

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release

KIRK VARNEDOE TO SUCCEED WILLIAM S. RUBIN AS DIRECTOR OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE  
AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1988  
WILLIAM RUBIN TO BE NAMED DIRECTOR EMERITUS

February 10, 1988. . . . Richard E. Oldenburg, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, announced today the appointment of Kirk Varnedoe as Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, effective August 1988. William S. Rubin, the current Director of the Department, will be retiring early. He will remain at the Museum to focus exclusively on exhibition projects, research, and writing. The Museum has named him Director Emeritus, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

Donald B. Marron, President of the Museum, stated, "On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I welcome the appointment of Kirk Varnedoe, whom I believe a worthy successor to the remarkable individuals who have held this important post at the Museum. I am also happy that Bill Rubin will continue his close relationship with this institution as Director Emeritus of the Department."

Mr. Oldenburg stated, "We are very pleased that Kirk Varnedoe, who has been associated with the Museum since 1984, has accepted the Directorship of the Painting and Sculpture Department. In this role, he will oversee the painting and sculpture collection, its installation and acquisitions, and the painting and sculpture exhibition and loan programs, in addition to assuming all administrative responsibilities for the Department. Kirk is very well qualified for this position. In the tradition of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and of William Rubin, he is a highly respected art historian, with a distinguished record of publications, as well as creative and significant exhibitions."

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Mr. Oldenburg continued, "This is an appropriate occasion for me to pay tribute to Bill Rubin for his extraordinary accomplishments as Director of Painting and Sculpture. His role as curator and art historian is recognized internationally as one of the most influential and impressive of our time. His eye, his acumen, his persuasiveness, and his tenacity have enriched the Museum's collection with many works now considered 'icons' of modern art. Bill has also worked tirelessly and brilliantly to accomplish dynamic and challenging exhibitions that have helped to shape our vision of modernism."

Mr. Rubin first joined the Museum in 1967. He was Chief Curator of the Painting and Sculpture Collection from 1968 until 1973, when he was named Director. For the last twenty-two years he has had primary responsibility for painting and sculpture acquisitions, documentation, and installation. His first major exhibition as Director Emeritus will be THE UNIQUE COLLABORATION: PICASSO AND BRAQUE, 1907-1914, opening September 1989.

Among the major exhibitions that Mr. Rubin has organized for the Museum are DADA, SURREALISM, AND THEIR HERITAGE (1968), THE NEW AMERICAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE: THE FIRST GENERATION (1969), FRANK STELLA (1970), ANTHONY CARO (1975), CEZANNE: THE LATE WORK (1977), DE CHIRICO (1982), HENRI ROUSSEAU (1985), "PRIMITIVISM" IN 20TH CENTURY ART: AFFINITY OF THE TRIBAL AND THE MODERN (1984), and FRANK STELLA: WORKS FROM 1970 TO 1987 (1987). In 1980 he directed PABLO PICASSO: A RETROSPECTIVE, one of the most important and celebrated exhibitions in the Museum's history.

Mr. Rubin wrote or edited the publications which accompanied these and other exhibitions, as well as independent books, such as The Church of Assy and Modern Sacred Art (1961) and Dada and Surrealist Art (1969). In addition, he has contributed many articles to leading art periodicals.

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Among his many honors, Mr. Rubin was made Knight of the Legion of Honor in 1978, Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters in 1979, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Fine Arts and Sciences in 1985. In 1986 he received the prestigious Art Dealers Association of America award for outstanding lifetime achievement in art history, following such distinguished recipients as Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (1972), Meyer Schapiro (1973), Lloyd Goodrich (1977), Horst W. Janson (1981), and John Rewald (1983), among others.

In addition to his position at the Museum, Mr. Rubin serves as Adjunct Professor of Art History at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Previously he served as Professor of Art History at Sarah Lawrence College (1952-67), Hunter College (1954-60), and City University of New York (1960-67). He was the American Editor of Art International from 1958 to 1964. Born in New York City in 1927, Mr. Rubin received a B.A. (1949) from Columbia College and an M.A. (1952) and Ph.D. (1959) from Columbia University.

Mr. Varnedoe, who joined the staff as Adjunct Curator in the spring of 1985, first became affiliated with the Museum in 1984 when he collaborated with William Rubin in organizing "PRIMITIVISM" IN 20TH CENTURY ART: AFFINITY OF THE TRIBAL AND THE MODERN. Since 1984 Mr. Varnedoe has also been Professor of Fine Arts, and from 1980 to 1984 Associate Professor, at The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

As Adjunct Curator, Mr. Varnedoe organized the major exhibition, VIENNA 1900: ART, ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN (1986), and wrote the accompanying catalogue. He is currently organizing HIGH AND LOW: MODERN ART AND POPULAR CULTURE, opening May 1991.

Among the exhibitions Mr. Varnedoe has directed for institutions nationwide are NORTHERN LIGHT: REALISM AND SYMBOLISM IN SCANDINAVIAN PAINTING,

1880-1910 (1982-83), GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE: A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION (1976-77), MODERN PORTRAITS: THE SELF AND OTHERS (1976), and RODIN DRAWINGS TRUE AND FALSE, with Albert Elsen (1971-72).

Born in 1946 in Savannah, Georgia, Professor Varnedoe graduated from Williams College and received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in art history from Stanford University (1972). In addition to lecturing around the country on a wide variety of topics, he has authored major publications to accompany his exhibitions and articles appearing in various art journals. His most recent book, Northern Light: Nordic Painting at the Turn of the Century, will be published this year by Yale University Press. In 1984 Mr. Varnedoe received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

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