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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

September 16, 1940.

TO City Editors
Art Editors
Ship News Reporters
Feature Editors

Dear Sirs:

Brazil's most famous modern artist, Candido Portinari, will arrive in New York Tuesday, September 17, on the S. S. Argentina, at the Canal Street Dock.

Mr. Portinari is coming to this country, for the first time, to attend the opening of his one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art, October 9. He is bringing with him his wife and year-old baby. The baby, by the way, is one of the largest lenders of Portinari paintings to the exhibition.

Mr. Portinari may be interviewed either on the ship or, later in the day, at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. He speaks Portuguese, Italian and some French. His wife, who will act as his interpreter, speaks French and some English. Mr. Portinari will undoubtedly have interesting things to say, as his idea of this country has been obtained from American motion pictures. He makes an effort to see the movies every day in Brazil.

The time of the interview at the Museum of Modern Art will depend somewhat upon what time the ship docks. For this or any other information regarding Portinari, please call me Tuesday morning at Circle 5-8900.

Sincerely,



Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1940.

BRAZIL'S MOST FAMOUS MODERN PAINTER ARRIVES FOR OPENING
OF HIS ONE-MAN SHOW AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

An important Brazilian modern artist and an important collector of modern art both arrived in New York Tuesday, September 17, to attend the opening of the artist's one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art October 9. The artist is Candido Portinari. The collector is Joao Candido Portinari, the artist's year-old son. Several months before his son's birth Portinari began setting aside some of his choicest paintings for the baby's art collection. He has continued this practice and will not sell any of these paintings. A number of the oils and more than two dozen of the drawings to be shown in the Museum's exhibition, Portinari of Brazil, have been lent by the baby.

Portinari has never been in the United States. He has, however, an absorbing interest in this country. He goes to the movies every day and because practically all the motion pictures shown in Rio are American ones he has a detailed, vivid and somewhat inaccurate knowledge of the United States.

In 1935, for the first time, Portinari sent a picture to this country: Coffee, a painting of the Brazilian fields and coffee workers. It won second honorable mention in the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh that year. In 1938 he painted three panels for the Brazilian Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. His painting, Morro, showing a hillside slum back of Rio de Janeiro, was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in 1939 and was hung in the Museum's first exhibition in its new building, Art In Our Time, in the summer of 1939. In August and September of this year an exhibition of his work was held at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Some of the paintings in this exhibition will be included in the large one-man Portinari show which the Museum will open on October 9. Portinari is bringing with him on ship board about forty paintings and drawings which have never yet been exhibited.

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Portinari was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1903, the son of Italians who, as children, had migrated to Brazil. They were coffee workers on a plantation in the interior, and as the second of twelve children Portinari had an irregular and brief schooling. The idea of painting as a career came to Portinari at the early age of eight when some itinerant painters, redecorating the local church, allowed the boy to mix paint for them and to get up on the scaffolding to paint stars on the ceiling. Portinari begged the painters to take him with them to the next town, but as they had no specific work in view they refused.

Seven years later, when he was fifteen, his parents had saved enough money to pay his way second class to Rio, but Portinari had to support himself as well as earn his tuition in the art school. He rented sleeping privileges in the bathroom of a boarding house with the understanding that he would be up and out of the place by five in the morning. Included in the rental was a bowl of soup once a day. To pay for his lodging and to buy extra food and some clothing he found a job with a photographer for whom he drew painstakingly accurate portraits from small photographs at a lower price than the cost of photographic enlargements.

For ten years, between 1918 and 1928, Portinari managed a bare existence while he continued to study. In the early 1920's he began to receive a few medals and prizes which gave him enough prestige to bring portrait commissions at a very low price. In 1928 he won a Frix de Voyage for a year's study in Europe. He went to France, Italy, England and Spain, where he visited galleries, talked to people and read omnivorously, but during the whole year he did almost no painting. When he returned to Rio he brought back one small canvas. This shocked the art world of Rio, which considered he had wasted his time abroad. Besides his one small painting Portinari also brought back from Europe a wife, Maria, a Uruguayan he had met in Paris. Although his portrait work has been their chief source of income, his wife has always insisted that he paint the real pictures he wanted to paint--Brazilian life as he sees it.

The Museum's current Exhibition of Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art will remain on view in its entirety through September 30. The large Pre-Spanish section will not close until October 8, the day before the Portinari exhibition opens to the public.