earlier traditions from the point of view of our own day. The Museum has also always adhered to the premise that it should be international in its approach to art. Thus, while one of its major functions is the presentation of the art of its own country, its collections and exhibitions are not limited by national considerations.

In addition to approximately 25 new exhibitions organized each year for display in its own building, the Museum annually sends out more than 75 exhibitions which are shown throughout the United States and Canada, Europe, Latin America and the Far East. Other principal activities of the Museum include publication of eight to ten new art books each year; film showings twice a day in its auditorium of movies from its famous Film Library; conducting art classes for about 1500 children and adult amateurs; the sale of fine color reproductions, postcards, and Christmas cards specially designed by well-known artists; and renting to members of the Museum original works of art assembled from New York galleries.

The Museum of Modern Art receives no funds from federal, state or municipal government. Like many museums in the United States, it is an educational institution devoted to the service of the public, yet entirely supported and administered by private individuals. Its work is made possible by more than 25,000 members who pay annual dues beginning at \$³12.50; by the public which pays a small admission fee (60¢ for adults, 20¢ for children); by the sale of books and reproductions; and by contributions from private donors and charitable foundations.

COLLECTIONS

Among the more than 1000 paintings in the Collection are such famous works of art as Cézanne's "Still Life with Apples," Rousseau's "Sleeping Gypsy" and "The Dream," van Gogh's "Starry Night," Modigliani's "Reclining Nude," Matisse's

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"Red Studio" and "The Moroccans," de Chirico's "Nostalgia of the Infinite" and Monet's "Water Lilies." The Museum owns 20 paintings by Picasso, including such outstanding works as "Les Femmes d'Alger," "Three Musicians," and "Night Fishing at Antibes," in addition to watercolors and gouaches, collages, sculpture and prints. The Collection's examples of Cubist paintings by Picasso, Braque and Gris are particularly outstanding. Among Latin-American artists are notable works by Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, Tamayo, Lam and Matta. Artists of this country represented in the Collection include John Marin, Edward Hopper, Ben Shahn, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock and Morris Graves.

The sculpture collection of approximately 200 examples is installed partly in galleries and partly in the Museum's outdoor garden. It includes Rodin's monumental Balzac, and major works by Maillol, Brancusi, Renoir, Lipschitz and Gonzalez, as well as mobiles by Alexander Calder, a wire construction by Richard Lippold and works by young Americans.

In the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room are more than 4,000 original prints in all graphic media in use among 19th- and 20th-century artists of North and South America and Europe. This collection, the largest in the world, includes books and portfolios. It contains the most extensive selection of Picasso prints in any museum. The Print Room is on the Museum's fourth floor and is open to the public every weekday afternoon.

Outstanding modern buildings are documented in the Department of Architecture and Design through its extensive collection of photographs, color slides, plans and models. In addition, the related arts are represented through a highly selective collection of furniture, glassware and other objects, including examples of Art Nouveau and works by the Bauhaus and de Stijl designers such as Gropius and Mies van der Rohe and Rietveld. Both handcrafted and machine-made, mass-produced objects as diverse as business machines, kitchen utensils, fabrics and ceramics are included, since the Museum believes that good design does not depend either upon methods of manufacture or on the price of the article. The collection of typographical design includes posters from all over the world, as well as book jackets, magazine covers and advertisements.

The Museum of Modern Art was the first museum to make the art of photography an important part of its program. It possesses outstanding examples of some of the earliest photography, but its collection consists predominately of 20th-century photographs by such masters as Steiglitz, Cartier-Bresson, Man Ray, Edward Weston, Ansel Adams and Paul Strand.

The greatest film collection in the world is that of the Museum's Film Library,

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whose function is to collect, preserve and show the artistically and historically significant films produced throughout the world over the past sixty years. In many instances the Film Library has unique surviving examples of important films which would otherwise have been irretrievably lost; a Film Preservation Fund is now being raised to transfer to permanent film works in danger of serious deterioration. In addition to providing an archive with a codified body of reference material for the use of scholars and professionals, the twice-daily programs of film showings bring pleasure to thousands of laymen. Films from the Collection are also circulated to other educational institutions throughout the country.

EXHIBITIONS

The Museum of Modern Art presents exhibitions in all its fields of interest, drawing upon the rich material in its own collection (which is far too extensive to be displayed at one time) and upon loans from private and public collections all over the world. It has held comprehensive one-man retrospectives of such artists as Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Klee, Dali and Rouault, and surveys of major trends in art history or of schools, such as "Cubism and Abstract Art," "Fantastic Art," "Dada and Surrealism," "The Fauves," "Twentieth Century Italian Art," "Sculpture of the 20th Century," "Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America" and "Masters of British Painting." A series of exhibitions, each composed of between 12 and 15 one-man shows, is presented periodically to show recent works by American artists.

Architectural exhibitions also have been devoted either to work by one man, such as Mies van der Rohe, or to surveys such as "Built in U.S.A.: Post-war Architecture" and "Built in Latin America." Three full-scale houses have been temporarily erected in the Museum's outdoor exhibition area: one by Marcel Breuer, one by Gregory Ain and, most recently, an authentic reproduction of a Japanese house of the 16th-17th century, a period particularly important for modern western architecture. Among notable pioneering efforts was the "Machine Art" show of 1934, revolutionary in its emphasis on the beauty in well-designed tools, beakers and other industrially produced objects. Since then, the Museum has had many other important design shows, some featuring useful objects obtainable at low cost, others exhibiting the prize-winning examples of lamps, furniture, or playground sculpture in competitions frequently co-sponsored by the Museum and outside organizations.

Print shows have featured the graphic work of individual artists such as Redon, Klee or Picasso, or of groups of artists, such as "Young American Printmakers" which featured the recent notable activity in printmaking among artists under 35 years of age in the United States. Of the many photography exhibitions, the most popular is "The Family of Man" held two years ago which presented over 500 photographs from 68

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countries selected to demonstrate the theme of essential oneness of human beings throughout the world.

In addition to the 25 or more exhibitions which the Museum presents each year in its own building in New York, it circulates some 60 to 75 exhibitions to educational and non-profit institutions throughout the United States and Canada, and in foreign countries. These are shown not only in large metropolitan museums, but in small, widely separated communities remote from urban centers; many schools and colleges utilize them as an essential feature of their own educational program.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

The Museum's international activities were greatly expanded in 1952 by a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers' Fund which enabled the Museum to send exhibitions of American art abroad and to bring to the United States art from other countries. Under this International Program, the Museum has organized the United States representation at such international art exhibitions as the II Bienal at São Paulo, Brazil, the 10th Inter-American Conference at Caracas, Venezuela, and the II Bienal Hispanoamericana de arte at Barcelona. The Museum also purchased the privately owned U. S. pavilion at the Venice Biennale and organized the exhibition of (North) American art held at the XXVII Biennale in 1954. The International Program has also enabled the Museum to send various exhibitions of the work of American painters, sculptors, architects, printmakers, graphic artists, designers and photographers to Europe, Latin America and the Far East. Among the exhibitions of art from other countries that it has presented in the United States are "The Architecture of Japan," "The Modern Movement in Italy: Architecture and Design," "Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India" and "Latin American Architecture Since 1945."

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

In December 1956 a group of community leaders and art patrons from various parts of the United States incorporated a non-profit educational organization called The International Council at the Museum of Modern Art. Headed by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd, the Council plans to finance a five-year world-wide program of art exhibition exchange so that American cultural achievements can be better known abroad and the art of other nations brought here to enrich our own knowledge and cultural resources. Formation of the Council ensures the continuation and expansion of the International Program of circulating exhibitions initiated at the Museum in 1952 as the original foundation grant is due to expire. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, however, has pledged additional contributions during the next five years to help the Council get started. William E. S. Curteis is Executive Secretary of the Council which has rented office space from the Museum at 11 West 53 Street, New York City.

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PUBLICATIONS

Since it was founded, the Museum of Modern Art has published approximately 200 books, among them pioneering efforts which have made unique and valuable contributions to the world's literature on art. Their authors are noted scholars, many of them members of the Museum's own distinguished staff. Some have been issued in conjunction with exhibitions, of which they provide a permanent record; others are comprehensive monographs on individual artists, or surveys of particular periods or subjects like The History of Impressionism or The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day. The small paper-back booklet What is Modern Painting?, designed as an introductory guide for laymen, has been reprinted in five editions, has sold more than 75,000 copies since its first publication in 1943 and has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese. For its 25th Anniversary in 1954-55, the Museum issued Masters of Modern Art, a survey of 350 of the best or most characteristic works in its collection, reproduced in color or black and white. French, Spanish, German and Swedish editions of this major publication are in print. A recent major publication is Post-Impressionism; from van Gogh to Gauguin.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Department of Education is concerned with teaching art at all age levels. In its own classes it offers courses for children organized by age group, beginning with three-year olds, as well as for adult amateurs. Puppet making, clay work, painting, drawing and lecture courses on photography and architecture, art history, and design are among the many classes offered each semester. During the summer months classes are held on Long Island so that vacationing families can take advantage of their holiday leisure to explore painting and the arts.

The Department of Education also presents exhibitions aimed at acquainting parents and teachers with methods of art education and examples of children's creative art work. Most popular is the annual Children's Holiday Carnival attended each year by about two thousand children between the ages of four and eight who play with specially designed toys and have a chance to paint and make "feeling pictures" and three-dimensional pictures in a specially equipped workshop gallery.

The Department has also been a prime organizer of the Committee on Art Education, a national organization of art teachers.

JUNIOR COUNCIL

The Junior Council of the Museum was organized in 1949. Composed of about 60 young men and women interested in the visual arts, the Council organized and operates the Art Lending Service, has presented, with the assistance of the Museum curatorial staff, large exhibitions of drawings and prints, and has organized symposia,

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discussion groups, evenings of dance, poetry readings, music and other arts related to the Museum program. Mrs. Donald B. Straus is Chairman of the Council, which has its offices at the Museum.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees which administers the Museum's affairs is Nelson A. Rockefeller who has been a trustee since 1932. During the past 16 years, Mr. Rockefeller has served with the federal government as Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Under Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and most recently Special Assistant to President Eisenhower for foreign affairs, a position from which he resigned in December 1955. He is now chairman of New York State's Temporary State Commission on the Constitutional Convention, and since 1953 has been chairman of the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization. Mr. Rockefeller's business activities and government posts encompass a wide range. He is chairman of the board of Rockefeller Center, Inc., president of the International Basic Economy Corporation, an international financing and development company, and president of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

The president of the Museum of Modern Art is Mr. William A. M. Burden, well-known in the United States for his activities in government service, business, educational and charitable institutions. Formerly Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Air, he is now the senior partner in the New York firm of William A. M. Burden, and Company and a director of the Hanover Bank and other business corporations. He is also a governor of the Society of the New York Hospital, a director of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a visiting member of various faculty committees of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He served as Co-Chairman of the "Salute to France" held in Paris in 1955, and was in charge of the visual arts events which featured the two exhibitions 50 ANS D'ARTAUX ETATS-UNIS and DE DAVID A TOULOUSE-LAUTREC.

Among the Museum's Trustees, many of whom, like Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Burden, have outstanding art collections of their own, are John Hay Whitney, Ambassador to Great Britain; Wallace K. Harrison, noted architect; Henry Allen Moe; A. Conger Goodyear; Mrs. Bliss Parkinson; Mrs. Henry R. Luce, former Ambassador of the United States to Italy; and such eminent scholars and writers on art as Dr. Paul J. Sachs, Professor Emeritus of Harvard University and Mr. James Thrall Soby, author of Contemporary Painters and Giorgio de Chirico.

The staff of the Museum includes many distinguished scholars of international renown in their respective fields:

René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum
Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum Collections
Miss Dorothy C. Miller, Curator of the Museum Collections

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William S. Lieberman, Curator of Prints

Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture

Arthur Drexler, Director of the Department of Architecture and Design

Edward Steichen, Director of the Department of Photography

Richard Griffith, Curator of the Film Library

Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications

Porter McCray, Director of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions and International Program

Victor D'Amico, Director of the Department of Education.

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