

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

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FOR RELEASE

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Nelson A. Rockefeller, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art, will speak at a dinner before the gala preview of the re-opening of the Museum at 11 West 53 Street on Monday evening, October 6. The Museum has been closed since June 1 for extensive re-modeling.

About 2500 people from various parts of the country will attend the opening in the newly designed galleries from nine until midnight. Among those expected are hundreds of individuals who made contributions ranging from \$1 to several thousand to the "Friends of the Museum Emergency Committee." This group was formed last May to help the Museum in the proposed remodeling which went far beyond repairing the insured damage caused by a fire on April 15.

Many well known American artists, collectors, architects, designers, publishers, gallery directors, museum officials and art patrons are also expected. (partial list attached) Jean Arp, internationally famous French artist whose work is shown in one of four exhibitions marking the re-opening has flown to New York from Paris for the event.

Mr. Rockefeller, who officiated as President of the Museum when the building opened in 1939 will speak as Chairman of the Board at this second opening almost 20 years later. He will address a dinner of 140 in the Museum Penthouse about 9 p.m., immediately preceding the preview itself. (Text of Mr. Rockefeller's remarks will be available at 4 p.m. Monday.)

At 7:30 p.m. the dinner guests will congregate for cocktails in the newly designed Main Lobby of the Museum. Dinner will begin at 8 p.m. in the Penthouse and is expected to be over by 9:30 when the dinner guests will join others attending the preview in the galleries.

In addition to the Arp show seen in a dramatic installation designed by René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum, the new galleries will contain an exhibition called "Works of Art: Given or Promised" including world-famous paintings by Picasso, Cézanne, Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec from the collections of Mrs. David M. Levy, William S. Paley, William A. M. Burden and the Honorable and Mrs. John Hay Whitney.

Monday evening guests will also be the first to use the new public stair tower, a six story gray brick structure that projects into the garden terrace at the east end of the building. The garden itself, where much of the Museum's famous sculpture collection is on view, has been newly planted with chrysanthemums and will be floodlit for the evening.

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The remodeling, which will be completed only hours before the opening, was designed to make the 19-year old building more efficient. Attendance, membership, staff and services have increased many times since 1939, when the building first opened. While the most obvious changes are the addition of a third stairway, re-designed main lobby and new lighting throughout, the remodeling affected almost every square foot of the main building at 11 West 53 Street, the annex at 21 West 53 Street and the former Theater Guild Building at 23 - 25 West 53 Street, purchased by the Museum in 1956 for additional office and storage space. Numerous changes were also made in the three floors below ground level.

The other exhibitions on view for the re-opening are "Painting and Prints from the Museum Collection" and "Architecture Worth Saving."

The Museum will re-open to the public on Wednesday, October 8. Museum hours will remain the same (daily 11 - 6, Sundays, 1 - 7 p.m.) The Garden Restaurant will begin serving lunch and tea on that day as will the Members' Penthouse. Museum books, reproductions, Christmas cards and postcards will be on sale at the front desk. Film showings at 3 and 5:30 daily will also be resumed with a cycle devoted to the films of Paul Rotha.

Estimated cost of the improvements to the buildings is about \$850,000. This is over and above cost of repairs to the building following a fire on April 15. At that time building damage caused by the fire was estimated at about \$250,000. The Friends of the Museum Emergency Committee contributed more than \$143,000 towards the cost of remodeling.

The fire was confined to the Museum's second floor galleries which had been closed to the public for the installation of air conditioning equipment. It caused a two week halt in all services. On May 1 the ground floor re-opened for a month so that the two loan shows which had been on view could be re-installed before the pictures were scheduled to be returned to their owners.

Philip C. Johnson was architect for the remodeling program. George Fuller Company was the general contractor.

For additional information please contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900.