

May 1964

ALFRED H. BARR, JR.

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum Collections at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, is largely responsible for the diversity of both the collections and activities of that institution. As first Director of the Museum from its founding in 1929 until 1943, Mr. Barr established the concept of a multidepartmental museum concerned with all the modern visual arts -- architecture and design, photography and film as well as the traditional fields of painting and sculpture, drawings and prints.

During his career at the Museum Mr. Barr has directed over one hundred exhibitions beginning with the inaugural show in 1929, Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh. Revealing the remarkably wide range of his knowledge, scholarship and interests, they have included surveys of new art forms as well as many one-man shows. Under the Museum's extensive circulating exhibitions program, many of these shows have traveled in whole or in part to other cities in the United States.

Among the pioneering exhibitions that introduced particular styles and movements to the American public were Cubism and Abstract Art (1936) and Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism (1936-37). Major shows devoted to individual artists have included Vincent van Gogh (1935-36), two on Henri Matisse (1931 and 1951-52) and three Picasso retrospectives: Picasso - Forty Years of His Art (1939-40), Picasso - 75th Anniversary Show (1957), and 80th Birthday Exhibition - Picasso (1962), the last consisting entirely of works in the Museum's collection or promised to it as gifts. The art of particular countries has been shown in German Painting and Sculpture (1931), Italian Masters (1940), Modern Cuban Painting (1944) and Twentieth Century Italian Art (1949) which was directed jointly with James Thrall Soby. Mr. Barr has also arranged many special exhibitions of works drawn from the Museum's Collection,

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such as the Tenth Anniversary Exhibition: Art In Our Time (1939), The Latin American Collections Of The Museum Of Modern Art (1943) and Painting From The Museum Collections (1955), the 25th Anniversary Exhibition. With Dorothy C. Miller, Curator of the Museum Collections, Mr. Barr has also organized over thirty showings of recent acquisitions to the collections. During the past winter while the Museum was closed for new construction and remodeling he directed at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C., the exhibition Paintings From The Museum Of Modern Art, New York.

Since the Museum's founding Mr. Barr has encouraged its publication of books and catalogs and written or edited many of them himself. He was instrumental in establishing fully illustrated catalogs with knowledgeable texts that far transcended the scope of the respective exhibitions to become standard reference works in their fields. Among his other works, Mr. Barr is the author of Modern German Painting and Sculpture (1931), Cubism and Abstract Art (1936), Matisse: His Art and His Public (1951) and the Museum's best-selling publication, What Is Modern Art? which has appeared in eight editions since its first appearance in 1943 and also been translated into Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish. In addition to the catalogs of exhibitions mentioned above, Mr. Barr has edited more than thirty Museum catalogs, including Masters of Modern Art (1954) and Painting and Sculpture in The Museum of Modern Art, soon to appear in a greatly expanded edition.

Graduating from Princeton University with the A.B. in 1922, Mr. Barr received the degree of M.A. there the following year and his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1946. Frequently honored for his contributions to the world of art, he has received honorary degrees from Princeton University, the University of Bonn, the University of Buffalo and Adelphi College. His decorations from foreign governments include the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit from the Federal Republic of Germany, the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor from France, and the Star of Italian Solidarity. In 1959 Mr. Barr received the 50th Anniversary Award of The American Federation of Arts for "outstanding and continuous achievement in furthering the cause of art and
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artist in America."

In addition to his duties at the Museum Mr. Barr is active on the visiting committees of the art departments or museums of Columbia University, Dartmouth College, Princeton University and Harvard University. He is President of the Foundation of Arts, Religion and Culture, and an advisor of the Willism and Norma Copley Foundation of Chicago. He is a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors and of the International Association of Art Critics, and an Honorary Member of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He is a Trustee of The Museum of Modern Art and of New College, Sarasota, Florida. Mr. Barr has also served on the editorial boards or committees of Magazine of Art, The Art Quarterly, The Art Bulletin, Art in America and Gazette des Beaux-Arts and been a frequent contributor of articles to these and other periodicals.

Born in Detroit, Michigan in 1902 Mr. Barr attended Boys' Latin School in Baltimore before going to Princeton. He is married to the former Margaret Scolari-Fitzmaurice, also an art-historian, whom he met at the opening night of the Museum's first exhibition. Mr. and Mrs. Barr live in New York City with their daughter, Victoria.

 Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y.
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