

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
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TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

JOHN HAY WHITNEY ANNOUNCES MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WILL SERVE
AS WEAPON OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

In the interest of national defense, the Museum of Modern Art will inaugurate a new program to speed the interchange of the art and culture of this hemisphere among all the twenty-one American republics, it was announced last night (Friday, February 28) by John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum and Chairman of the Motion Picture Division, Office of the Coordinator of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics.

At the Museum Mr. Whitney was host to several hundred educators of North, Central and South America who are attending the First International Conference of the School of the Air of the Americas held under the auspices of the National Education Association and the Columbia Broadcasting System, with the cooperation of the Pan American Union.

Mr. Whitney's announcement was the highlight of his speech on the place of a museum in national defense, in which he described it as a vital force available to aid in welding solidarity in this hemisphere. From ten to ten-thirty p.m. the meeting at the Museum was broadcast on a nation-wide hookup by the Columbia Broadcasting System.

The first medium it will use in the new program, he said, will be the motion picture, utilizing the facilities of the Museum's Film Library. Every non-theatrical motion picture film that is now available in this country will be reviewed and then graded as to its suitability for rescoring in Spanish and Portuguese, Mr. Whitney announced, emphasizing that private as well as public reels will be included.

"We will not be limited to technical subjects, for films portraying any and every phase of life in the United States will be considered," he said. "Once a list is selected new sound tracks will be put on the reels and they will be despatched for showings throughout Central and South America. In addition to loaning equipment to the governments and institutions of these countries,

motion picture projectors will be installed in our key missions there.

"We know that there are elements in Central and South America who are doing their best to minimize the achievements and the potentialities of the United States," he said. "They are trying to prove that there can be no common ground on which all of the people of the Western Hemisphere can meet. We believe that the widespread showing of these films will clarify their impressions of us and demonstrate incontrovertibly the community of our material interests, and the common ground of our aspirations."

Mr. Whitney said that painting, sculpture, industrial design, the graphic arts, architecture and music will have their place in the program and that already plans are in progress to show several travelling exhibitions of paintings by North American artists in the leading cities of Central and South America. Further details of the program will be announced in the near future, it was stated.

Dr. Luis Quintanilla, Minister Plenipotentiary and Counselor of the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D. C., who followed Mr. Whitney on the air, began his speech by delivering a message from His Excellency Ezequiel Padilla, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the United States of Mexico. This message was in part as follows:

"The grave fact is being sadly and ironically brought home to us that the greater the world's advances in the material sense, the deeper the abyss that separates us from the spiritual. First, it was steam; then electricity; now it is the radio. Each one of these discoveries and inventions has shortened distances between the peoples. Yet, by a cruel contradiction, as these wonders, ever more prodigious, make their influence felt, men draw farther away from one another and understand each other less. Diversities of systems, mad greed for power, unrestrained competition for markets, ambition for conquest, and mutual distrust raise barriers that defeat or distort the inestimable gains achieved by science.

"However, that very contrast, so noticeable over a great part of our planet, leads us, in the Americas, to hopeful optimism. Today, as we celebrate the opening of the American School of the Air, we ought to feel comforted by the idea that our Continent, in the presence of the European tragedy, falters not in its firm resolve. It steadily pursues its great aim, that the approach brought about in the physical sense by the advances of civilization shall consolidate spiritual approach as well, by strengthening the doctrine of brotherhood and stimulating wholesome intentions of mutual assistance. Thus, a new continental consciousness is in process of formation, and is becoming more noticeable day by day.

"Due to this policy, Pan Americanism has been gradually transformed, until it has now become a positive doctrine of solidarity. It has been strengthened not merely by theories and good intentions, but by oft renewed and tangible facts. Close on eight years have passed since President Roosevelt, by proclaiming the policy of the 'Good Neighbor' as a new standard, fairer and more humane, for governing relations between the United States and

the other nations of the Americas, instilled fresh life into Pan Americanism. This principle, after being put to sundry and final tests, now shines forth in all the splendid reality of American unity and democracy. Its trend is toward placing the rights of all the peoples of this hemisphere on the same footing of equality.

"Now that we talk of rights, however, the most rudimentary notion of ethics suggests to us that we also think of duties. This is the truth that we must take to the inmost consciousness of our peoples. They must apprehend it clearly so that at the hour when destiny calls us we may fully realize that we cannot be united in peace unless we are also united in the face of danger.

"Mexico is not anxious for her own domestic progress only. At these moments of civic celebration, we Mexicans ardently desire that we may, in close union with the peoples of the whole Continent, fortify our aim of assuring to all our sovereign States an international regime of indestructible peace.

After delivering Senor Padilla's message Dr. Quintanilla continued in his own words. He spoke in part as follows:

"In Europe, as well as America, a widespread legend prevails that the United States is a big country, but 'without tradition,' 'without art,' 'without soul.' As if the spiritual could exist totally independent of the material! You are even reproached for being 'young.' As if youth could be a reproach! And as if the culture of the United States was not, in part, the sum total of those aged cultures transplanted by the millions of immigrants who made this great Nation.

"However, those who have contributed to this absurd belief abroad are not entirely to blame. You, yourselves, so often underestimating the non-commercial values of your national life, are equally guilty. Because my words are those of a foreigner who knows you well and admires you sincerely, I feel assured that you will listen to them with friendly interest.

"Since you have the necessary means, why not organize now a 'Travelling Art Caravan' showing three manifestations of your artistic genius: music, painting and architecture, which need no translation in order to be understood. That Caravan should visit every capital of the twenty other American Republics. The language of Latin America is decidedly a language of the heart. You will not impress the natives of this Continent with statistics on industrial production and other numerical evidences of your material strength. If you, therefore, esteem our friendship you must appeal to our hearts. A song, a painting, a monument will bring you nearer to us.

"That Travelling Caravan would do more to bring us together as friends than ten years of commercial and political work. If the days of 'Manifest Destiny,' 'Big Stick Policy,' 'Dollar Diplomacy' and 'Yankee Imperialism' are to be buried in History, acquaint us then with the artistic and human side of the American of today; the American of the 'Good Neighbor Policy'!"