

194
April, 1968

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON RENE D'HARNONCOURT

Rene d'Harnoncourt joined the staff of The Museum of Modern Art in 1944 and became director in 1949.

Born in Austria in 1901, Mr. d'Harnoncourt lived in Mexico from 1925 to 1931. His first show for The Museum of Modern Art, New York, as guest director in 1941, was Indian Art of the United States, for which he co-authored a book with Frederic H. Douglas. Other exhibitions he directed reflect his widespread interests and expertise, and include Art of the South Seas (1946), Timeless Aspects of Modern Art (1948), Modern Art in Your Life (1949), and Ancient Art of the Andes (1954). He also collaborated on the publications for these shows.

Mr. d'Harnoncourt is widely known here and abroad as an expert on exhibition installation techniques. Abroad, he installed the U.S. representation at the biennial exhibitions in Brazil in 1951 and in Venice in 1962, as well as Museum exhibitions at the Musee National d'Art Moderne in Paris in 1953 and 1955, and Modern Sculpture U.S.A., a major exhibition at the Musee Rodin in 1965. He has also installed many exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

A member of the National Council on the Arts since its founding in 1965, Mr. d'Harnoncourt previously served on a number of Federal commissions dealing with the Arts. He is a member of the Board of the newly founded Center for Inter-American Relations and Vice President of the Museum of Primitive Art, and has been associated with the U.S. Commission for UNESCO since 1946. He is a Trustee of the Museum of African Art in Washington, the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in Fort Worth, and of the American Federation of Arts, and Artistic Consultant to the Department of Interior.

He has received honorary degrees from Dartmouth College (1955), Columbia University (1958) and the University of New Mexico (1964). He has also been decorated by the French, German and Peruvian governments.

(more)

Mr. d'Harnoncourt, who is fluent in six languages, was educated in Austria and studied chemistry and philosophy at the State University in Graz from 1918 to 1922, and chemical engineering at the Technische Hochschule in Vienna from 1922 to 1924. In Mexico, Mr. d'Harnoncourt worked as a poster artist and illustrated children's books before entering the Museum field.

A U.S. citizen since 1939, Mr. d'Harnoncourt directed a network radio program called "Art in America" from 1933 to 1934. For the two following years, he taught at Sarah Lawrence College. Mr. d'Harnoncourt was named General Manager of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the U.S. Department of Interior in 1937 and served in that position until 1944, becoming Chairman of the Board, until 1961.

During this time he also served as acting Director of the Arts section of the Office of Inter-American Affairs and Chairman of the Committee on Manual Industries for that office. In 1944, when he joined the staff of the Museum, he served as Vice President in charge of Foreign Affairs and Director of the Department of Manual Industries. In 1947 he became Director of Curatorial Departments.

Mr. d'Harnoncourt lives in New York City with his wife, the former Sarah Carr of Chicago, and vacations in his house in Key West. Their daughter, Anne, is an assistant curator of painting and sculpture at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Mr. d'Harnoncourt will retire on July 1, 1968, when he will be succeeded by Bates Lowry.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200