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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1943, AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE TRUSTEES' ROOM

PRESENT: Mr. Coiner, Mr. Duchamp, Miss Hawkins, Mr. Kootz, Mrs. Lasker, Mrs. Lewisohn, Mrs. Lynes, Miss Rindge, Mrs. Russell, Miss Shaver, Mr. Soby, Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Wheeler, Miss Willard.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as circulated.

Miss Rindge gave the report of the Purchase Committee as Mr. Janis was unable to be present. The painting Carnival by Cristofanetti, has been purchased at a very advantageous price and has already been approved by the Acquisitions Committee of the Museum. All of the Purchase Fund is now exhausted with the exception of \$7.57.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

At the previous meeting in November the Chairman of the Nominating Committee presented the following slate:

Miss Marian Willard, Chairman  
Mrs. Albert Lasker, Vice-Chairman

There were no further nominations. It was moved by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mrs. Lynes that the two people nominated be unanimously elected--it was so voted. It was brought out that the committees mentioned at the previous meeting were only suggestions by the Chairman, and the heads of the various committees were at liberty to make changes or additions of their own. If the membership of the various committees is now definite, will the various committee heads please let Miss Willard know so that these may be included in the minutes.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

By Mr. James Johnson Sweeney, Chairman

The Committee feels, after going over the check list Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art (1943) and an Advisory Committee report on the Museum Collection made two years ago, that it would be better to approach such an extensive problem in a general way rather than indicate gaps and unbalanced items on this list. Suggestions regarding outstanding needs are easy to make. Any group of well-informed students could detect lacunae at a first reading of the check list. But a fundamental revision of policy seems at present more important. For this reason we feel that our main aim at this moment would be to work out a basic purchasing scheme that will permit effective long-range planning, to bring the Museum's acquisition activities out of the realm of the haphazard in which it apparently has functioned in great part to date. The building up of a Museum collection, if this is a desideratum, should be given system. It should not be left to chance. Lack of system can only lead to lack of balance in the collection, such as exists today.

But before any proposal to this end is possible, it is important to define the direction of the Museum's interest in making acquisitions. Is it to acquire a collection of outstanding pieces of contemporary art - "high spots" as it were, or to acquire a well-rounded educational unit? The Committee feels that the latter should be true. They feel the Museum needs a collection of pieces from this continent and Europe to which artists, students and the public can go for the best in all fields. Private collectors can be more limited and personal in their choice. A museum has its duty toward a wide public and the general education of that public.

The Committee on the Museum Collection was asked to consider the condition of that collection. The ideal for that collection, as we see it, is a well-rounded educational unit. And faced by the spotty condition of the collection as it now exists today, we take the liberty of offering these general suggestions as a constructive glance toward the future rather than a criticism of things past. We assume that the responsibility for the present state of that collection has been the various Acquisitions Committees which have functioned since the inception of the Museum, not any single individual since that body, and no individual, has had the right to accept or reject acquisitions. And the suggestions which we have been requested to make frankly for the interest of the Museum are concerned only with this impersonal and changing Committee.

From reading over the previous report and studying the Collection through the published check list, the Committee assumes that there have been five major reasons for the unbalanced, spotty condition of the Museum Collection today.

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1. Lack of funds in the past;
2. The unwillingness of the Acquisitions Committee to make certain purchases because of personal dislikes for certain forms of contemporary expression, which nevertheless have a historical place;
3. The feeling that even though the gap in the Collection was serious the works available were not as good examples as others which might turn up later;
4. The feeling that the price asked was disproportionate even though an evidently advisable piece presented itself;
5. The failure to learn that a desirable item was available on the market until another organization had picked it up through the Committee members' lack of acquaintance with the market, the lack of time for such work in the case of staff members, and finally the lack of a specially deputed investigator in this field.

By way of preface to the report, the Committee would like to mention two points which come to its attention and which might deserve attention on the part of the Museum, and the Committee would like to make two suggestions in this connection:

FIRST: In attempting to ascertain what additions have been made to the Museum Collection since the publication of the check list entitled Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art (November 1942), no complete supplementary lists were available. This prompts us to make the following suggestion: that, for the information of the members of the Museum, as well as a working list for the staff and for students, a list of acquisitions supplementary to the illustrated check list should be published periodically. This might be done inexpensively by mimeographing, or it might be printed in a more durable form as an issue of the Museum Bulletin, or as a supplement to one of the issues of the Museum Bulletin.

SECOND: It developed that there was no check list, printed or otherwise, of graphic art in the Museum Collection. In certain cases notes were subjoined to entries in the check list Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art reading "also Prints and Illustrations" or "A Drawing and Prints" or also "Drawings, Prints and Illustrations." But in such cases no indication as to the quantity, specific character or dates of such items was given. The Committee takes this opportunity to suggest that work should be undertaken at once to build up such a check list to facilitate reference and for the information of the members and the interested public. Again, this could be done inexpensively by periodic mimeographing until a sufficiently large list was compiled to justify formal publication.

With regard to the main question before the Committee--a study of lacunae or disproportionate representations in the Museum Collection, and suggestions toward a means of working out a better balance--the problem struck the Committee as much too large to be treated with fairness, without considerable study and a detailed report. A glance through the published check list Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art shows that practically every field requires serious attention. We find the Museum's only Gleizes as 3 1/2 x 2 1/4," a wash, the gift of Mr. A. E. Gallatin. Representations of Metzinger, Leger, Le Fauconnier and Picasso, 1910-1913 or 1914 - the great Cubist years - are lacking. Cubist Picassos are available today in New York even if not of the first quality. Delaunay is not represented by an oil. The fauve period is weak throughout, in spite of the fact that fauve Braques and fauve Matisse are at present available in the New York market. Burliuk, an important Russian figure, is completely lacking in the Museum collection, although Burliuk himself has been living in this country for several years. Severini is lacking among futurists; and the English representation is negligible. Therefore, instead of a detailed analysis of lacks and excesses, the Committee felt it might be more valuable to submit a general plan of approach toward the systematization of acquisitions for the future. Merely a suggestion, in rough outline, on which something more specific might be based.

With this in view, the Committee proposed three main procedures and recommends that all three be undertaken concurrently, with as little delay as possible:

First, concentration of buying effort on twentieth century American paintings and sculpture to fill in the gaps in that field.

Second, plans for a vigorous campaigning to be undertaken immediately on the cessation of hostilities abroad.

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Third, the purchase of whatever European paintings are available at the present time to fill in the gaps in the European collection - on a tentative basis, with the realization that perhaps these are not the best works for the purpose, but with the plan to replace them by better works as soon as conditions abroad will permit.

1. With regard to the first proposal, the purchase of American works, the war obviously makes it extremely difficult for the Museum to fill in its gaps in European painting and sculpture at present. But unlike the field of European art, the American field is fully open to us at present. At the time an earlier Advisory group made a report on the Museum Collection, Mr. Soby felt that \$10,000 or \$15,000 per year would finance a very adequate buying program in the American field. I understand he still holds the same opinion. The field is a limited one, its boundaries should be determined by the tastes of two other major museums in this city. Our duty should be to purchase American paintings we consider of value which neither of these museums has purchased or will likely purchase. When a work of American art is considered desirable for the Museum Collection by a properly authorized committee, this committee might propose it to the Metropolitan and the Whitney. If neither of these museums will purchase it, then it should be the duty of the Museum of Modern Art to acquire it. In cases where work of American artists represented in the Metropolitan or Whitney is felt by the Committee necessary for the rounding out of the American collection as an educational unit, formal exceptions should be made. In the American field, we should have in this way two collaborators in the preparation of a representative collection of modern art for the City, namely, the Whitney and Metropolitan collections.

2. In the field of contemporary European art, we have, however, no equivalent collaborator. And in connection with the second proposal it is suggested that:

- (a) A central committee of members of the staff or specialists employed from outside should be appointed at once to work out a schedule of items desirable for filling out the present gaps in the Collection.
- (b) A representative of the Museum (or better two) should be sent to Europe as early as possible after the cessation of hostilities to investigate possibilities of purchase and to arrange options on certain particularly desirable items; and
- (c) In the future, reliable agents should be maintained in European, Mexican and South American centers - men well acquainted with the local art field and market. Such agents should have the right to arrange options at their discretion and cable opportunities of purchase which they regard as interesting to the Central Committee for action. The manner of payment for these agents should be considered carefully. They should be intimately familiar with the field of their investigation and have a knowledge of the market. Each should be supplied with a list of desiderata and when such desiderata appear an option should be taken and the Central Committee immediately cabled for a decision.

3. Action on the third proposal should also be taken at once, namely, an effort to fill lacunae in the Museum Collection until better examples will be available after the war. The situation remains to date practically as our predecessors reported it two years ago. Very few gaps have been filled. The gaps are very obvious, from a glance at the check list. And because of the war and the Museum's policy of waiting for a better example, or at times even a better price, only a few of the gaps which might have been temporarily or permanently filled have been filled, since the last Advisory Committee examination of the Collection. The only important revision of the former report on this head that we can suggest today is an amplification of the lists of needed work, and a reiteration of their suggestion that use should be made of nineteenth century for purchase of needed twentieth century examples.

In connection with the purchase of works of art for the Museum, the Committee feels it a short-sighted policy to keep gaps in the Museum Collection merely because the finest example is not available at the moment. And once again it is recommended that the Museum Collection should be built up as a rounded educational instrument, not as a private collection formed mainly along the lines of individual taste.

It is further recommended that the present plan of anticipating eventual gifts from donors be abandoned. The Museum Collection should be filled, if only tentatively, as a working unit. If better pictures are eventually donated, some means of disposing of the less interesting items should be found. If a financial loss may be entailed in the proceeding, the Museum should consider this as part of the cost of maintaining a well-rounded educational collection.

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which

Another point has come to our attention in connection with the policies underlying purchases which we take the liberty to point out is the fact that in the past considerable effort has been made to conserve funds in purchasing for the Museum Collection. From this has apparently derived the loss of certain fine pieces which were sold by their owners at more advantageous figures than the Museum felt itself able to offer. The dealers have preferred to sell to private individuals rather than to the Museum because of this point of view. The Museum should feel confident of its choice of putting the purchase in the hands of someone who should be instructed to buy for quality rather than for price. In purchasing contemporary art, this is always a sounder economic approach in the long run. If the work of art is worth investing in, the price should not be the main consideration. The Museum should cease to be a bargainer, but should try to build up the reputation of being in the market for worthwhile contemporary art. In this way available works of art would be brought to our attention rather than our having to go out and look for them.

Gaps should be closed as quickly as possible, because if we wait until we can buy cheaper, the gaps will naturally increase. This whole consideration has been based on a view of the Museum Collection as an educational nucleus rather than as a private collection, the character of which is dictated by private preferences. The Museum Collection should meet the tests of a wide public interested in the history and development of contemporary expression.

Money for purchase would be available from sale of nineteenth century work-- and eventually through sale of work supplanted by better examples.

Lack of funds is of course one of the greatest problems in the way of building up a representative Museum Collection. In connection with this "lack of funds," however, there is an interesting statistical exhibit that our predecessors pointed out; a tabulation of the value of purchases in relation to the operating expenses of the Museum in the period 1934-1940 inclusive:

	Cost of Operating <u>Film Library</u>	Cost of Operating <u>Museum</u>	Insurance Value of <u>Purchases</u>	% of Cost of Operating <u>Museum</u>
1934-37	\$ 89,538.92	\$ 404,809.58	\$ 10,234.	2.5
1938	69,334.54	140,429.72	8,175.	5.8
1939	83,643.95	210,329.63	34,957.	16.6
1940	94,541.82	410,555.73	9,050.	2.1

The Committee is not familiar with the budget system of the Museum. Nor had it any other figures on which to base conclusions than these from its predecessor's report. But from these figures it would appear that in the years recorded there has been a considerable expenditure of funds in operating the Museum and a relatively slight expenditure in purchasing art for the Museum Collection. The Committee appreciates the importance of large temporary exhibitions in the education of the public and the prestige deriving to art from a museum managed on the scale of the Museum of Modern Art. Still, the Committee feels that there is a certain disproportion between the amount of money shown here, as going directly into art and that which is paid into other channels, even though its purpose is to further indirectly the interests of the contemporary artist. And if one excuse for the lack of wider and more important purchases for the Museum Collection is a shortage of funds, the Committee feels that even a slight revision of budgets - even a slight reduction of the program of temporary exhibitions - might double or treble the Acquisitions Committee's resources without the expenditure of a dollar more than is being expended today.

To conclude, the Committee would like to offer one further and more specific suggestion. In the matter of relations between artists and the Museum, the Committee felt that one point which might help most toward fostering good will in that quarter would be a clear evidence that the Museum itself - not merely its individual trustees - was doing concrete work toward helping the painter by generously patronizing his work. It struck us that two objectives might be gained by one stroke in the following:

The Museum, as we all know, has many nineteenth century masters which today have a considerable market value. The Museum's scope as a museum of modern art has been to some extent undefined. Originally it was understood as covering a span of the fifty years previous to the present date. In this way each year the span of the Museum leaves certain works behind. At present the Museum has several Cezannes. It is suggested that, each year, the Museum "sell one old picture to keep the Museum of Modern Art young." The price received for the older master could be published and the number of pictures by younger masters bought with this amount could be shown; or the title of the older master could be published at the

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end of the year and the purchases, without showing any figures, could be shown with the announcement of the next old master to follow; or again, the older master could be offered publicly at auction and a clear statement of the Museum's reasons for disposing of it: not because it was unworthy of a museum collection but for the very reason that it was recognized as a picture of outstanding value and on this basis should bring a large return to be redistributed to the artists themselves through the purchase of paintings by young men. In this way the purchaser could feel that he was doing a double service in buying himself an excellent example of nineteenth century painting and at the same time helping twentieth century painters with the money he was spending.

The Committee feels that the main point is that some system should be worked out at the present moment toward future acquisitions - it should not be left to chance as much as it has been in the past. If the objective is to have a well-rounded teaching unit, plans should be made now to decide upon the specific pictures to be sought after the war to fill in the gaps; and immediately on the conclusion of hostilities some concrete action should be taken toward their purchase.

MR. SOBY'S COMMENTS ON THE REPORT

Mr. Soby congratulated Mr. Sweeney on the thoroughness and extent of the report, on behalf of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Soby, however, went on to explain that the reason for there being no material on graphic arts and no published checklist of the Collection is that we have never had a curator of prints to take care of listing them. Mr. Soby felt that there was enough activity in this field to merit the appointment of a Curator. The Committee expressed its willingness to recommend to the Trustees the appointment of a Curator of the Print Collection.

Mr. Soby also said that the kind of plan suggested by the Committee on the Museum Collection has been the Department's plan for some time. There are two difficulties, however. First is the difficulty of getting acquisitions through because at this time the main purchase fund of the Museum is limited to use for the purchase of major contemporary works which are, of course, badly needed. The only way to get additional money is by sale of 19th Century works, as was suggested. The second difficulty in times past has been to persuade the Acquisitions Committee as a whole to accept the idea of having this collection a broad collection for educational purposes. The tendency of the Committee has been to approve pictures outstanding in quality and to lose sight of an over-all educational plan for the collection - a plan which would necessarily mean acquiring many works of secondary importance and esthetic interest. The Acquisitions Committee is a completely independent body and has final say over purchases.

Mr. Soby also brought out the point that whereas museums covering a longer chronological span can afford to take their time in making purchases, since fine works in one of many fields are continually coming on the market, this Museum is under constant pressure to exercise first choice in a narrow field, i.e., twentieth century painting and sculpture. If an outstanding Picasso is lost, it cannot be compensated for by a Fragonard. He added that the Museum had been forced into bargaining by lack of funds in years past. But if word gets around that the Museum is in the market and ready to buy, we will hear about available works and can afford to be generous so as to attract the market to us.

Miss Rindge suggested that the Permanent Collection should be more on view.

It was Mr. Soby's opinion that if this Committee approves the report, it should be read to the Acquisitions Committee as a whole as a proposal that we should not buy on quality alone but should make the Museum Collection an historical and educational unit.

A motion was made by Mr. Kootz and seconded by Mrs. Lasker and VOTED that the Advisory Committee accept the report on the Museum Collection by the Committee on the Museum Collection, read at this meeting by Mr. Sweeney, and that they recommend it to the Acquisitions Committee, who would then recommend it to the Trustees. The Advisory Committee further thinks that mimeographed copies of any plan evolving from this report should be circulated to all the Trustees and Committee members because, if adopted, such a plan will affect the basic policy of the Museum and so it must be clear to everyone in order that everyone can be working from the same basis.

Mr. Soby suggested further that it might be a good idea to let the public

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know what we are doing if such a plan is approved--we might show parts of the Museum Collection to illustrate the plan.

Miss Willard mentioned that she will report to the Trustees that this report has been presented.

MR. WHEELER'S REPORT ON EXHIBITIONS

Mr. Wheeler announced that the whole policy of exhibitions will be discussed at a future meeting so that the Advisory Committee can recommend exhibitions with a basic knowledge of the policy of the Museum and the Department.

An exhibition of Amateur Photography, to open in March, has been approved by the Exhibitions Committee and should be added to the list given in the minutes of the last Advisory Committee meeting. Also approved is a highly selective exhibition of the work of Feininger to be shown with the exhibition of the work of Marsden Hartley and some other man (Eilshemius and Weber have been suggested).

EXHIBITION SUGGESTED BY MR. SAMUEL KOOTZ

Mr. Kootz proposed an exhibition centering around the idea that New York is the center of the art world of today. He would like to preserve that status by encouraging the most aggressive artists around--this would include a qualitative, not a quantitative study of the work of 75 or 100 artists, who, in Mr. Kootz's opinion, are doing any creative work that is being done today. The exhibition would be the first attempt to weed out the followers and designate the men who are formulating the art of today and tomorrow. A correlation of their work at one time would be the best method of showing the public what is going on. Such a combination would be a feather in the Museum's cap and would go a long way toward building up the Museum's prestige.

It was felt that before any definite action could be taken Mr. Kootz should draw up a tentative list of the artists to be included in the exhibition.

PROGRAM FOR NEXT MEETING

The January meeting of the Advisory Committee will be given over to discussion of the exhibition policy of the Museum and to Mr. Kootz's proposed exhibition.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:25.

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1. Lack of funds in the past;

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"Report of the Committee on the Museum  
Collection"  
by James Johnson Sweeney

pages 1-6 in Minutes of the Advisory  
Committee (December 8, 1943)

see p 4

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PRESENT: Mr. Coiner, Mr. Duchamp, Miss Hawkins, Mr. Kootz, Mrs. Lasker, Mrs. Lewisohn, Mrs. Lynes, Miss Rindge, Mrs. Russell, Miss Shaver, Mr. Soby, Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Wheeler, Miss Willard.

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But before any proposal to this end is possible, it is important to define the direction of the Museum's interest in making acquisitions. Is it to acquire a collection of outstanding pieces of contemporary art - "high spots" as it were, or to acquire a well-rounded educational unit? The Committee feels that the latter should be true. They feel the Museum needs a collection of pieces from this continent and Europe to which artists, students and the public can go for the best in all fields. Private collectors can be more limited and personal in their choice. A museum has its duty toward a wide public and the general education of that public.

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Third, the purchase of whatever European paintings are available at the present time to fill in the gaps in the European collection - on a tentative basis, with the realization that perhaps these are not the best works for the purpose, but with the plan to replace them by better works as soon as conditions abroad will permit.

1. With regard to the first proposal, the purchase of American works, the war obviously makes it extremely difficult for the Museum to fill in its gaps in European painting and sculpture at present. But unlike the field of European art, the American field is fully open to us at present. At the time an earlier Advisory group made a report on the Museum Collection, Mr. Soby felt that \$10,000 or \$15,000 per year would finance a very adequate buying program in the American field. I understand he still holds the same opinion. The field is a limited one, its boundaries should be determined by the tastes of two other major museums in this city. Our duty should be to purchase American paintings we consider of value which neither of these museums has purchased or will likely purchase. When a work of American art is considered desirable for the Museum Collection by a properly authorized committee, this committee might propose it to the Metropolitan and the Whitney. If neither of these museums will purchase it, then it should be the duty of the Museum of Modern Art to acquire it. In cases where work of American artists represented in the Metropolitan or Whitney is felt by the Committee necessary for the rounding out of the American collection as an educational unit, formal exceptions should be made. In the American field, we should have in this way two collaborators in the preparation of a representative collection of modern art for the City, namely, the Whitney and Metropolitan collections.

2. In the field of contemporary European art, we have, however, no equivalent collaborator. And in connection with the second proposal it is suggested that:

- (a) A central committee of members of the staff or specialists employed from outside should be appointed at once to work out a schedule of items desirable for filling out the present gaps in the Collection.
- (b) A representative of the Museum (or better two) should be sent to Europe as early as possible after the cessation of hostilities to investigate possibilities of purchase and to arrange options on certain particularly desirable items; and
- (c) In the future, reliable agents should be maintained in European, Mexican and South American centers - men well acquainted with the local art field and market. Such agents should have the right to arrange options at their discretion and cable opportunities of purchase which they regard as interesting to the Central Committee for action. The manner of payment for these agents should be considered carefully. They should be intimately familiar with the field of their investigation and have a knowledge of the market. Each should be supplied with a list of desiderata and when such desiderata appear an option should be taken and the Central Committee immediately cabled for a decision.

3. Action on the third proposal should also be taken at once, namely, an effort to fill lacunae in the Museum Collection until better examples will be available after the war. The situation remains to date practically as our predecessors reported it two years ago. Very few gaps have been filled. The gaps are very obvious, from a glance at the check list. And because of the war and the Museum's policy of waiting for a better example, or at times even a better price, only a few of the gaps which might have been temporarily or permanently filled have been filled, since the last Advisory Committee examination of the Collection. The only important revision of the former report on this head that we can suggest today is an amplification of the lists of needed work, and a reiteration of their suggestion that use should be made of nineteenth century for purchase of needed twentieth century examples.

In connection with the purchase of works of art for the Museum, the Committee feels it a short-sighted policy to keep gaps in the Museum Collection merely because the finest example is not available at the moment. And once again it is recommended that the Museum Collection should be built up as a rounded educational instrument, not as a private collection formed mainly along the lines of individual taste.

It is further recommended that the present plan of anticipating eventual gifts from donors be abandoned. The Museum Collection should be filled, if only tentatively, as a working unit. If better pictures are eventually donated, some means of disposing of the less interesting items should be found. If a financial loss may be entailed in the proceeding, the Museum should consider this as part

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Another point <sup>which</sup> has come to our attention in connection with the policies underlying purchases which we take the liberty to point out is the fact that in the past considerable effort has been made to conserve funds in purchasing for the Museum Collection. From this has apparently derived the loss of certain fine pieces which were sold by their owners at more advantageous figures than the Museum felt itself able to offer. The dealers have preferred to sell to private individuals rather than to the Museum because of this point of view. The Museum should feel confident of its choice of putting the purchase in the hands of someone who should be instructed to buy for quality rather than for price. In purchasing contemporary art, this is always a sounder economic approach in the long run. If the work of art is worth investing in, the price should not be the main consideration. The Museum should cease to be a bargainer, but should try to build up the reputation of being in the market for worthwhile contemporary art. In this way available works of art would be brought to our attention rather than our having to go out and look for them.

Gaps should be closed as quickly as possible, because if we wait until we can buy cheaper, the gaps will naturally increase. This whole consideration has been based on a view of the Museum Collection as an educational nucleus rather than as a private collection, the character of which is dictated by private preferences. The Museum Collection should meet the tests of a wide public interested in the history and development of contemporary expression.

Money for purchase would be available from sale of nineteenth century work-- and eventually through sale of work supplanted by better examples.

Lack of funds is of course one of the greatest problems in the way of building up a representative Museum Collection. In connection with this "Lack of funds," however, there is an interesting statistical exhibit that our predecessors pointed out; a tabulation of the value of purchases in relation to the operating expenses of the Museum in the period 1934-1940 inclusive:

	Cost of Operating Film Library	Cost of Operating Museum	Insurance Value of Purchases	% of Cost of Operating Museum
1934-37	\$ 89,538.92	\$ 404,809.58	\$ 10,234.	2.5
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1939	83,643.95	210,329.63	34,957.	16.6
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The Committee is not familiar with the budget system of the Museum. Nor had it any other figures on which to base conclusions than these from its predecessor's report. But from these figures it would appear that in the years recorded there has been a considerable expenditure of funds in operating the Museum and a relatively slight expenditure in purchasing art for the Museum Collection. The Committee appreciates the importance of large temporary exhibitions in the education of the public and the prestige deriving to art from a museum managed on the scale of the Museum of Modern Art. Still, the Committee feels that there is a certain disproportion between the amount of money shown here, as going directly into art and that which is paid into other channels, even though its purpose is to further indirectly the interests of the contemporary artist. And if one excuse for the lack of wider and more important purchases for the Museum Collection is a shortage of funds, the Committee feels that even a slight revision of budgets - even a slight reduction of the program of temporary exhibitions - might double or treble the Acquisitions Committee's resources without the expenditure of a dollar more than is being expended today.

To conclude, the Committee would like to offer one further and more specific suggestion. In the matter of relations between artists and the Museum, the Committee felt that one point which might help most toward fostering good will in that quarter would be a clear evidence that the Museum itself - not merely its individual trustees - was doing concrete work toward helping the painter by generously patronizing his work. It struck us that two objectives might be gained by one stroke in the following:

The Museum, as we all know, has many nineteenth century masters which today have a considerable market value. The Museum's scope as a museum of modern art has been to some extent undefined. Originally it was understood as covering a span of the fifty years previous to the present date. In this way each year the span of the Museum leaves certain works behind. At present the Museum has several Cezannes. It is suggested that, each year, the Museum "sell one old picture to keep the Museum of Modern Art young." The price received for the older master could be published and the number of pictures by younger masters bought with this

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amount could be shown; or the title of the older master could be published at the over →

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end of the year and the purchases, without showing any figures, could be shown with the announcement of the next old master to follow; or again, the older master could be offered publicly at auction and a clear statement of the Museum's reasons for disposing of it: not because it was unworthy of a museum collection but for the very reason that it was recognized as a picture of outstanding value and on this basis should bring a large return to be redistributed to the artists themselves through the purchase of paintings by young men. In this way the purchaser could feel that he was doing a double service in buying himself an excellent example of nineteenth century painting and at the same time helping twentieth century painters with the money he was spending. -5-

The Committee feels that the main point is that some system should be worked out at the present moment toward future acquisitions - it should not be left to chance as much as it has been in the past. If the objective is to have a well-rounded teaching unit, plans should be made now to decide upon the specific pictures to be sought after the war to fill in the gaps; and immediately on the conclusion of hostilities some concrete action should be taken toward their purchase.

#### MR. SOBY'S COMMENTS ON THE REPORT

Mr. Soby congratulated Mr. Sweeney on the thoroughness and extent of the report, on behalf of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Soby, however, went on to explain that the reason for there being no material on graphic arts and no published checklist of the Collection is that we have never had a curator of prints to take care of listing them. Mr. Soby felt that there was enough activity in this field to merit the appointment of a Curator. The Committee expressed its willingness to recommend to the Trustees the appointment of a Curator of the Print Collection.

Mr. Soby also said that the kind of plan suggested by the Committee on the Museum Collection has been the Department's plan for some time. There are two difficulties, however. First is the difficulty of getting acquisitions through because at this time the main purchase fund of the Museum is limited to use for the purchase of major contemporary works which are, of course, badly needed. The only way to get additional money is by sale of 19th Century works, as was suggested. The second difficulty in times past has been to persuade the Acquisitions Committee as a whole to accept the idea of having this collection a broad collection for educational purposes. The tendency of the Committee has been to approve pictures outstanding in quality and to lose sight of an over-all educational plan for the collection - a plan which would necessarily mean acquiring many works of secondary importance and esthetic interest. The Acquisitions Committee is a completely independent body and has final say over purchases.

Mr. Soby also brought out the point that whereas museums covering a longer chronological span can afford to take their time in making purchases, since fine works in one of many fields are continually coming on the market, this Museum is under constant pressure to exercise first choice in a narrow field, i.e., twentieth century painting and sculpture. If an outstanding Picasso is lost, it cannot be compensated for by a Fragonard. He added that the Museum had been forced into bargaining by lack of funds in years past. But if word gets around that the Museum is in the market and ready to buy, we will hear about available works and can afford to be generous so as to attract the market to us.

Miss Rindge suggested that the Permanent Collection should be more on view.

It was Mr. Soby's opinion that if this Committee approves the report, it should be read to the Acquisitions Committee as a whole as a proposal that we should not buy on quality alone but should make the Museum Collection an historical and educational unit.

A motion was made by Mr. Kootz and seconded by Mrs. Lasker and VOTED that the Advisory Committee accept the report on the Museum Collection by the Committee on the Museum Collection, read at this meeting by Mr. Sweeney, and that they recommend it to the Acquisitions Committee, who would then recommend it to the Trustees. The Advisory Committee further thinks that mimeographed copies of any plan evolving from this report should be circulated to all the Trustees and Committee members because, if adopted, such a plan will affect the basic policy of the Museum and so it must be clear to everyone in order that everyone can be working from the same basis.

Mr. Soby suggested further that it might be a good idea to let the public

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know what we are doing if such a plan is approved--we might show parts of the Museum Collection to illustrate the plan.

Miss Willard mentioned that she will report to the Trustees that this report has been presented.

MR. WHEELER'S REPORT ON EXHIBITIONS

Mr. Wheeler announced that the whole policy of exhibitions will be discussed at a future meeting so that the Advisory Committee can recommend exhibitions with a basic knowledge of the policy of the Museum and the Department.

An exhibition of Amateur Photography, to open in March, has been approved by the Exhibitions Committee and should be added to the list given in the minutes of the last Advisory Committee meeting. Also approved is a highly selective exhibition of the work of Feininger to be shown with the exhibition of the work of Marsden Hartley and some other man (Eilshemius and Weber have been suggested).

EXHIBITION SUGGESTED BY MR. SAMUEL KOOTZ

Mr. Kootz proposed an exhibition centering around the idea that New York is the center of the art world of today. He would like to preserve that status by encouraging the most aggressive artists around--this would include a qualitative, not a quantitative study of the work of 75 or 100 artists, who, in Mr. Kootz's opinion, are doing any creative work that is being done today. The exhibition would be the first attempt to weed out the followers and designate the men who are formulating the art of today and tomorrow. A correlation of their work at one time would be the best method of showing the public what is going on. Such a combination would be a feather in the Museum's cap and would go a long way toward building up the Museum's prestige.

It was felt that before any definite action could be taken Mr. Kootz should draw up a tentative list of the artists to be included in the exhibition.

PROGRAM FOR NEXT MEETING

The January meeting of the Advisory Committee will be given over to discussion of the exhibition policy of the Museum and to Mr. Kootz's proposed exhibition.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:25.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1943, AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE TRUSTEES' ROOM

PRESENT: Mr. Coiner, Mr. Duchamp, Miss Hawkins, Mr. Kootz, Mrs. Lasker, Mrs. Lewisohn, Mrs. Lynes, Miss Rindge, Mrs. Russell, Miss Shaver, Mr. Soby, Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Wheeler, Miss Willard.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as circulated.

Miss Rindge gave the report of the Purchase Committee as Mr. Janis was unable to be present. The painting Carnival by Cristofanetti, has been purchased at a very advantageous price and has already been approved by the Acquisitions Committee of the Museum. All of the Purchase Fund is now exhausted with the exception of \$7.57.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

At the previous meeting in November the Chairman of the Nominating Committee presented the following slate:

Miss Marian Willard, Chairman  
Mrs. Albert Lasker, Vice-Chairman

There were no further nominations. It was moved by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mrs. Lynes that the two people nominated be unanimously elected--it was so voted. It was brought out that the committees mentioned at the previous meeting were only suggestions by the Chairman, and the heads of the various committees were at liberty to make changes or additions of their own. If the membership of the various committees is now definite, will the various committee heads please let Miss Willard know so that these may be included in the minutes.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE MUSEUM COLLECTION  
By Mr. James Johnson Sweeney, Chairman

The Committee feels, after going over the check list Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art (1943) and an Advisory Committee report on the Museum Collection made two years ago, that it would be better to approach such an extensive problem in a general way rather than indicate gaps and unbalanced items on this list. Suggestions regarding outstanding needs are easy to make. Any group of well-informed students could detect lacunae at a first reading of the check list. But a fundamental revision of policy seems at present more important. For this reason we feel that our main aim at this moment would be to work out a basic purchasing scheme that will permit effective long-range planning, to bring the Museum's acquisition activities out of the realm of the haphazard in which it apparently has functioned in great part to date. The building up of a Museum collection, if this is a desideratum, should be given system. It should not be left to chance. Lack of system can only lead to lack of balance in the collection, such as exists today.

But before any proposal to this end is possible, it is important to define the direction of the Museum's interest in making acquisitions. Is it to acquire a collection of outstanding pieces of contemporary art - "high spots" as it were, or to acquire a well-rounded educational unit? The Committee feels that the latter should be true. They feel the Museum needs a collection of pieces from this continent and Europe to which artists, students and the public can go for the best in all fields. Private collectors can be more limited and personal in their choice. A museum has its duty toward a wide public and the general education of that public.

The Committee on the Museum Collection was asked to consider the condition of that collection. The ideal for that collection, as we see it, is a well-rounded educational unit. And faced by the spotty condition of the collection as it now exists today, we take the liberty of offering these general suggestions as a constructive glance toward the future rather than a criticism of things past. We assume that the responsibility for the present state of that collection has been the various Acquisitions Committees which have functioned since the inception of the Museum, not any single individual since that body, and no individual, has had the right to accept or reject acquisitions. And the suggestions which we have been requested to make frankly for the interest of the Museum are concerned only with this impersonal and changing Committee.

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1. Lack of funds in the past;
2. The unwillingness of the Acquisitions Committee to make certain purchases because of personal dislikes for certain forms of contemporary expression, which nevertheless have a historical place;
3. The feeling that even though the gap in the Collection was serious the works available were not as good examples as others which might turn up later;
4. The feeling that the price asked was disproportionate even though an evidently advisable piece presented itself;
5. The failure to learn that a desirable item was available on the market until another organization had picked it up through the Committee members' lack of acquaintance with the market, the lack of time for such work in the case of staff members, and finally the lack of a specially deputed investigator in this field.

By way of preface to the report, the Committee would like to mention two points which come to its attention and which might deserve attention on the part of the Museum, and the Committee would like to make two suggestions in this connection:

FIRST: In attempting to ascertain what additions have been made to the Museum Collection since the publication of the check list entitled Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art (November 1942), no complete supplementary lists were available. This prompts us to make the following suggestion: that, for the information of the members of the Museum, as well as a working list for the staff and for students, a list of acquisitions supplementary to the illustrated check list should be published periodically. This might be done inexpensively by mimeographing, or it might be printed in a more durable form as an issue of the Museum Bulletin, or as a supplement to one of the issues of the Museum Bulletin.

SECOND: It developed that there was no check list, printed or otherwise, of graphic art in the Museum Collection. In certain cases notes were subjoined to entries in the check list Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art reading "also Prints and Illustrations" or "A Drawing and Prints" or also "Drawings, Prints and Illustrations." But in such cases no indication as to the quantity, specific character or dates of such items was given. The Committee takes this opportunity to suggest that work should be undertaken at once to build up such a check list to facilitate reference and for the information of the members and the interested public. Again, this could be done inexpensively by periodic mimeographing until a sufficiently large list was compiled to justify formal publication.

With regard to the main question before the Committee--a study of lacunae or disproportionate representations in the Museum Collection, and suggestions toward a means of working out a better balance--the problem struck the Committee as much too large to be treated with fairness, without considerable study and a detailed report. A glance through the published check list Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art shows that practically every field requires serious attention. We find the Museum's only Gleizes as 3 1/2 x 2 1/4," a wash, the gift of Mr. A. E. Gallatin. Representations of Metzinger, Leger, Le Fauconnier and Picasso, 1910-1913 or 1914 - the great Cubist years - are lacking. Cubist Picassos are available today in New York even if not of the first quality. Delaunay is not represented by an oil. The fauve period is weak throughout, in spite of the fact that fauve Braques and fauve Matisses are at present available in the New York market. Burliuk, an important Russian figure, is completely lacking in the Museum collection, although Burliuk himself has been living in this country for several years. Severini is lacking among futurists; and the English representation is negligible. Therefore, instead of a detailed analysis of lacks and excesses, the Committee felt it might be more valuable to submit a general plan of approach toward the systematization of acquisitions for the future. Merely a suggestion, in rough outline, on which something more specific might be based.

With this in view, the Committee proposed three main procedures and recommends that all three be undertaken concurrently, with as little delay as possible:

First, concentration of buying effort on twentieth century American paintings and sculpture to fill in the gaps in that field.

Second, plans for a vigorous campaigning to be undertaken immediately on the cessation of hostilities abroad.

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Third, the purchase of whatever European paintings are available at the present time to fill in the gaps in the European collection - on a tentative basis, with the realization that perhaps these are not the best works for the purpose, but with the plan to replace them by better works as soon as conditions abroad will permit.

1. With regard to the first proposal, the purchase of American works, the war obviously makes it extremely difficult for the Museum to fill in its gaps in European painting and sculpture at present. But unlike the field of European art, the American field is fully open to us at present. At the time an earlier Advisory group made a report on the Museum Collection, Mr. Scoby felt that \$10,000 or \$15,000 per year would finance a very adequate buying program in the American field. I understand he still holds the same opinion. The field is a limited one, its boundaries should be determined by the tastes of two other major museums in this city. Our duty should be to purchase American paintings we consider of value which neither of these museums has purchased or will likely purchase. When a work of American art is considered desirable for the Museum Collection by a properly authorized committee, this committee might propose it to the Metropolitan and the Whitney. If neither of these museums will purchase it, then it should be the duty of the Museum of Modern Art to acquire it. In cases where work of American artists represented in the Metropolitan or Whitney is felt by the Committee necessary for the rounding out of the American collection as an educational unit, formal exceptions should be made. In the American field, we should have in this way two collaborators in the preparation of a representative collection of modern art for the City, namely, the Whitney and Metropolitan collections.

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end of the year and the purchases, without showing any figures, could be shown with the announcement of the next old master to follow; or again, the older master could be offered publicly at auction and a clear statement of the Museum's reasons for disposing of it: not because it was unworthy of a museum collection but for the very reason that it was recognized as a picture of outstanding value and on this basis should bring a large return to be redistributed to the artists themselves through the purchase of paintings by young men. In this way the purchaser could feel that he was doing a double service in buying himself an excellent example of nineteenth century painting and at the same time helping twentieth century painters with the money he was spending.

The Committee feels that the main point is that some system should be worked out at the present moment toward future acquisitions - it should not be left to chance as much as it has been in the past. If the objective is to have a well-rounded teaching unit, plans should be made now to decide upon the specific pictures to be sought after the war to fill in the gaps; and immediately on the conclusion of hostilities some concrete action should be taken toward their purchase.

#### MR. SOBY'S COMMENTS ON THE REPORT

Mr. Soby congratulated Mr. Sweeney on the thoroughness and extent of the report, on behalf of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Soby, however, went on to explain that the reason for there being no material on graphic arts and no published checklist of the Collection is that we have never had a curator of prints to take care of listing them. Mr. Soby felt that there was enough activity in this field to merit the appointment of a Curator. The Committee expressed its willingness to recommend to the Trustees the appointment of a Curator of the Print Collection.

Mr. Soby also said that the kind of plan suggested by the Committee on the Museum Collection has been the Department's plan for some time. There are two difficulties, however. First is the difficulty of getting acquisitions through because at this time the main purchase fund of the Museum is limited to use for the purchase of major contemporary works which are, of course, badly needed. The only way to get additional money is by sale of 19th Century works, as was suggested. The second difficulty in times past has been to persuade the Acquisitions Committee as a whole to accept the idea of having this collection a broad collection for educational purposes. The tendency of the Committee has been to approve pictures outstanding in quality and to lose sight of an over-all educational plan for the collection - a plan which would necessarily mean acquiring many works of secondary importance and esthetic interest. The Acquisitions Committee is a completely independent body and has final say over purchases.

Mr. Soby also brought out the point that whereas museums covering a longer chronological span can afford to take their time in making purchases, since fine works in one of many fields are continually coming on the market, this Museum is under constant pressure to exercise first choice in a narrow field, i.e., twentieth century painting and sculpture. If an outstanding Picasso is lost, it cannot be compensated for by a Fragonard. He added that the Museum had been forced into bargaining by lack of funds in years past. But if word gets around that the Museum is in the market and ready to buy, we will hear about available works and can afford to be generous so as to attract the market to us.

Miss Rindge suggested that the Permanent Collection should be more on view.

It was Mr. Soby's opinion that if this Committee approves the report, it should be read to the Acquisitions Committee as a whole as a proposal that we should not buy on quality alone but should make the Museum Collection an historical and educational unit.

A motion was made by Mr. Kootz and seconded by Mrs. Lasker and VOTED that the Advisory Committee accept the report on the Museum Collection by the Committee on the Museum Collection, read at this meeting by Mr. Sweeney, and that they recommend it to the Acquisitions Committee, who would then recommend it to the Trustees. The Advisory Committee further thinks that mimeographed copies of any plan evolving from this report should be circulated to all the Trustees and Committee members because, if adopted, such a plan will affect the basic policy of the Museum and so it must be clear to everyone in order that everyone can be working from the same basis.

Mr. Soby suggested further that it might be a good idea to let the public

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know what we are doing if such a plan is approved--we might show parts of the Museum Collection to illustrate the plan.

Miss Willard mentioned that she will report to the Trustees that this report has been presented.

MR. WHEELER'S REPORT ON EXHIBITIONS

Mr. Wheeler announced that the whole policy of exhibitions will be discussed at a future meeting so that the Advisory Committee can recommend exhibitions with a basic knowledge of the policy of the Museum and the Department.

An exhibition of Amateur Photography, to open in March, has been approved by the Exhibitions Committee and should be added to the list given in the minutes of the last Advisory Committee meeting. Also approved is a highly selective exhibition of the work of Weininger to be shown with the exhibition of the work of Marsden Hartley and some other man (Eilshemius and Weber have been suggested).

EXHIBITION SUGGESTED BY MR. SAMUEL KOOTZ

Mr. Kootz proposed an exhibition centering around the idea that New York is the center of the art world of today. He would like to preserve that status by encouraging the most aggressive artists around--this would include a qualitative, not a quantitative study of the work of 75 or 100 artists, who, in Mr. Kootz's opinion, are doing any creative work that is being done today. The exhibition would be the first attempt to weed out the followers and designate the men who are formulating the art of today and tomorrow. A correlation of their work at one time would be the best method of showing the public what is going on. Such a combination would be a feather in the Museum's cap and would go a long way toward building up the Museum's prestige.

It was felt that before any definite action could be taken Mr. Kootz should draw up a tentative list of the artists to be included in the exhibition.

PROGRAM FOR NEXT MEETING

The January meeting of the Advisory Committee will be given over to discussion of the exhibition policy of the Museum and to Mr. Kootz's proposed exhibition.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:25.