

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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REMARKS BY MINISTER ALBRECHT VON KESSEL AT THE CONTRIBUTING  
MEMBERS OPENING OF GERMAN ART OF THE 20TH CENTURY  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 30, 1957

Mr. Burden

Honored Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is for me a special honor and pleasure to be able to open with a few words the Exhibition of German Art of the 20th Century.

First of all I, as representative of the Federal Republic of Germany and also as an individual, would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who made this Exhibition possible, to

the President of the Museum, Mr. Burden

the Director of the Museum, Mr. d'Harnoncourt

the Director of the Exhibition, Mr. Ritchie

who have lent their untiring help and interest.

The career diplomat has - unfortunately all too often - the task to deal with selfishness, with quarrels, and with lack of wisdom of governments and nations. He scores the biggest success in his profession, when - once in a while - he succeeds to convince both parties that it is in their enlightened self-interest to reach an honorable compromise. But the task of a career diplomat is very often disappointing and doomed to failure. You can read this in almost classical words in the essays of Harold Nicolson and George Kennan.

At this Exhibition we enter into another sphere. No antagonism is arising here. Selfishness, supported by means of propaganda, plays no role.

Each work of art is like a confession made in a conversation with a friend. In this conversation the artist struggles to come as close to the ultimate truth as it is humanly possible. He talks about his own self, his faith, his aims, hopes, and dreams. He does it with humility, hoping that his friend will accept his ideas with understanding and sympathy. In this sense the works of art of this exhibit speak for themselves. It would be a lack of respect, if I would try to comment on them, for in this silent conversation you, Ladies and Gentlemen, are the proficient partner.

But allow me - even if I do not want to comment or praise - to add one last thought to my words; We live in a period of a tremendous challenge to our world, to our way of life. If I am not mistaken, this challenge cannot be met only with the rules of conformism or with so-called economic miracles. The ultimate answer is to be sought in the spiritual field and I hope, that this Exhibition may be considered by you as a contribution to this answer.