

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

14 WEST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

The importance of modern art in the contemporary world was discussed by President Roosevelt in a radio address last night. He spoke in connection with the opening of the Museum's new building, the presentation of a new exhibition to the public and the induction of a new president of the Modern Museum of Art, Nelson A. Rockefeller.

(The text of the President's address is being released in Washington.)

In last night's radio program Nelson A. Rockefeller, introduced by Lowell Thomas, stated: -- "Our purpose is to show in the most representative way the best that American and foreign artists are doing today. The Museum of Modern Art represents the art of the past fifty years, a dynamic museum. There are plenty of splendid institutions that show the arts of the past -- other ages than our own. The purpose of our talented director, Alfred Barr, is to keep the Museum always up-to-date."

Other speakers were Edsel Ford, Edward Bruce, chief of the section of fine arts of the Treasury Department, the noted turfman Jock Whitney who is sponsor of the Museum of Modern Arts motion picture film library, President Robert Maynard Hutchins of the University of Chicago and Walt Disney, who spoke from Hollywood.

Edward Bruce spoke of museum co-operation with the government. He said: "As Chief of the Treasury Department of Fine Arts I have never asked for the co-operation of the Museum of Modern Art without receiving it heartily. The first exhibition ever held by a government art agency, the former Public Works of Art Project, came to your gallery for exhibition. Ever since that day, I have felt grateful for your cordial support, especially grateful to your able young director, Mr. Alfred E. Barr. We have the good fortune to be working together in a period of growing appreciation.

Edsel Ford discussed the industrial aspect of modern art. "Modern industries can turn out innumerable examples of handsomely designed modern objects which will be as representa-

tive of the best taste of our own epoch as the objects of Greece and Rome were of theirs. One of the purposes of the Museum of Modern Art is to help you perceive the beauty in useful well-made things. One of its exhibitions now on tour is called 'Useful objects under five dollars'. I think the time is not far away when it will be possible for all of us to live in homes furnished with objects of 'museum quality,' even though their cost be trifling."

The work of the historical motion picture film library of the Museum was discussed by Mr. John Hay Whitney of The Turf and Motion Pictures. He said: "The liveliest visual art of the twentieth century is the motion picture. So we have a Film Library and John Abbott is doing a fine job directing it. It contains hundreds of motion pictures of every type made since eighteen ninety-five, representing the birth and aesthetic development of that medium which has both mirrored and influenced the world during the last forty years."

Walt Disney spoke from Hollywood and told of the significance of historical motion pictures for the future: "It was only four years ago that there was considerable talk about the real need for this film library, and tonight it's an accomplished fact. I believe at the time it was said what a profound tragedy it would be if the record of motion pictures was lost to posterity. The human critter just naturally can't swallow the thought of himself and life's work passing into oblivion completely. I understand that's why those kings of Egypt built their tombs, the pyramids, to last forever. And the fascination of the past has drawn millions to the pyramids for a look. But think how much more interesting, if we had motion picture records of the actual building of the pyramids, if we could see and hear those old kings buried. How would you like to watch Nero fiddling while Rome burned? Well, our film library will be on the right side of the ledger there. And think of the knowledge we'll give posterity -- the way we talk and dress and act -- and the ladies' hats, especially! And perhaps a thousand years from now or some far time when our world is ruled by tolerance and reason -- posterity will delve into these film archives of today and see great cities ruled by gangsters -- see the insane savagery of war --

and perhaps the world will be so changed that our tragedies will seem strange -- unbelievable -- incredible! And that will make posterity feel superior -- a very pleasant feeling -- a gift from us."

From the University of Chicago, President Robert Maynard Hutchins spoke on modern art and education: "The Museum of Modern Art is a place of demonstration. It follows that the Museum of Modern Art is a place of action. A university, on the other hand, is a place for study, contemplation, and decision. Aesthetics, or the philosophy of art, is an important subject matter which no one will deny should be contemplated in a university. Perhaps the reason it is contemplated inadequately is that it is too difficult. The Greeks left the subject relatively unexplored because they considered an artist no different from a shoemaker. They were, therefore, unable to recognize in his production the symbol of beauty. It appears that it is difficult for us to think without the Greeks. The Museum of Modern Art is going ahead without the help of the universities and without the Greeks. It has recognized its double burden and its double privilege. It is making decisions about beauty as well as displaying beauty. It is also attempting to teach aesthetics. It knows that it is not enough to have exhibits. People have eyes and perceive. Perception can be taught. Perception is understanding."

These statements were broadcast on a program from 10 to 11 p.m. EDT over the NBC Blue Network and Station WOR. The Columbia Broadcasting System and the Mutual network joined the program at 10:45 for the speech by the President of the United States.

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53rd Street, New York, N. Y.

Telephone: Circle 5-8900

Cable Address: Modernart

May 6, 1939.

TO City Editors
News Photo Editors

Dear Sirs:

You are invited to come or send a representative
to a
PRESS CONFERENCE at the Museum of Modern Art,
11 West 53 Street
Monday, May 8, at 3:30 P.M.

for a
PREVIEW OF THE NEW TWO-MILLION DOLLAR GLASS-WALLED
BUILDING AND SCULPTURE GARDEN of the Museum of
Modern Art

and
to receive news of IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE
MUSEUM'S OFFICERS

Present at the conference will be A. Conger Goodyear,
Nelson A. Rockefeller, Mrs. John S. Sheppard and John Hay Whitney.

Reporters are requested to come as near 3:30 as
possible for a trip through the building, which has many unusual
features and innovations.

Photographers are requested to come at four o'clock.

N.B. THIS IS NOT AN ART PREVIEW. Art critics have
been invited to cover the exhibition, Art In
Our Time, Tuesday, May 9, between noon and
four P.M.

For further information please call me at Circle 5-8900.

Yours very truly,

Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

Goodyear
President:
N. A. Rockefeller, Jr.
President:
A. Lewisohn
and
President:
A. Rockefeller
N. Bliss
Robert Woods Bliss
C. Clark
Murray Crane
Daven of Millbank
Field
Ford
Goodwin
K. Harrison
S. Paley
Charles S. Payson
Resor
Ruml
S. Sheppard
M. M. Warburg
Whitney
H. Barr, Jr.
Director:
Dabney Mabry, Jr.
Film Library:
Abbott