Publicity
for Organization of Museum
August, 1929

In the 19th Century there developed a strange and most unhappy divergence between the achievements of important artists and the tastes of the public. Previous to 1800 great artists, even the most courageous innovators had been understood, or at least accepted with remarkable facility. Giotto, the great 14th Century modernist, got contracts from Chambers of Commerce, and Churches, business men and noblemen in a dozen Italian Cities. Artists of succeeding centuries were almost all immediately successful. Donatello, Piero della, Francesca, Botticelli, John vanEyck, the Bellinis were famous and honored. Popes bowed to Michelangelo, an Emperor to Titian. The uncompromising Poussin, the tempermental Bernini took turns at snubbing Louis XIV. Rubens painted for three or four Kings. El Greco -master of distortion - had he been half as tactful as Velasquez would have been official court painter. As it was, he was acknowledged to be the best painter in Spain.

The 18th Century master was for the most part as well provided for as were his Renaissance, and Baroque predecessors. Gainsborough Chardin, Tiepolo, Boucher, and even those arch rebels, David and Goya maintained fairly harmonious relations with the Societies in which they lived. But after 1800 the condition of the adventurous artist is extraordinarily altered. Delacroix, Constable, Ingres in his early years are ridiculed. Courbet, Manet, Degas, Renoir, Monet, Cezanne almost every great name calls up it corresponding story of contempt and neglect. Waves of laughter and wrath break over the next generation. Gauguin, Saurat, Van Gogh. Most critics jeer; most collectors follow their lead. All but a few dealers invest their money in Meisonniers and Henners. Shortly before his death poor Cézanne is made happy by

the mere sight of his pictures in real frames "like old masters" - even though very few are sold. Only Octo generians like Monet survive to find their art accepted and, ironically, established in orthodoxy to confront the turbulent youth of the early 20th Century, les Fauves, the wild fellows. And now the 25th anniversary of the Fauves movement is being celebrated, not defiantly, not rebelliously, but with dignity and confidence, for these "wild beasts" of 1905 Matisse, Vlaminck, Braque, Friesz, Derain, are now, at the height of their matured powers, among the most respected living artists.

Far more remarkable is the fact that their juniors have faired even better. The cubists and subsequent rebels have made continuously fresh assaults upon the rapidly weakening opposition. Until now few critics dared to contemn too quickly the new thing, be it the neue sachlichkeit or sur-realisne

Indeed, it looks as if the world had learned its lesson. Enthusiasm, esthetic curiosity and tolerance abetted it must be confessed by some snobbery and speculation have gone far in transforming the position of the modern artist, closing that breach of misunderstanding and mutual indifference which had come between him and his public, tho in a manner very different from that which existed before the 19th Century.

Money talks vividly. Let us not be ashamed to listen. When Van Gogh and Cezanne died the accumulated income from the sale of their pictures would scarcely have paid for adequate funerals. Today, twenty-five or thirty years later, a good Cezanne or Van Gogh brings $50,000.00. During Seurat's lifetime his pictures wanted purchasers. Thirty years after his death the American collector,

John Quinn, paid $7000.00 for Le Cirque. Today, only ten years later, this same picture would probably bring not much less than $150,000.00, that is, if the Louvre to which Quinn bequeathed it decided to sell. But far more significant are the prices paid for the work of living artists. Derain and Matisse have comparatively luxurious incomes, and Picasso seems to thrive today by those very tactics which would have left him penniless, bohemian 50 years ago. Even the avantgardists of 1929, Joan Miro, Otto Dix, Jean Lurcat, Pierre Roy, are adequately rewarded financially, as well as acutely, appraised critically.

In short, the world's attitude toward the advanced artist has changed astonishingly. Of course he is still called (by the obtuse) madman, degenerate and (more absurdly) bolshevik but on the whole his position seems better than at any time since the French Revolution.

Now let us ask ourselves questions. Are we in America participants in this new attitude toward the modern artist? Do not our collectors turn increasingly from old masters to the adventure of buying the works of living men? A host of names spring to mind the answering of this question - in Chicago Mrs. John Alden Carpenter, Martin Ryerson in Baltimore, the Misses Cone in Philadelphia, Dr. Albert Barnes and in Boston, the John Spaulding, Robert Treat, Paine II, Mrs. J. Q. Adams McKean in Columbus, Ferdinand Howald in Detroit, Ralph Booth in Washington, Duncan Phillipps in New York,-but in New York the list is too long even to begin.

Are not our critics flexibly-minded, sympathetic to innovation. Our picture dealers, do they not date to experiment especially in this field which has expanded so astonishingly in the last ten years. The great public itself, which can not afford to collect is thoroughly

aroused. The rage untutored as it is for modernistic furniture is evidence of a new taste.

And our museums, what have they done? Have they kept pace with the progressive spirit of our collectors and critics? and the general public?

The answer to this last question is not simple. In Detroit, Dr. Valentine, with the help of Mr. Booth, and others, has brought together a very stimulating collection of modern paintings, American, German, and French. The Chicago Art Institute houses the magnificant Birch-Bartlett room of masterpieces by Cezanne, Seurat, Picasso, Matisse. The Fogg Museum of Harvard University held, last spring, the finest exhibition of modern french painting since the Armory Show of 1913. San Francisco, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Worcester have excellent modern pictures of the non-academic kind. Saginaw City, Michigan, has recently acquired a Vlaminck, but in New York that vast, that exceedingly modern metropolis we discover a curious anomaly.

The Metropolitan, the foremost museum in America, owns no Van Gogh, no Gauguin, no Saurat, no Toulouse-Lautrec (men long dead) and among the living no Matisse or Picasso, no Segonzac, no Derain, no Bonnard, or Laurencin, and, among Americans, no Burchfield, or Dickinson; no Max Weber, Edward Hopper or Georgia O'Keeffe.

Now in spite of her many and voluable critics, the Metropolitan's policy is easily defanded because it is reasonable. She can not afford to extend her important sanction rashly. She can not afford to take a chance on being wrong. Her great historical collections are not journalistic, they can not, no should they attempt, to tell us what new things are going on in the world. Novelties are inpermanent

and taste is embarrassingly transitory.

But the Metropolitan is in no sense along in her conservative pplicy. The Louvre ignores artists till long after death. The Kaiser Friedrich Museum devotes itself to old masters The National Galley in London, The Alte Pinakothek in Munich, The Museum of Art in Moscow ignore modern art not tentatively, but absolutely. Why? Because there are in each of these great cities museums devoted solely to modern art. Berlin, has the National-Galerie in the Kronprinzen Palast, whene works by the best modern German and French painters can be seen. Munich has the Neue Staatsgalerie, Moscow, three modern museums with fifty-five Picassos and twenty Cezannes. London, mainly through the efforts of Samuel Courtauld and Sir Joseph Duveen have added magnificent modern rooms to the Tate Gallery, where one may see fine Van Goghs, Seurat's masterpiece, Le Vaignade, Matisse, Braque, Utrillo and many others, and finally in Paris there is in addition to the Louvre, the Luxembourg. Between these two French galleries, as between those in the Cities just mentioned, there can be no rivalry for they supplement each other. The finest works in the Luxembourg, those that have stood times criticism ten years after the painter's death may be admitted to the Louvre,-others are conveniently got rid of when interest in them is found to have passed, though it must be kept in mind that works of art which are vitally important to us deserve careful consideration, even though our grandchildren may dispise them.

It is with these modern museums of Londonp Berlin and Paris in mind that a small group of influential men and women have decided to organize in New York a Gallary for the exhibition of modern

to be known as The Museum of Modern Art. This undertaking immense in its potentialities will begin with a modest experiment. For the first two years a series of very fine loan exhibitions will be held on the twelfth floor of the Hecksher Building on Fifth Avenue at 57th Street. Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gaugain and Seurat, the ancestors of the modern movement, will perhaps form the first show to be followed by our American ancestors, Ryder, Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins, the last of whom is possibly of more interest to the younger generation than even the great Frenchmen previously-named. Other exhibitions will be devoted to the work of living Americans, living French painters, German sculptors, Russian painters, modern Mexican art, with perhaps "One man shows " for Daumier, Seurat and others. For these exhibitions funds must be raised, the co-operation of collectors, critics and dealers invited, but there is so much enthusiasm and interest in New York that these things will scarcely be lacking.

At the end of two years we should be able to discover whether New York really wants a Modern Museum, which might easily become the greatest of its kind in the world.

Miss Lizzie Bliss

The Organizing Committee, at present, is composed of Mrs. . Murray Crane; Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan, Professor Paul J. Sachs; Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Treasurer; Mr. Frank Crowninshield Secretary; A. Conger Goodyear, Chairman.

The Rise and Decline of Abstract Art.

The New Realism in Painting.
(French, American, German, Italian).

and selections from the following "one-man shows".

Daumier, Thomas Eakins, Ryder, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, Modigliani, Picasso, Matisse, Bonnard, de Segonzad, Henri Rousseau, Derain, Paul Klee, Edward Hopper, Eugene Speicher etc

to be accompanied by smaller exhibitions of work by John Marin, Varnum Poor, Hunt Diederich, Poupelet, C. C. Rumsey, Fran von Allesch, Ralph Steiner etc.

For such exhibitions the co-operation of other museums, private collectors, and dealers is warmly invited. In addition, to cover the expenses of a gallery of such size and activity, $100,000 a year will be necessary.

Before these two years of temporary exhibitions are over it should be possible to discover whether New York is really willing to build and support a great permanent Museum of Modern Art.