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All over the world the rising tide of interest in modern movements in art has found expression not only in private collections but also in the formation of public galleries created for the specific purpose of exhibiting collections of modern art.

No where has this tide of interest been more manifest than in New York but New York alone among the great capitals of the world lacked a public gallery where the works of the founders and masters of the modern school could be seen today. That the American metropolis had no such gallery is an extraordinary anomaly. The municipal museums of Stockholm, Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Mannheim, Grenoble, Essen, the Hague, Detroit, Cleveland, Providence, Worcester, San Francisco, and a score of other cities provided the public with more adequate permanent exhibitions of modern art than did the institutions of our vast and conspicuously modern New York.

Experience has shown that the best way of giving modern art a fair presentation is to establish a gallery devoted frankly to the works of artists who most truly reflect the taste, feeling and tendencies of our day. The Louvre, National Gallery of England, and the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, to mention only three national museums, form parallels to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. They are great reservoirs of historical collections but in addition to these huge institutions there are in Paris the Luxembourg, in London the Tate Gallery, and in Berlin the Crown Prince's Palace, where modern art receives the same serious attention as do Italian painting, Gothic sculpture or colonial furniture in the historical museums.

With these parallels in mind a group of New York collectors decided in the summer of 1929 to organize a museum of modern art for New York. Under the initiative of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, a committee was formed which comprised in addition to these three members Mrs. W. Murray Crane, Frank Crowninshield, A. Conger Goodyear, and Professor Paul J. Sachs. The first two years of the Museum have been in the nature of an experiment to discover whether the public was really sufficiently interested in modern art to encourage the Trustees to make their venture permanent.

No attempt was made at first to assemble a collection. Instead a series of important loan exhibitions was organized. One after another these became the focus of interest in art activities in New York. 40,000 people attended the first exhibition of paintings by Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, and van Gogh, and over 50,000 the exhibition of "Painting in Paris." During the first two years fifteen loan exhibitions attracted over 315,000 people, almost one-eighth the attendance at the Metropolitan Museum during the same period. These exhibitions were in part historical including Ryder, Homer and Eakins, great American painters of the last generation; Corot and Daumier, great French painters of the nineteenth century; as well as many exhibitions devoted to contemporary American and European painters and sculptors.

In the spring of 1931 the Museum received a severe blow in the death of Miss Bliss, its vice president. The Trustees had been for some time convinced that the immense popular interest in the Museum was sufficient proof of the desirability of making the Museum permanent. Miss Bliss' will confirmed this feeling by its extraordinarily generous bequest of the major portion of her collection comprising masterpieces by Cézanne, Seurat, Gauguin, Degas, Picasso, Matisse, and other modern painters - works which might be valued at little less than one million dollars.

It is interesting to recall in passing that at the opening of the Memorial Exhibition of Miss Bliss' Collection in June of this year, Mrs. Archibald M. Brown and Mrs. Alonzo Potter of the North Suffolk Garden Club, and Mrs. Baillie Ripley, President of the Garden Club of Litchfield, took charge of arranging flowers at the invitation of the Trustees of the Museum. All three had been prize winners in "Flower Arrangements in Modernistic Groups" at the exhibition of the Garden Clubs of America at the New York Flower Show.

Miss Bliss' bequest was, however, provisional. In her will she had charged her executors to deliver her bequest to the Museum only after they were convinced of the permanent character of the Museum.

Miss Bliss' bequest has thus become a challenge to the Museum to proceed with its original program of making a permanent institution after two years of experiment. Now at the beginning of its third year in spite of the economic distress throughout the country which has very seriously affected the financial condition of the Museum itself,

the Trustees are determined if they can secure adequate support to take active steps. After the expiration of the lease of the present gallery in the Heckscher Building, 730 Fifth Avenue, they hope to secure a large private house in the vicinity, to make it over into a building which will serve as the second stage of the Museum in its progress towards a well equipped museum building of its own.

Meanwhile, during the winter of the present year, three exhibitions have been planned. The first, devoted to the works of the famous French painter, Henri-Matisse, has already met with astonishing success as proved by an attendance exceeding even that of the famous first exhibition of the Museum two years ago. Following Matisse Diego Rivera, the Mexican painter, will be given an exhibition which will include a series of frescoes especially painted for the occasion.

A third exhibition will show relationships between the art of past periods - Egyptian, Hittite, Greek, Medieval - and modern art.

Perhaps the Garden Club of America will find the most interesting of all the Museum's ventures the International Architectural Exhibition which is to open early in February. While no special emphasis has been laid upon garden design many of the photographs and several of the models may well be of special interest to those interested in the relation between the modern house and modern landscape and garden design. The Museum plans a special lecture upon modern gardens to be given after the opening of the Exhibition. Members of the Garden Club all over America will have a chance to see the Architectural Show since it is already scheduled to travel to thirteen other museums and probably to many more during the next three years.

The circulation of the Architectural Exhibition throughout the United States is the first important step in making the Museum of Modern Art a national institution whose activities should run parallel to a considerable extent with the Garden Club of America. The Museum looks forward to any possible co-operation between the two organizations.