

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

"However great the importance of international cultural exchange from the standpoint of our relations with other countries, this is not the main reason why we Americans have need for cultural contacts with other peoples at this time. The main reason lies rather in our own need as Americans for just this sort of enrichment of our national spirit...

"Actually, of course, we have at this time the greatest and most urgent need to correct a number of impressions that the outside world entertains of us, impressions that are beginning to affect our international position in very important ways. I think we are gradually becoming aware for the first time of the frightening extent to which negative conceptions about us prevail to one degree or another abroad; but many of us still do not realize how largely these negative feelings are related to cultural rather than to political conditions...

"To many of these people (abroad), cultural life appears as the highest and the most hopeful form of human activity. And these people are apt to measure other civilizations by the degree to which they are considerate of cultural values and cause cultural activities to flourish within their confines.

"It is a fact that in the creation of beauty and in the great monumental works of the intellect, and there alone, human beings have been able to find an unfailing bridge between nations, even in the darkest movements of political bitterness and chauvinism and exclusiveness."

--- George F. Kennan, in a speech before
the International Council of the
Museum of Modern Art, 1955.

THE PLACE OF MODERN ART IN THE WORLD TODAY

"It should be a source of special concern to Americans that the materialist proponents of Marxism are able to level against us the charge of materialism. Unfortunately, this accusation has particular impact among the intellectual leaders, not only of Europe but of the vigorous new societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

"One of the best and most convincing answers we can offer to such a charge is creative American leadership in the arts -- and especially in painting and music, which transcend the barriers of language.

"That is why non-traditional artistic creations can make an important contribution in our efforts to develop ties of cultural understanding with the people of other nations. And art can be a powerful expression of a free society that welcomes individual creativeness and stimulates the flow of new ideas.

"This value of advanced modern art exists quite apart from its success or failure in communicating to large numbers of people. It is a fact that American abstract expressionism has had universal appeal among the artists and intellectuals, not only in the non-Communist world, but even in the Communist world. And these are the circles which must evaluate and interpret advanced ideas to the general public.

"In the years that lie before us, artistic leadership in the modern world must mean leading with advanced ideas and programs, rather than cautious adherence to tradition or the easy road of catering to popular preference. It must be made clear to the world that the concepts of freedom of enterprise in the United States includes freedom of expression and initiative in artistic creation."

--- Chester E. Bowles

Introduction to a catalog for Louise Rosenthal, exhibition of recent paintings, at the Bodley Gallery, October 24 - November 12, 1960.

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since its founding in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art has time and again been the first institution to present to the American public comprehensive surveys of the 20th Century art of other countries; since 1938 the Museum has pioneered in presenting contemporary American art abroad. Today its program of international cultural exchange of the visual arts - painting, sculpture, photography, architecture and design - leads the programs carried out by our government and by any other private institution.

The Museum of Modern Art began to send American art abroad less than a decade after it was founded. During the past 22 years more than 100 exhibitions organized by the Museum have been circulated to over 260 communities in 56 countries on every continent. During the past 8 years under a stepped-up international exchange program the Museum has presented a program of art exhibitions on every continent and is now concentrating its experience and facilities in new areas, particularly Africa, Latin America and the East.

The first comprehensive review of American art ever to be seen in Europe was sent to Paris by the Museum shortly before World War II. "Three Centuries of Art in the United States" was an historical panorama of our contributions to the visual arts, from 1670 to 1937. This was followed after the war in 1953 with a show of work by 12 American painters and sculptors, and in 1956, by the largest exhibition of contemporary art from the United States ever sent abroad: "Modern Art in the United States: Selections from the Collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York." More than 550 paintings, sculptures, prints, architectural photographic enlargements, stereo-realist slides and models, examples of industrial design, typographic design, photography and films drawn entirely from the Museum's own collections of 20th Century art were exhibited in Paris and then in 7 other countries.

After seeing the very recent works of American art included in this show, several European institutions then requested an exhibition entirely devoted to the "New American Painting". This show, which toured Europe in 1958-59, and was called by some the Armory show in reverse, has been credited with bringing a new understanding of this country's cultural "vitality, vigor, and energy" to European intellectual leaders.

The success of these major exhibitions of American painting and sculpture in Europe has stimulated interest in American art throughout the world. Australia, India, Pakistan, and Japan will soon receive for the first time a major exhibition of contemporary American art, as will the major capitals in Latin America.

One of the future exhibitions the Museum hopes to circulate abroad is a show devoted to small bronzes from American collections which would be sent to the Middle and Far East where there are no major collections of Western art. Another proposed

exhibition deals with African influences in modern Western art which would introduce the African public to major movements in 20th Century art through comparison with their own tradition.

Unlike the countries of Europe, Latin America and the East, the United States government has seldom participated officially in the great - or small - international art exhibitions. The Museum of Modern Art has filled this role for our country since 1954 when it brought the U. S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, the oldest of the international shows. Since then the Museum has either assumed full responsibility for the United States representation or substantially aided by funds and advice the other museums which it has invited to assemble this country's exhibition there. In addition the Museum of Modern Art has organized the United States exhibitions at the many new international biennials established since the end of World War II - in Mexico, in Brazil, in India, in Japan, and in Paris.

The Museum has also played a major role in introducing 20th Century design to areas of the world which have had limited contact with this Western cultural heritage. In India, for example, the Museum of Modern Art provided the exhibition "Design Today in America and Europe", a collection of well-designed objects of the present day - ranging from tea cups to chairs. These were assembled from the markets of the world by the Museum and, aided by a foundation grant, sent on a two-year tour of India. After being seen by millions of Indian students, housewives, manufacturers and government leaders, the collection will form the nucleus of the first permanent modern design collection of that country.

Europe, rebuilding after the war, was also particularly interested in new architectural ideas. "Built in U.S.A., Post War Architecture" was sent to 14 European countries and was one of the first cultural manifestations of this country to pierce the Iron Curtain.

The under developed areas, particularly the new countries of Africa will receive architectural shows, including photographs, plans of public buildings, schools, dams, etc.

Close cooperation with government agencies was firmly established by the Museum during World War II, when the Museum prepared and sent dozens of exhibitions to Latin America. Although since the war several exhibitions first organized by the Museum and shown in New York have later been adapted for travel abroad under the auspices of the U.S.I.A., the best known is undoubtedly the "Family of Man" show. It is estimated that more than nine million people, many behind the Iron Curtain, have been touched, and moved by this exhibition assembled by the great American photographer, Edward Steichen, for an American museum.

In its 22 years experience in international cultural exchange the Museum has also pioneered in techniques from packing and shipping to final installation and presentation abroad. Usually these exhibitions are shown in public institutions under the sponsorship of local museums and associations who often publish the catalogs and frequently contribute to transportation costs.

The material in these exhibitions has been predominantly, but not exclusively, contemporary; sometimes it has included the art of other countries in order to indicate the esteem in which their achievements are held by the American people. This was the case in a show of "French Drawings from American Collections", received with great enthusiasm in France and an exhibition of 20th-century Italian art from American collections which has just completed highly successful showings in Milan and Rome.

Because this program of international cultural exchange carries with it the serious responsibility of maintaining and enhancing this country's prestige abroad, the Museum's international activities are now under the sponsorship of International Council composed of art patrons and community leaders from all parts of the country.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS 1938 - 1960

More than 100 exhibitions organized by the Museum of Modern Art have been circulated to over 260 communities in 56 countries outside the United States and Canada.

(Number indicates communities served within each country)

Argentina (1)	El Salvador (1)	Kenya (1)	Singapore (1)
Australia (10)	Finland (10)	Korea (5)	Southern Rhodesia (1)
Austria (5)	France (10)	Laos (1)	Spain (2)
Belgium (4)	Germany (9)	Lebanon (1)	Sweden (12)
Bolivia (2)	Greece (1)	Mexico (3)	Switzerland (5)
Brazil (9)	Guatemala (2)	Netherlands (3)	Turkey (2)
Ceylon (3)	Haiti (1)	New Zealand (5)	Union of S.Africa (7)
Chile (3)	Iceland (1)	Norway (16)	United Kingdom (36)
Colombia (2)	India (14)	Pakistan (3)	Uruguay (2)
Costa Rica (1)	Indonesia (1)	Panama (1)	U.S.S.R. (1)
Cuba (1)	Ireland (1)	Peru (1)	Venezuela (1)
Denmark (4)	Israel (2)	Philippines (1)	Vietnam (1)
Ecuador (1)	Italy (21)	Poland (9)	Yugoslavia (4)
Egypt (1)	Japan (10)	Romania (4)	

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