

The Museum of Modern Art

KIRK VARNEDOE

Kirk Varnedoe, who organized **MASTERPIECES OF THE DAVID AND PEGGY ROCKEFELLER COLLECTION: MANET TO PICASSO**, assumed the position of Chief Curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, in 1988, after serving as Adjunct Curator for the previous three years. Mr. Varnedoe first became affiliated with the Museum in 1984 when he collaborated with William Rubin, then Director (now Director Emeritus) of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, in organizing "PRIMITIVISM" IN 20TH CENTURY ART: AFFINITY OF THE TRIBAL AND THE MODERN. From 1984 to 1988, Mr. Varnedoe was Professor of Fine Arts and, from 1980 to 1984, Associate Professor, The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University; he continues to hold an adjunct teaching post there.

For The Museum of Modern Art, Mr. Varnedoe is currently organizing **CY TWOMBLY: A RETROSPECTIVE**, which opens at the Museum in September 1994. He also organized **HIGH AND LOW: MODERN ART AND POPULAR CULTURE** (with Adam Gopnik, 1990) and **VIENNA 1900: ART, ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN** (1986), and initiated the series **ARTIST'S CHOICE**, in which artists select and install temporary exhibitions of works from the Museum's collection. The first **ARTIST'S CHOICE** exhibition was **SCOTT BURTON: BURTON ON BRANCUSI** (1989); this was followed by **ELLSWORTH KELLY: FRAGMENTATION AND THE SINGLE FORM** (1990), **CHUCK CLOSE: HEAD-ON/THE MODERN PORTRAIT** (1991), and **JOHN BALDESSARI** (1994).

In 1993 Mr. Varnedoe oversaw the expansion and renovation of the Museum's galleries for contemporary art, which now comprise nearly 11,000

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square feet. Following the return of the collection after the exhibition HENRI MATISSE: A RETROSPECTIVE, he renovated and reinstalled the Painting and Sculpture Galleries in an installation that represents a major rethinking of the collection and its display.

Among the exhibitions Mr. Varnedoe organized for other 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).

In addition to lecturing around the country on a wide variety of topics, Mr. Varnedoe has authored major publications to accompany his exhibitions and articles appearing in various art journals. Mr. Varnedoe held the Slade Professorship in Art History at Oxford University, a visiting professorship which entailed a series of public lectures which took place in 1992. In 1984 he received the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, which resulted in his book, *A Fine Disregard: What Makes Modern Art Modern* (published by Abrams, 1990). In 1987 he wrote *Gustave Caillebotte* and, in 1988, *Northern Light: Nordic Painting at the Turn of the Century*, both published by Yale University Press.

Born in Savannah, Georgia, Mr. Varnedoe graduated from Williams College and received his M.A. (1970) and Ph.D. (1972) degrees in art history from Stanford University.