

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

at THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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NATIONWIDE GROUP FORMED TO AID INTERNATIONAL ART EXCHANGE

Thirty-nine community leaders and art patrons from 12 states and the District of Columbia have organized a non-profit membership organization to finance a five-year worldwide program of art exhibition exchange so that American cultural achievements can be better known abroad and the art of other nations brought here to enrich our own knowledge and cultural resources.

Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd is president of the new organization, called THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, INC., which hopes to obtain broad support for an exchange program of exhibitions in all the visual arts: painting, sculpture, prints, architecture, design, typography, photography and films.

The Executive Secretary of the International Council, which has its offices at 11 West 53 Street, is William E. S. Curteis, who served with the British Broadcasting Corporation in London and the British Embassy and the American Embassy in Paris before coming to the United States to enter business. Mrs. Carleton Sprague Smith, who has lived in Latin America and Europe and has been associated with international cultural exchange for many years, is Consultant.

Pointing out that the new International Council will fill pressing needs, Mrs. Rockefeller said that there had been no nationwide private organization functioning in the field of the international exchange of exhibitions of the visual arts, although there are groups in such other fields as the performing arts. "We believe the visual arts of all countries are of interest and value to people everywhere," Mrs. Rockefeller said. "Modern art in particular is a means of communicating today's ideas and aspirations in spite of barriers of language and custom. This can help create the kind of mutual understanding that is conducive to a peaceful and productive world."

Formation of the Council ensures the continuation and expansion of the International Program of circulating exhibitions initiated at the Museum of Modern Art in 1952 by a foundation grant due to expire next June. The pilot program, under the direction of Porter McCray, received \$125,000 a year for

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five years from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund which will contribute for a further five years, but its scale of payments will gradually decrease in order to encourage support for the Council on a broader national basis. Under the initial five-year grant, the International Program sent more than 30 exhibitions abroad and presented eight exhibitions containing material from other countries in the United States. The grant received from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund was supplemented by reimbursement for exhibitions prepared under contract for governmental agencies and other outside organizations, and by contributions from private and public sources in the United States. In addition, participating institutions and governments abroad bore a large share of the costs connected with the presentation of the exhibitions in the respective countries.

"The demand and need for exhibition exchange in the contemporary arts which American museums and institutions are being asked to meet by their colleagues abroad creates a need much more extensive than any single institution can or should undertake alone," Mrs. Rockefeller said. "Our plans call for financing a program far larger than the successful pilot program, response to which clearly demonstrates the need for not only its continuation but also for its great expansion. Despite the valuable activities being carried on by the United States Government, and through it other private and public organizations receiving government grants, we feel that in accordance with American traditions, a large share in the initiative for patronage of the arts and for sending exhibitions abroad should be the responsibility of privately sponsored organizations."

The majority of the exhibitions made possible under the International Program during its first five years have been organized by the Museum of Modern Art. The San Francisco Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago organized the United States participation at two major international art exhibitions in São Paulo and Venice; and a national committee of museums and art patrons organized a major loan show of 19th-century French masterpieces which the Program coordinated.

While the International Council expects to continue to rely heavily on the experience of the Museum of Modern Art, which has been actively concerned with art on an international scale since its founding in 1929, and on its International Program, its goal is to enlist nationwide support for a

greatly expanded program of cultural exchange. Responsibility for individual exhibitions and supplementary activities will be entrusted to specialists throughout the country experienced in the various fields of the visual arts.

Immediate projects for which the International Council is assuming financial responsibility include United States participation in three major international art exhibitions--two in Europe and one in Latin America, a major exhibition of avant-garde American painting to travel in Europe, and the circulation of 13 existing exhibitions prepared by the International Program of the Museum of Modern Art and tentatively booked for 65 showings in 54 cities in 33 countries during 1957-58.

Mrs. Rockefeller said that several factors were undoubtedly responsible for the increased demand from abroad for exhibitions of American visual arts, little known in many parts of the world. In Paris, outside of Whistler's "Mother" in the Louvre and a painting by Grandma Moses, there are no American paintings in public collections, while in London there are only three recent American works of art in public museums. The large survey shows sent to Europe recently have stimulated interest in the work of our artists, she pointed out, and now museums in many European countries are eager to show American art, particularly recent work. In Asia there has never been a major American painting or sculpture show, and at the same time the postwar building boom has awakened interest in Western achievements in the architecture of factories, hospitals, schools and housing as well as in the design of mass-produced articles. In Latin America where the population is increasing faster than in any other place in the world, new museums are being established, creating an increasing number of places capable of and interested in presenting art exhibitions.

The newly incorporated International Council is the outgrowth of an earlier organization which supplemented the international activities of the Museum of Modern Art by a variety of projects. Officers of the International Council, in addition to Mrs. Rockefeller, are: Mrs. Bliss Parkinson and Ralph F. Colin, Vice-Presidents; Alex L. Hillman, Treasurer and Mrs. Richard Rodgers, Secretary.

Honorary Members of the Council are: The Honorable C. Douglas Dillon, American Ambassador to France; Senator J. William Fulbright, Arkansas; Dr. Will Grohmann, Historian of Modern Art, Berlin; Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary-

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General of the United Nations; Sir Herbert Read, K. B. E., President of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Paul J. Sachs, Professor of Fine Arts, Emeritus, Harvard University; George A. Salles, Director of the National Museums of France; Lionello Venturi, Professor of the History of Modern Art, University of Rome.

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