

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND ITALY

The Museum of Modern Art, which has just announced a campaign to raise 25 million dollars for additional building and program funds, has played an important role in worldwide cultural exchange since its founding in 1929. This activity has been increased in recent years with the establishment of the International Program, a special department in the Museum devoted to cultural exchange. The importance of this activity to men and women all over America is attested by the fact that the Museum's Program is now under the auspices of an International Council composed of community leaders and art patrons from many parts of the country.

Since its inception the Museum has carried on an active exchange program with Italy which began with the acquisition of works by Italian artists. Among the painters represented in the Museum Collections are: Afro, Boccioni, De Chirico, Guttuso, Modigliani, Morandi and Vedova. Sculptors include among others: Manzù, Marini and Viani. In addition, Italian art is broadly represented in the print, film, photography and design collections of the Museum.

The number of exhibitions devoted to Italian art have included the great exhibition, Italian Masters, ranging in date from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries which was presented at the Museum in 1940. The twenty-eight works included the first Michelangelo sculpture, Madonna and Child, ever to be exhibited in this country, as well as such world-famous paintings as Botticelli's The Birth of Venus, and Raphael's Modonna of the Chair.

In 1949, Twentieth Century Italian Art, the first comprehensive exhibition in the United States devoted to Italian contemporary art, was held at the Museum. This exhibition directed by James Thrall Soby and Alfred H. Barr, Jr. included paintings and sculpture of the major movements in Italian art such as Futurism, Scuola Metafisica and a few of their postwar artists. An important one-man show of the work of Modigliani was given in 1951. Olivetti: Design in Industry, presented in 1952 and The Modern Movement in Italy: Architecture and Design, in 1954, were subsequently circulated throughout the United States and Canada.

Under the Museum's International Program, the United States Pavilion at the Venice Biennale was acquired in 1954. Since then, except in 1956, the International Program has been responsible for the United States Representation at this important international art exhibition. At the XXIX Biennale in 1958, the highest painting prize was awarded to an American, Mark Tobey, the first since James McNeill Whistler to be so honored.

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Two significant exhibitions of contemporary American painting were seen in Italy in 1958. Organized by the International Program, a memorial exhibition, Jackson Pollock: 1912-1956, was shown in Rome and The New American Painting, the work of seventeen painters who comprise the central core of abstract expressionism, was exhibited in Milan.

Other smaller shows have been circulated throughout Italy, including: The American Woodcut Today, and Built in U.S.A.: Postwar Architecture. The Family of Man, the great photographic exhibition created by Captain Edward Steichen, visited three Italian cities.

A large selection of the best American art publications were presented to six Italian institutions on the occasion of the XXIX Biennale di Venezia and the showing of The New American Painting in Milan in 1958.

The list of Museum publications includes such important studies of Italian art as Giorgio De Chirico, and Modigliani, both by James Thrall Soby.

As a tribute to the contribution that the Italian film has made to the art of the cinema, the Museum presented a special film cycle, Fifty Years of Italian Cinema in 1955.

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A detailed list of activities is available upon request.

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